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Evaluating the Efficiency of the Textbook “Play and Learn” to
Enhance Fourth Grade Students’ English Proficiency Skills at a
Rural Primary School in Costa Rica

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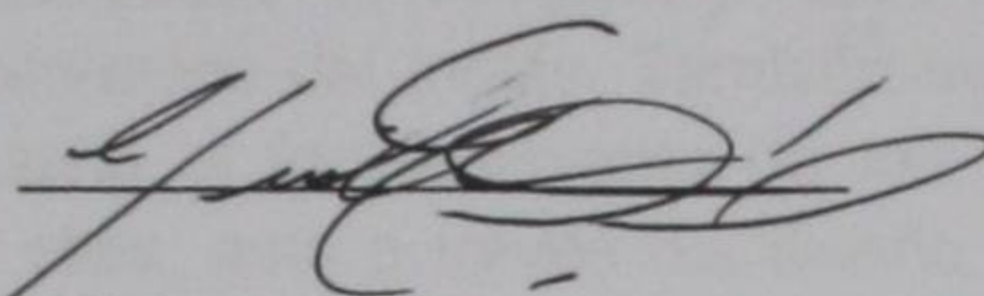
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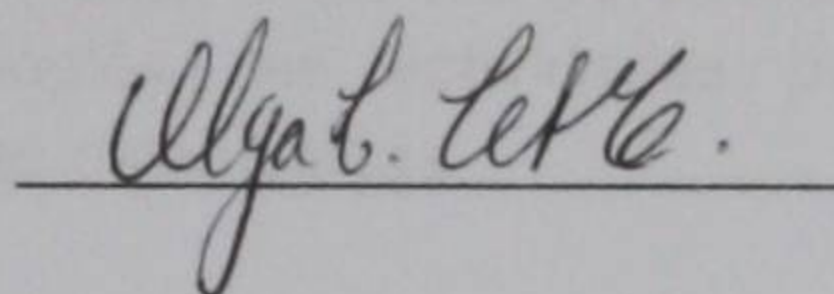
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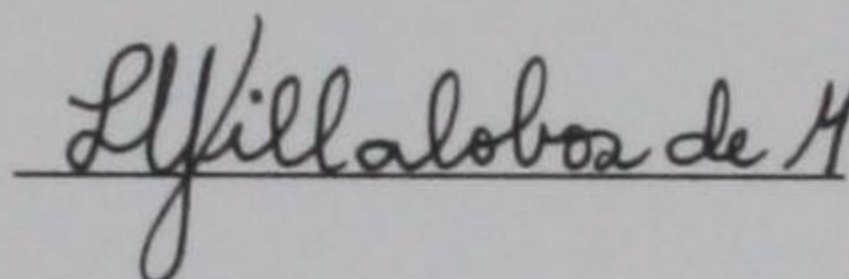
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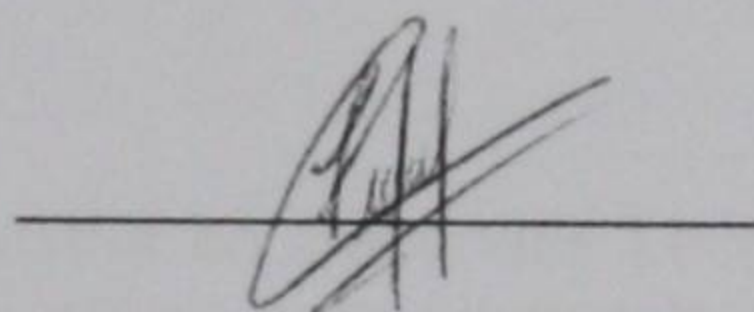
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Resumen

La presente investigación evalúa la eficacia y conveniencia del libro de texto "Play and Learn" para promover las habilidades del idioma inglés en el aula a estudiantes de cuarto año de la escuela Finca Seis en Río Frío de Sarapiquí de Heredia. Además, estudia las actividades pedagógicas, cognitivas y lingüísticas y la relación que existe entre su contenido y los temas propuestos por el Ministerio de Educación Pública. La información se recolectó con la ayuda del director del centro educativo, personal administrativo, educadores, estudiantes, padres de familia, y la editorial "Publitex"; además, profesores y estudiantes de otras instituciones como Escuela El Bambu, IDA Otoyá y Finca Dos. El objetivo fundamental de contar con diferentes participantes permitió obtener una visión más amplia sobre la efectividad del libro y el papel que desempeña como herramienta pedagógica entre el maestro y los estudiantes. Como resultado de esta investigación surge la necesidad de incluir más actividades pedagógicas para fortalecer las destrezas de escucha y habla lo cual permitirá que el estudiante mejore sus conocimientos del Inglés. También se debe incorporar el componente de cultura. Se resalta el fortalecimiento de las cuatro destrezas del idioma y no solamente dos de ellas, esto a través del diseño de un programa virtual interactivo que resume cada una de las 7 unidades establecidas por el Ministerio de Educación Pública. Al finalizar cada unidad el estudiante resolverá con sus compañeros y la docente de inglés, las actividades pedagógicas relacionadas al tema visto durante las lecciones establecidas.

Palabras Clave: Libro de texto, evaluación de textos, selección de libros de textos, evaluación de materiales, evaluación, materiales auténticos, materiales.

Trabajo presentado para optar al grado de Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto, según lo establece el Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado de la Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

Abstract

This research evaluates the efficiency and suitability of the textbook "Play and Learn" to enhance the English skills of fourth graders at Finca Seis elementary school in Sarapiquí. Moreover, this study examines the pedagogical, cognitive and linguistic activities and the relationship that it has between its content and the seven units required by the Ministry of Public Education. The information was provided by the principal of the school, administrative department, teachers, students, parents, and the publisher "Publitext" and from teachers and students from other primary schools such as El Bambú, IDA Otoyá y Finca Dos. The purpose of having different participants allowed to widen the researcher's vision about the effectiveness of the textbook and its role as a pedagogical tool between the teachers and the students. This investigation draws the need to include more pedagogical activities to the textbook, as well as culture activities. It also recommends strengthening listening and speaking skills which will allow students to improve their knowledge of the language. Moreover, there is an interactive virtual software proposal on developing not only 2 skills of the target language but also the 4 English skills. This software summarizes each of the 7 units recommended by the Ministry of Public Education; further, this complementary material was done for the students to practice English with more tasks.

Key words: Textbook, textbook evaluation, textbook selection, material evaluation, evaluation, authentic materials, materials.

Paper presented as a requirement to obtain the Master's Degree in Second Languages and Cultures with an Emphasis in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to Adult Learners, in fulfilment of the bylaws and regulations established by the Graduate Program at Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

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Habakkuk 2:3

For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
 it speaks of the end, and does not lie.
 If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
 it will surely come, it will not delay.

Evaluating the Efficiency of the Textbook Play and Learn to
Enhance Fourth Grade Students' English Proficiency Skills at
a Rural Primary School in Costa Rica

M.A Thesis by Jairo Eduardo Viales Angulo

Dedicated to

The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit who lifted me up when
my spirit got too weak.

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Background of the study

Costa Rica is located in Central America between Nicaragua and Panama, and it is also surrounded by the Pacific Cost and the Caribbean Ocean. Education has played a vital role to make Costa Rica have one of the highest educational programs in Central America. In this regard, English has occupied the position of a major foreign language in the Costa Rican educational curriculum. That is why a program called "Costa Rica Multilingual¹" intends to have students in high school level handle the English language up to the B1 range according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. According to the law, its main objective is to provide student population with communicative competences that will enable them to have a better personal and professional growth so they may gain a universal knowledge and a better economical income (Costa Rica Multilingüe 2008 – 2017: 2009, 3)

Nowadays, most Costa Rican students start studying English when they go into the first grade in elementary school at the age of seven. After finishing primary school, students move to high school where they have, five English lessons per week for a period of five or six years among other subjects. In order to graduate, they have to take the National Standardized English Test² from the Ministry of Public education (MEP). As soon as the students obtain the certificate that allows them to go to the university, most of them continue

1 A project of the government of Costa Rica that started in 2008 and will end in 2017 to certify high school students with a B1 in the Common European Framework for Languages: Language, Teaching, Assessment.

2 An English test based on reading comprehension which certificates students enter to the university system.

studying English due to job demands that international corporations³ offer to Costa Ricans. Most of them continue studying English at the university or at language schools.

To achieve the proficiency level required to cope with the former requirement, textbooks and authentic materials play a paramount role. The purpose of this study is to analyze an English textbook used in a primary school and to propose other materials that will fulfill the objectives of the curriculum.

³ International companies in Costa Rica face the new challenge of having bilingual employees who can perform a job successfully in English. (Costa Rica Multilingüe , Presidencia de la Republica 2008 – 2017: 2009, 1)

Introduction

The main objective of teaching English as a foreign language is to enable learners to develop communicative competence in English so that they may interact successfully in the real world using this international language. Textbooks have played an important role in facilitating this process. They have also been the most common form of teaching materials. Likewise, they are important references that teachers use for teaching a variety of languages. They have been considered very effective tools since they can be used as a syllabus or pedagogical guide to direct the process of teaching and learning of a course.

English teachers use textbooks as a basis for their lessons; however, in some cases these textbooks do not reflect the reality of the classroom in terms of students' needs and interests. They might not provide the type of activities needed for teaching. Therefore, teachers should have the expertise to evaluate a textbook in order to choose the activities that serve learners' needs, course objectives and curriculum content. In addition,, other pedagogical materials should also be carefully selected or designed by teachers themselves. Textbooks should be used as supplementary support to teach the lesson. Once teachers identify what textbook to use for their course, they should start creating, adapting, and adopting materials to help students learn in a more effective way.

Due to the need that fourth grade students at Finca Seis School have in the educational region of Sarapiquí⁴ to develop their four English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in the educational region of Sarapiquí, the English teacher always has to find ways to facilitate this development. Therefore, the textbook "Play and Learn"⁵ from Publitex (a Costa Rican publisher) was chosen for this purpose. This textbook was chosen based on the contents stated in the seven units that the MEP English curriculum⁶ suggests for public elementary schools. Similarly, this textbook intends to improve students' skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking by making them become more independent learners. Even though MEP recommends this textbook, it is not supplied to the teachers. Consequently, they should search for the most appropriate textbooks to use in their schools since they have been empowered to select the best materials to provide the students with tools that really fit the curriculum's requirements. These materials should include sensitiveness to other cultures, broader knowledge of the world, and discovery of new ways for communicating with others (through linguistic, social and cultural options).

Particularly, this research intends to evaluate the pertinence and appropriateness of "Play and Learn" used in two fourth grade groups at Finca Seis School. The research will not only be essential to explore the role that the

4 The educational system in Costa Rica works in the seven provinces as follows: there are 27 branches around the country called Educational Regions. Here, the regional advisors are in charge of supervising both elementary and secondary schools that need to comply with the laws and the English curriculum established by the Ministry of Public Education.

5 Year 2010

6 Units of the MEP curriculum: socializing, keeping healthy, family ties, my social life, holidays and Celebrations in my region, Costa Rican identity and environmental education.

book has on learning and teaching English to develop learners' communicative competence, but also the role it has in real life situations inside the classroom, and thus determine the learners' and English teachers' perceptions concerning the advantages or disadvantages (effectiveness and suitability) of this textbook.

I The Problem and its Importance

The study was conducted in two fourth grade groups at the Finca Seis School located in Río Frío, Horquetas, Sarapiquí, Heredia, Costa Rica. The purpose of this study is to assess the overall effectiveness and suitability of the primary school level textbook entitled "Play and Learn" for fourth graders. This textbook follows the content of the English curriculum for fourth graders at elementary schools of Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Education.

Hence, the use of this textbook becomes important because it not only facilitates the planning process, but also encourages the students to work more independently in the classroom. Moreover, the textbook leads the teacher to plan and develop more appropriate activities to improve students' English proficiency level in reading and writing.

However, it has some weaknesses for instance; it lacks wrap-up activities, warm-ups, listening and oral activities. Additionally, the textbook does not have pedagogical activities, such as board games, videos (CD), songs, games, flashcards, puzzles, crosswords, letters soups, jeopardy, pictures and memory games that can enhance motivation and fun in the

classroom. This is a limitation for all English teachers to teach English, and those from the educational region of Sarapiquí are not excluded from it. The lack of pedagogical materials from textbooks has forced some teachers of English to adapt, design and create materials to solve the problem. Some others decide to buy other textbooks provided by some publishers such as Santillana, Eduvision, and Publitex.

In fact, teachers should consider not only what materials should be used to fit the students' needs, but also MEP's curriculum. This consideration and the searching for materials to teach a curriculum could become a frustrating process for some teachers because there is not an adequate book to base their teaching on. Teachers necessarily become creators, designers, and artists because they must think of obtaining the most appropriate materials to meet the curriculum goal and. For this reason, some teachers have created their own booklet of additional materials.

The process of creating, adapting, and adopting materials also requires one to be acquainted with the main purpose of teaching English, to know what and how to teach, and the ways students learn best. According to the national English Curriculum, the main objective is:

To integrate and interrelate the four skills as understanding, performing and following relationships in the communication process which reflects the distinction between receptive (listening and reading) and productive performance (speaking and writing) to achieve the communicative

competence appropriate for the level (National English Syllabus for II Cycle: 2005, 38).

If the textbook "Play and Learn" does not fulfill some of these four skills, it is necessary to elaborate a complementary proposal of the textbook used in order to accomplish MEP's objectives. This complementary proposal will be designed considering the information received from the application of the community diagnosis⁷ and the different instruments applied to elicit all necessary information from the students. Moreover, the application of the diagnosis included questionnaires and checklists to better understand the most relevant negative factors of the textbook and to come up with the most appropriate solution to strengthen language weaknesses from the information elicited in the diagnosis, and the instruments applied to the informants, Finca Seis School Institutional Plan⁸ (2011, 58) indicated some social factors that could guide these students positively or negatively in their learning process. Following will be presented some information found in the institutional plan.

First, the institutional plan mentions that some parents have an income that ranges from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand colons every two weeks. This may be a limitation for some of these students when trying to buy materials like English textbooks or textbooks for other subjects such as Science, Social studies, Math, and others. Second, other parents have an income that ranges from two hundred thousand to more than three hundred

⁷ This data collection instrument was designed and applied by the school board and it was taken into consideration in the development of this research.

⁸ This is an updated and private file that contains the background and whole information of the community, the institution since it was founded and the students.



thousand colons every two weeks which means that students can afford buying what the school authorities require in terms of didactic materials. This is not perceived as a limitation for the parents. Affording textbooks helps learners to be motivated to study or at least provides them with better conditions for learning. Finally, the institutional plan stated that some parents are teachers, nurses, managers, or work in the administrative department of a public or private institution, such as the National Bank, the hospital, or the pineapple and banana companies. In fact, the parents' academic level of education is an advantage that can positively influence in the students' learning process. Notwithstanding, in most of the cases both parents work and this means that students are taken care of by relatives or babysitters. Additionally, there are some parents who did not complete their basic formal education. This is a negative factor that may interfere or affect the process of learning for some students because these parents mentioned that they did not know how to explain the English assignments to their children.

In fact, the researcher came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to design complementary material for the textbook from which the students can interact more actively in the classroom. This material should help learners to develop their English skills. Considering the above needs and some of the conclusions presented in the institutional plan, the researcher will suggest and design pedagogical material that includes board games, videos (CD), songs, flashcards, games such as, puzzles, crosswords, letter soups, jeopardy, memory games, and will help both teachers and students on how to use voice

thread, scribus and wikis to accomplish some of the objectives established by the school, the publisher, and MEP's curriculum. Finally, any kind of materials that the teacher can use should be evaluated in order to determine if they are effective and useful for teachers and students in regard to content and teaching activities.

Objectives of the Research

These are the main and specific objectives to be accomplished throughout this research.

1.1 General Objective:

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the overall effectiveness and suitability of the textbook "Play and Learn" for two fourth grade groups at Finca Seis elementary school in Sarapiquí.

1.2 Specific Objectives:

1.2.1 To determine if the textbook "Play and Learn" is useful for the teacher in terms of pedagogical and social needs.

1.2.2 To determine if the textbook "Play and Learn" is useful for the students in terms of cognitive and linguistic needs.

1.2.3 To elaborate complementary pedagogical material to facilitate the process of learning established in MEP's curriculum.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Is the textbook useful to achieve the students' cognitive and linguistic needs?

1.3.2 Does the book have activities that enhance the four language skills?

1.3.3 Does the textbook meet the teacher's pedagogical and social needs?

II Framework of Reference

The following section describes the impact of materials evaluation on language teaching and the importance of using textbooks when teaching a foreign language. In addition, textbooks have become not only one of the main sources for teaching, but also the core element to support a lesson in the teaching and learning process. However, this was not the case three or four decades ago. Tomlinson analyses the history of materials development, and explains that, "educators had not given any real importance to textbooks until the 1990s when books on materials development started to be published [...] and that the topic on material development was treated as a subcategory of methodology" (qtd in Fredriksson and Olsson: 2006, 7, 8). In this regard, Fredriksson and Olsson explain the reasons for teacher's interests in materials development. They say, "What is really important in the development of materials is the realization of teachers" (2006, 8). This realization means that the teachers may become aware and proud of the type of work they may develop with the students and the progress they perceive from them as a result of using a particular textbook when learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers need to be able to evaluate, adapt, and produce materials that are appropriate and that complement their teaching.

Unfortunately, some teachers are more concerned with teaching content and using the right methodology so they do not pay attention to how to develop communicative competency. In this regard, Wei states, "The primary role of the teacher in the classroom is to facilitate the student-student communication

process through effective learning tasks" (2010, 78). This means that the learners should be the center of the learning process. Therefore, the teacher should create a learning environment that motivates students to actively engage in the classroom. That is one of the reasons why software design is important. The purpose is to have students develop virtual activities to enhance their knowledge from a different perspective. They will learn by doing. They will learn by playing virtually.

Another reason to consider when evaluating and selecting teaching materials is that students come to school already exposed to different kinds of resources such as technology and textbooks. These resources have become a challenge for teachers. This challenge has made teachers come up with new approaches including the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that aims broadly to apply the theories of the communicative approach by making communication the goal of language teaching. Another approach, Task-Based Instruction (TBI) helps teachers make the lessons more attractive for the students. This means that the lesson, in which they have to complete a central task, must be student centered. Moreover, the amount of language learned is determined by what happens while students are completing the task. Teachers should consider that technology not only facilitates the inclusion of various types of media within a lesson but also addresses the needs of multiple learning styles and abilities.

On the other hand, the traditional approaches are based on the use of language in communicative situations without resort to the native language.

The term natural approach came up in the eighties and according to Krashen merely emphasized that the principles underlying the method were believed to conform to the principles of naturalistic language learning in young children (qtd in Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 179). In this approach there is an emphasis on input rather than practice. This approach mentions that grammar is not the central component of the language, but language is viewed as a vehicle for communicating meanings and messages. This refers to the way students learn and acquire a second language. In addition, Krashen and Terrell stated that "acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language" (qtd in Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 180) the Input Hypothesis (IH) says that an important condition for language acquisition is the acquired input language that contains structure beyond his/her current level of competence in the language. Moreover, Krashen states that "acquisition is the natural and unconscious process that involves the naturalistic development of the language proficiency through understanding language and through using language for meaningful communication (qtd in Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 181). This is an unconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language, not unlike the process used by a child to pick up a language. On the contrary, learning "refers to a process in which conscious rules about the forms of a language are developed" (qtd in Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 181). Learners are generally aware of their own process. Fluency in second language performance is due to what learners have acquired, not what

learners have learned and learning cannot become acquisition. In fact, learning cannot lead to the acquisition of a language.

On the other hand, it is significant to say that teaching should also be students centered where interaction lead them to the improvement of the learning. The Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is an approach that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. These learners can interact and work together with classmates and the teacher as the instructor of the lesson. This approach is according to Olsen and Kagan "group of learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structure exchange of information between leaners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others" (qtd in Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 192). Considering that learners develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially structured situations teachers should provide natural environments in the classroom.

In fact, the teacher must provide cooperative learning activities and group work rather than competition while learning. Richards and Rodgers state that "cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (2001, 195). In this approach the teacher has to create a highly structured and well organized learning environment in the classroom. The teacher should set goals and assign students to group, role and select materials and time. Finally, should teacher provide broad questions to challenge students' thinking.

These approaches guide the selection of materials. The teacher should consider using a textbook as a crucial resource in developing the lesson. Teachers should know what to analyze when selecting textbooks and how to evaluate them by recognizing that this is an ongoing process. In other words, the evaluation process occurs before, during and after the development of materials. This process will also allow teachers to review textbooks that can help learners and teachers to study the language in a more effective way.

When selecting a textbook, the teacher should consider certain aspects such as the cultural component, length, size, and pictures that accompany the text. Does the text line up with the (national standards) national curriculum? These and other considerations can fulfill and develop the students' communicative competences. Textbooks provide teachers with tools that help facilitate the teaching process. Tomlinson, defines a textbook as a book "which provides the core materials for a course and which covers many issues in a single volume" (qtd in Aytug: 2007, 2). This means that these textbooks are prepared according to specific requirements established in a country or by private organizations. These guidelines can be used to design textbooks to teach subjects such as science, reading, listening or any other subject according to the level of the student. Textbooks are designed to be used around the world without consideration for specific cultural aspects, pedagogical needs, or social context within a given country. These types of textbooks take various aspects of different countries and generalize them to fit any learning situation. The main issue in selecting textbooks is to search for



the appropriateness of the textbook in a particular teaching context. Material designers cannot say whether a textbook is appropriate or not, but textbooks are helpful tools to support the lesson. It is difficult to find a perfect textbook which can be suitable for a particular group of students; this research focuses on analyzing whether or not the textbook is effective in enhancing the students' language skills.

These textbooks for children lead them in the process of learning English when teachers use strategies. Young learners are very active; they process new experiences, ask questions, and try things out, experimenting, practicing over and over until they master new skills. They are always more active and enthusiastic than adults because they learn by doing. As Nunan cites, he recommends an approach that encourages students to become active explorers of language (qtd in Cowan: 2008, 34). Children need activities as cooperative work individually or in groups, games, materials as pictures, flashcards realia and natural environments to fulfill their needs. They also learn by listening to music and watching videos, imitating sounds, sentences, gestures, role-playing, singing, playing games, and observing.

2.1 How Children Learn

Children learn differently than adults and they are able to achieve more by doing tasks. It is the teacher's responsibility to create an appropriate classroom environment where children feel comfortable within the group.

Children are always willing to do what the teacher asks them to do. They usually seem less embarrassed than adults when speaking a new language. Teachers must think about the language they teach, and the activities they use in the classroom. As expressed by Cameron "children are more enthusiastic and lively as learners, they want to please the teacher rather than their peer group" (2001, 1). Students act naturally in each environment where pedagogical activities are provided. They do not feel discouraged by inappropriate comments of other students in the classroom. Moreover, successful lessons and activities are the ones that are tuned to the needs of the students rather than to the interests of the teacher. Providing interactive activities enhances the student's English communication skills. Teachers should design activities that help the learners to complete the assigned task to develop specific skills. Also, teachers can support children's learning by creating a friendly environment in the classroom and making them feel more comfortable and happy in class. Additionally, students construct knowledge from actively interacting with the natural environment in developmental stages. They learn through social interaction or through their own individual actions or exploration.

In regards to learning a second language, students can learn without difficulty as Cameron cites, "young children can learn a second language particularly effectively before puberty because their brains are still able to use the mechanisms that assisted first language acquisition..." (2001, 13) The teacher can use interactive classroom techniques to give students a chance to

build their oral language proficiency. Students can practice using English in meaningful and communicative contexts with the teacher's guidance and feedback. Therefore, it is especially important that teachers provide opportunities for students to produce English in the classroom. Reynolds in addition states, "Learning is to be understood as a rational, a biological, perceptual and emotional process, and children develop learning capabilities through the stimulating of all these processes" (2). In the case of teachers they should stimulate all of the positive actions children undertake in the classroom such as the accomplishment of duties and responsibilities.

Rewarding students for their good class work will motivate them to improve their skills for learning. Further, Learning takes place in the brain through all input received from the outside and then, intelligence is developed from what was learned (Krashen, 1896). Holt states that, "school becomes a place in which all children grow, not just in size, not even in knowledge, but in curiosity, courage, confidence, independence, resourcefulness, resilience, patience, competence, and understanding" (1967, 1). At school levels, students begin to trust their friends, classmates and teachers. The learners gain independence and self-control and learn to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways.

Children learn from the experiences they acquire in their life or through actions they see from others. Everything they do in their life will result in either a positive or negative action. In other words, experience is not what happens to them, experience is how children respond to those actions that happen to

them. What teachers should do is simply provide them with tools that can help them face situations in which they have to use their foreign language skills for specific purposes.

Thus, students are generally aware of their own process of learning; nonetheless, fluency in foreign language performance is due to what learners have acquired, not what they have learned. Learning cannot become acquisition but is used to strengthen large acquisition activities in the classroom. Krashen defines learning as, "a conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. Learning is knowing about a language, which is knowing about rules" (qtd in Gass and Selinker: 2001, 198, 199). In fact, learning is not only knowing the language, but knowing about the language being used. Then, acquisition is:

A process, similar to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process in which learners are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication (qtd in Gass and Selinker: 2001, 198).

They do not learn grammar structures; they just produce them gradually, to later acquire the native speaker rules. Brown cites that "children can comprehend and incredible quantity of linguistic input [...] they internalize increasingly complex structures, expand their vocabulary, and sharpen

communicative skills" (2000, 21). This process of acquisition is subconscious and an intuitive process of constructing the system of the foreign language in which learners are immersed. Concerning the construction of a system, this occurs because students reorganize their existing knowledge in order to restructure new knowledge.

On the other hand, learning takes place by memorizing and hearing explanations or rules of grammar structures. Students can identify patterns when they play memory games, and then store those patterns or rules in output knowledge where they can start communicating ideas verbally by following those memorized rules. Ellis states, "Learning takes place when learners have the opportunity to practice making the correct response to given stimulus" (2005, 31). Then, teachers should develop strategies that trigger students' linguistic competences. Each strategy used by educators can be applicable in developing each of the four skills according to the teachers' or learners' needs, providing input for listening, speaking, reading and writing. Textbooks remain at the core of many language teaching throughout the world. In fact, teachers must design materials that can meet their objectives and use textbooks that can be suitable for the students in terms of price, images, length size, authentic readings, culture, content, context and communicative activities. Textbooks are an integral part of the educational context in which languages are studied.

2.2 Authentic Materials

Authentic materials expose learners to the target language so that they can learn more naturally. Authentic materials can be defined according to Kilickaya as, "materials designed for native speakers; they are real texts; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language" (2004, 62, 63). The importance of authentic materials is that they increase student's motivation for learning and expose learners to the foreign language.

Finally, materials could include realia (real objects) such as pencils, videos, flashcards, people, pictures, games, technological devices and taking the students outside the school. Thus, teachers should incorporate other resources and materials to help students to fulfill their individual learning needs. Textbooks are not perfect and teachers should not stick to only one particular book that is why Cunningsworth argues that "Textbooks are ... a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who are yet to gain confidence" (qtd in Tok: 2010, 508). Materials evaluation plays such an important role in language teaching that its potential for influencing the way teachers operate is considerable. Materials evaluation should enable teachers to develop awareness of their own teaching learning situation.

2.3 Importance of Using a Textbook

Textbooks are the main core that guides teachers to develop the lesson and the main tool that the students will use during the development of each lesson.

Tok comments that, "Textbooks are the mostly used teaching and learning materials for both teachers and the learners. They do not only provide a framework for teachers in achieving the aims and objectives of the course, but also serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting lessons" (2010, 508). Textbooks are of an acceptable standard or level of quality and appropriate for the learners with whom they are being used. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that educators establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks that they use in their language classrooms. English language textbooks are actually ambassadorial cultural artifacts and students should view them as more than mere teaching objects. In this way, learners will improve their language skills by using their textbooks as useful instruments for communication. Brown argues, "The most obvious and most common form of material support for language instruction comes through textbooks to support the success of the teaching learning process" (qtd in Septinawati: 2008, 2). In fact, textbooks as reaching material enable learners to interact with the language and content. Students feel that they are learning a target language as it is used outside the classroom in their natural environment. The role of the teacher is to prepare the students by giving the awareness and necessary skills to understand how the language is used. Likewise, Hycroft states, "one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for learners since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them" (qtd in Tok: 2010, 508).

On the other hand, Roberts observes that the curriculum developer will readily admit the importance of books and other materials in implementing the curriculum. He further states:

The organization of the contents could affect English language learning in a large degree because textbooks constitute the main source of information to which most teachers are enslaved. The organization of textbooks could affect the teaching methods and alternatively the improvement of instruction. The way teachers use textbooks affects the curriculum (qtd in Amuseghan and Olayinka: 2007, 179,180).

In addition, textbooks not only should fit the curriculum but also should be appropriate for the learners in terms of content, needs, environment, activities, and images. Martins states that, "modern textbooks include many images and that the relation between images and text has changed. In modern textbooks, pictures are part of the text, and it is necessary to read texts and images at the same time (qtd in Izquierdo, and Márquez: 2008, 209). This matching between images and texts allows establishing relationship between language and culture, but textbooks should be produced in a social context and in a specific historical moment in order to make possible communicative competences where teachers and students take part of them. Additionally, from a cultural point of view, locally produced textbooks allow the transmission of beliefs and values that serve to strengthen and unify social groups locally and the entire nation. Krishna, mentions that, "A textbook should have

sufficient number of pictures to make the situation more life-like" (2005, 79). Pictures can help learners to expand their perception of life. Students can also contextualize pictures to their daily life and if pictures are contextualized to the students' natural environment this contextualization could be more appropriate for the creation of new teaching styles and students' learning.

Williams points out that, "the textbook should provide appropriate guidance for the teacher of English who is not a native speaker of English (1983, 252). In other words, textbooks provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as formats that teachers can use. Williams also adds that the textbook "is a tool and the teacher must know not only how to use it, but how useful it can be... distinguishing between method in the use of printed materials and method in face-to-face teaching" (1983, 254). It is crucial to know that, learning how to use and adapt textbooks is thus, an important part of a teacher's professional knowledge.

Appropriate textbooks for the students' level which at the same time will make them feel comfortable because they will be able to solve the exercises or at least may understand most of the activities in the books. O'Neill has indicated that, "textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation" (qtd in Litz: 2001, 5). Textbooks are helpful tools to work with the class; however, the selection of them according to Chambers cannot be an easy process. He says, "It might be useful to include all the teaching team in the text

decision process” (qtd in Aytug: 2007, 3). This according to the author, may expand to a broader vision of the needs of the students considering cultural, social, economical, educational, and cognitive aspects. The teachers and the head department⁹ together will realize whether or not the textbook is suitable and their ideas will not be limited when making decisions.

In fact, McGrath emphasizes that teachers need to develop the ability to evaluate materials based on the teaching learning context. He points out that, “less time will have to be spent on adaptation and supplementation of the textbook if there is a process of evaluation” (qtd in Fredriksson and Olsson: 2006, 13). To summarize, the selection of textbooks should be closely related to the learners’ and teachers’ expectations in order to avoid mistakes such as the mismatch between the content and the curriculum, or the student’s English level and the level proposed by the book.

2.4 Textbook Evaluation

Textbooks take part of a very vital function in the process of language teaching and learning. In some cases, textbooks become the language input that students receive and the language output they use in the classroom. Stray defines textbooks as “a book designed to provide authoritative pedagogic version of an area of knowledge (1994, 2)”. Indeed, textbooks materials become the sources required by teachers for guiding their lessons. In this regard, McGrath cites that, “Textbooks materials include those that have been

⁹ Principal, regional advisor, supervisor, and team of teachers of English.

either specifically designed for language learning and teaching and authentic materials that have been specially selected and exploited for teaching purposes by the classroom and teachers" (2002, 7). In fact, textbooks provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as formats that teachers can use.

Nunan refers to materials evaluation as "an educational necessity because it shows how a textbook can be improved or justified" (qtd in Alamri: 2008, 3). The purpose of materials is to increase and strengthen the students' knowledge during the process of teaching and learning. However, it is essential to mention that materials can help teachers realize that they are also material developers since they can create their own materials for teaching a specific group of students.

Grant adds that, "the textbook should meet the needs of the learners by addressing their interests and abilities and it should also be consistent with the teaching style of a teacher" (qtd in Aytug: 2007, 15). In other words, textbooks not only can become the main source for developing the lesson, but they can also orient teachers to what they have to do in their lessons by being aware of supplying what the students really need.

To sum up, materials evaluation should have an important impact on learners because they are the main sources that the teacher may use to improve students' English proficiency level in every day class. Teaching materials have a direct influence on the process of learning and teaching because they lead the students to learn by doing. Nunan also states that

materials are “an essential element within the curriculum [...] They provide concrete models for desirable classroom practice, act as curriculum models and at their very best they fulfill a teacher development role” (qtd in Alamri: 2008, 3). Textbooks are materials in the hands of teachers and they must know not only how to use them, but also how useful they can be for an effective lesson. Textbooks can serve as the basis for much of the language input that learners receive in the teaching learning process that occurs in the classroom. In other situations, textbooks may serve primarily to complement the teacher’s instruction and should not only be evaluated before being used, but constantly while using it as well as after use.

2.5 Students Centered Methodology

As MEP suggests, the methodology should be student– centered in which the learners’ need, interests and cultures have to be considered. The teacher should organize and guide the learning situations. However, for many educators creating, adapting, and adopting materials is a real challenge because it is not just that teachers should design but also that the materials must be suitable to the learners’ needs, teaching objectives and learning principles.

In regards to the students as the center of the lesson, the English curriculum of Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Education for fourth grade groups¹⁰ states:

Every individual is capable of achieving his/her full potential. This means interacting harmoniously with his/ her surroundings as s/he develops the three areas of human development: Cognitive linguistic, Socio-affective and Psycho- motor and also to achieve communicative competence” (National English Syllabus for Second Cycle¹¹: 2005, 18).

The goal of the English curriculum is the acquisition of communication skills to foster real communication in and out of the classroom. The teachers should encourage the students' creative thinking skills, so they can solve communication problems by using the language, but the situations should be suitable for the students' age, level in school and language proficiency. For this purpose, teachers should provide students with real life situations to help them solve any communication problem.

10 This English curriculum has been designed for fourth graders around the country to be taught in public elementary schools. What teachers should do is adequate it according to the place where they teach. In this case the English teacher is using the syllabus to teach to two fourth grade groups at Finca Seis Elementary School.

11 Spanish translation, "Programa de Estudios de Inglés para II ciclo". In addition, Second cycle means students who are in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade in elementary school and whose ages range are from seven to nine years old.

III Methodology

This section reveals the methods and research instruments that were used to collect and interpret the data for assuring the quality of the research. Then, the instruments used to present the information gathered during the research process. The instruments used to measure the effectiveness of the textbook for both the teacher and the students were unstructured interviews, closed questionnaires, field notes, participant and nonparticipant observations, rating scales, checklists, artifacts, and photoethnography.

In education, qualitative research seems to provide tools that contribute to the development of knowledge not only of the teachers, but also of the students in their daily life situations. This research was essentially based on the emergent grounded theory study. Hernández, Fernández and Baptista state that this type of research poses "interpretative wealth, provides new visions of a phenomenon, and also explains the levels of action of the participant in the field" (2006, 687). In this qualitative research it is important to identify what the relationships between the students and the teachers are. Due to this, the researcher's goal is to offer software in which students can develop their skills as to test how much they have learned from the content of the book, which at the same time is central to education in promoting the learning of a new language. In other words, the software is a wrap – up activity that has to be developed after each unit of the book is covered.

3.1 Description of the Type of Research

This study is mainly a qualitative study because the researcher follows the principles of collecting data from the students' natural environment. The information was gathered from unstructured interviews, closed questionnaires, field notes, participant and non participant observations, rating scales, checklists, artifacts and photoethnography.

This type of research may be considered as an emergent grounded theory study because as Hernández, Fernández and Baptista mention that, "grounded theory generates a theory that explains a conceptual level, action, interaction or a specific area... it also poses interpretative wealth and provides new visions of a phenomenon" (2006, 686). In other words, this type of research design aims to develop theory based on data to be applied to specific areas in which individuals can elaborate a well supported and valid theory. Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, in addition state that "each theoretical proposition emerges from the data gathered during the research process instead of the previous studies" (2006, 687). Likewise, the researcher must be an open minded and sensible individual to any type of data or information gathered from the learners or other sources of information. This open minded process begins with the researcher; he may start establishing linkages and relationship between the students, the teachers, the institution, the policies of the Ministry of Education, and the publisher of the textbook "Play and Learn" to determine if there is a match between them. Creswell points out that

“grounded theory is useful when other types of researches do not explain the phenomenon or the statement of the problem...” (qtd in Hernández, Fernández and Baptista: 2006, 687). That is why grounded theory goes far from basic elements of theory to understand the social process of individuals when interacting in natural environments to understand the phenomenon emerged. Using English as a foreign language insight may help students create knowledge about who they are and how to interact with each other in a society in which they establish their own rules to enter social contact, with themselves and other individuals.

On the whole, this research aims to provide valid information that can help teachers, students, and the publishing house to evaluate the appropriateness and suitability of English textbooks during the teaching and learning process. This theory further, “goes beyond to find new paths to understand the social processes in a natural environment and also gives direction and a thorough value to the evaluation of the data” (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista: 2006, 688). That is why the researcher should also define what the most appropriate instruments to collect the data are. Once the information needed is gathered from the informants' natural environment, it is necessary to interpret the information in the most precise and objective way. The researcher must give a well grounded theory to the results.

3.2 The Setting

The site where this research was developed is Finca Seis. This is a small neighborhood located in down town Río Frío, Horquetas, Sarapiquí, Heredia, Costa Rica. Río Frío is a neighborhood that belongs to the district of Horquetas in Sarapiquí. In addition, Sarapiquí was established as a county on November 8th 1970 with a total population of 45434¹² people. Its towns are small and its economy is based on farming and livestock. It is near the Sarapiquí River from which tourism¹³ is coming up through years. The town of Río Frío is located in the northeast of Heredia province and around five thousand people live there.

In 1968 the Standard Fruit Company¹⁴ arrived to Río Frío and that was the beginning of a mass of people coming to this small town. The company started building "Baches¹⁵" for those people who came from different places in the country. Many people from Guanacaste and Perez Zeledón moved to Río Frío. It is necessary to mention that Río Frío is a town that has been developed by immigrants from different provinces in the country.

Later on, in 1996 The Standard Fruit Company decided to sell all of the baches to its employees and provided water and the collection of garbage for them. Finca Seis is the main town in Río Frío where the main services can be

12 Data gathered from http://www.sirzee.itcr.ac.cr/modules.php?op=modload&name=PRINCIPAL_CANTONES&file=Sarapiqui# information updated until 2004.

13 Tourist activities such as rafting, canopy, horseback riding, bird watching, rappel, biking, and rain forest hotels.

14 The Standard Fruit Company is an international company that came from the United States and its main purpose was to grow bananas to be exported to other countries around the world.

15 Small houses for laborers who worked for the Standard Fruit Company in Río Frío

found. Some of these services are one clinic for medical and social security services (Ebais).¹⁶, three private medical centers, five big supermarkets, two public banks, one office of the National Institute of Electricity (ICE) which provides services such as electricity, public and residential telephones and Internet services, one gas station, two mini malls, two bakeries, two big hardware stores, one main library, one soccer field with a synthetic floor, one natural soccer field, three big restaurants, fifteen stores, one catholic church, two evangelical churches, one church of Jehovah Witness, more than four small grocery stores, electricity and other services.

In regards to means of transportation, Finca Seis has rural bus service that goes from Finca Seis to all the surrounding places and from Finca Seis to San Jose¹⁷. There is a very important bus line called Transportes de buses Caribeños,¹⁸ Finca Seis also has transportation for all students who are in El Liceo de Río Frío High School not only during the day but also at night. People have cars, motorcycles, trucks, and many bikes. Finca Seis is a place that has grown very fast in terms of infrastructure and academic possibilities. In addition, Universidad Nacional¹⁹, Sarapiquí Campus was established there three years ago which will contribute to the development of this town and mostly those places that belong to the county of Sarapiquí such as La Virgen,

16 A kind of hospital but smaller

17 San Jose is the Capital of Costa Rica

18 The biggest national company bus in Costa Rica. This company goes from Limon to San José including the county of Sarapiquí.

19 This is one of the most important public Universities in the country.

Puerto Viejo, Horquetas, and some others such as Guápiles, Siquirres, Guácimo, Cariari, Jiménez, and San Carlos.

The town of Río Frío was created because of the number of jobs provided by the Standard Fruit Company to workers. Río Frío constitutes the second most important site for exporting bananas to foreign countries such as The United States and Europe. This situation enticed to high politicians to visit the place and foster new opportunities that could develop the community. For this reason, in 2007 ex-president of Costa Rica Dr Oscar Arias Sánchez visited Río Frío and promoted a program called Centro de Inteligencia Tecnológica (CIT) which intends to provide people from this community with a public computer lab in the main library at down town Río Frío. Furthermore, some experts in the branch of technology at Universidad Nacional Sarapiquí Campus train people in Sarapiquí who really want to get not only a diploma that certifies them as people with abilities to work with computers in public or provide institutions, but also those people who did not have an opportunity to study. In fact, these people who could not study will develop their different skills and their academic educational level.

3.2.1 Finca Seis School²⁰

Finca Seis School has a total area of 4770.28 square meters from which 70% of this area is almost built. Further, each classroom is 39.5 square

²⁰ The following information was taken from Finca Seis Institutional Plan 2011

meters size. This is a public institution that was established in 1969. Finca Seis School belongs to the educational region of Sarapiquí and has been categorized as a D3²¹ school. Moreover, the school board has a principal, a secretary, two teachers of kinder garden, four teachers of special needs²², six teachers for first and second cycle²³, two teachers of English, one religion teacher, one computer teacher, two janitors, two cooks, and one security guard. Following is a photo of the main entrance at Finca Seis School.



Picture N° 1
Finca Seis Elementary School
The school where the research took place

After describing Finca Seis School in terms of infrastructure and employees, it is important to show a list of the people that work for this public institution. The chart below describes them in a more specific way. This chart includes the entire population of workers. This means, the principal, assistant, teachers of all subjects, librarian, janitors, cooks, security guard and door keeper.

21 This is a category given to the school which means that the enrollment of students go from 250 to 380 students.

22 Curricular adaptations and learning disabilities

23 First cycle means 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade and second cycle means 4th, 5th, and 6th grade.

Exhibit N° 1

School Board 2011



Puesto	NOMBRE	CÉDULA	DIRECCIÓN	TELÉFONO
Director	Franklin Solano Castro	5268099	Finca Diez Río Frío Sarapiquí	27645356 88830968
Asistente de director	Margoth Mora Rojas	1614287	Finca Seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	27643952 88757968
ET	Silvia Esquivel Ugalde	4186842	San José de la Montaña Heredia	22661251 83052665
Materno	Karen Quesada Paniagua	4182674	Horquetas	27641048 83197309
Kínder	Lorena Hernández Sánchez	4146295	Finca Seis Río Frío	27644853 83770607
Aula Integrada	Herlinda Gamboa Herrera	2637063	Finca Seis	89806910 24605872
Problemas de Emocionales	María José Rodríguez Castillo	11226117	Finca Seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	27642384 88985807
Problemas de aprendizaje	José Fina Suazo García	5208116	San Bernardino	27641794 88820478
Retardo Mental	Yamileth Ramirez Madrigal	6248671	Finca Dos	27645412 86647028
Primer grado	Michelle Castro Molina	7140615	Finca Cuatro	88210716 27644994
Segundo grado	Ana Yansy Mendoza Hernández	5268258	Finca seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	27644994 88349234
Tercer grado	Marjorie Mora Cross	8074150	Finca Dos	27643874 87952953
Cuarto grado	Alexandra Vargas Alpízar	1574681	La Victoria	27644704 87485226
Quinto grado	Karen Carmona Miranda	1855384	Finca Once Río Frío Sarapiquí	27644428 87203039
Sexto grado	Gerardo Vega Zamora	1861635	Horquetas	88389481

Informática	Alcides Enriquez Paniagua	2603180	Puerto Viejo centro	27667041 83398961
Religión	Julio Espinoza Rodríguez	2547595	Inca Seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	88715663 27645728
Inglés	Enith Zeledón Valverde	5311906	Finca Seis	89383183
Inglés	Daniela Salas Mora	2653620	El Cruce Río frío Sarapiquí	27644722 87292731
Bibliotecóloga	Karen Marín Sirias	2523614	Finca Seis	27644861
Conserje	Jeanette Murillo Herrera	2356988	La Victoria Río Frío Sarapiquí	27644280 86668694
Conserje	Olga Cabezas Mora	1653399	La Victoria Río Frío Sarapiquí	27643614 86668642
Jefa de Cocina	Marlene Mora Morales	6199442	Finca Seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	27641744 88559784
Cocinera	Marcela Villalobos L	4159670		27645636
Cocinera	María Adilia Vega G	4159965	La Victoria	27642304
Guarda	Miguel Reyes Martínez	4139468	Finca Seis Río Frío Sarapiquí	87038528
Soda	Maira Araya Bolaños	2465955	Finca Dos	27646083

Finca Seis Institucional Plan 2011

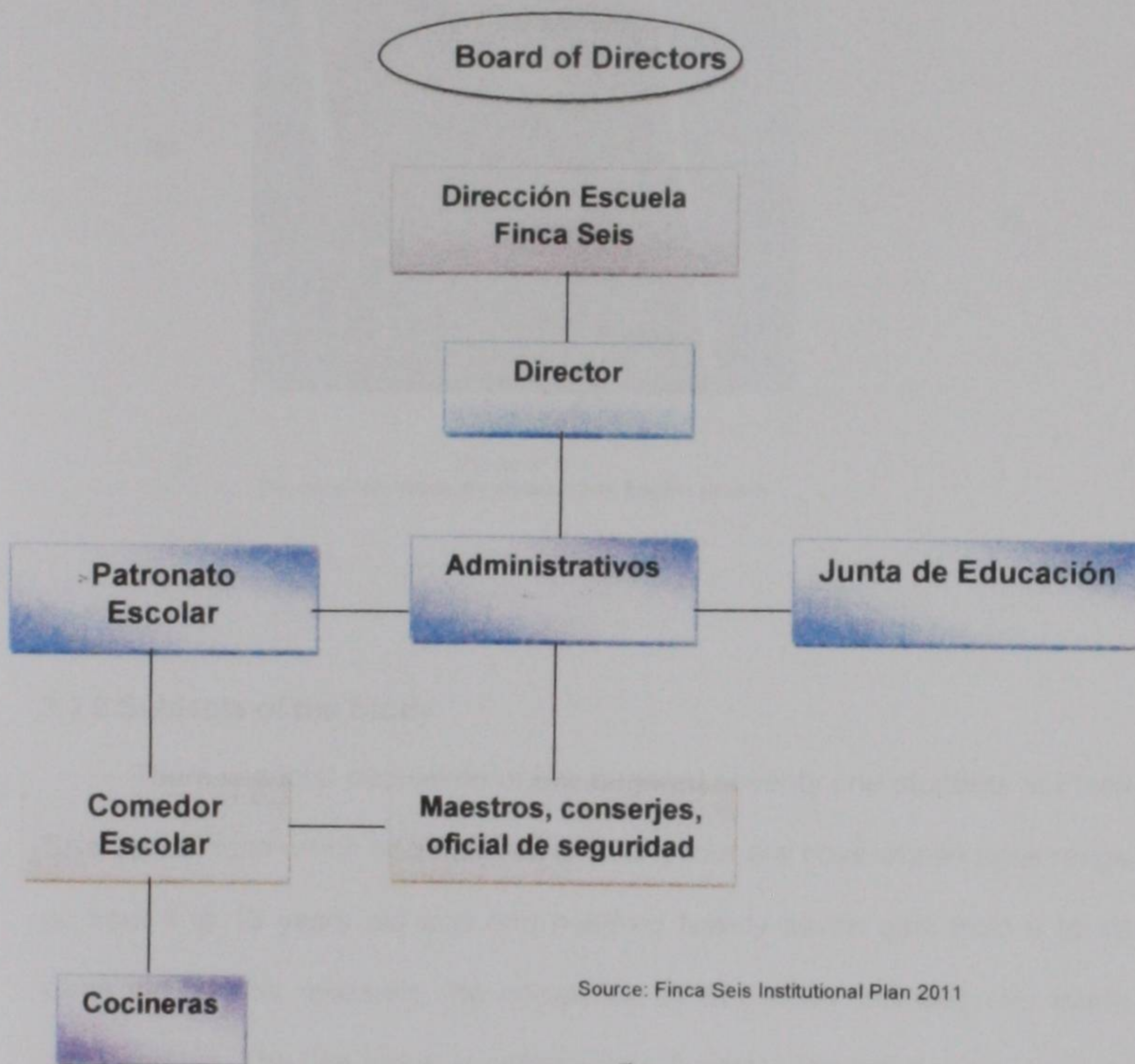
Finally, it is crucial to present the academic performance of the students during the year 2010. Finca Seis School performance is over the national mean²⁴. This is a challenge for the institution to improve their performance each year. In regards to the English department the performance is a lot better from the rest of the subjects such as science, math, social studies, Spanish,

²⁴ It is the balance point. It is the most commonly used measure of central tendency because it takes the score. In other words it is the average.

religion class, computer class, agriculture, and others. This is due to the quality of educators at Finca Seis School according to the institutional plan.

Following is the description of the board of directors at Finca Seis School and a picture of the classroom where this research took place.

Exhibit N° 2



Source: Finca Seis Institutional Plan 2011



Picture N° 2
The classroom where the students take English classes

3.2.2 Subjects of the Study

There is a total population of two hundred seventy one students at Finca Seis School from which one hundred and forty four are boys whose ages range go from 6 to 13 years old and one hundred twenty seven girls from 6 to 13 years old. In this research, the population of this study includes two fourth grade groups. The first group is called group A, with a total of sixteen students from which eleven are females and five are males and their ages range are from 9 to 11 years old. The other group is called group B, and there are

eighteen students from which twelve are females and six are males and their ages are from 9 to 11 years old and their English proficiency level is low beginners. These students have been taking English since they were in first grade and some of them have taken private English classes.

A few parents of the learners have very low income which has become a limitation for some of the students to buy materials when the teacher asks them to buy those required by the course. These learners' parents work for the Standard Fruit Company or TropiFrost²⁵ which are private companies. However, there are other parents who work as elementary school or high school teachers, managers, secretaries, principals, nurses or they have any other administrative position for any public or private institution²⁶. An important aspect to be considered is that some of these students have the economical support given by the government of Costa Rica.

In general, most of the parents' economical situation is good because most of them have stable jobs or tenure positions. In contrast, there are few of them whose jobs are temporary. Most of these are responsible, respectful and honest. Also, they get along well with each other. These aspects affect the students to have a variety of behaviors at school.

25 A Pineapple Company

26 Pineapple, Banana Company, public Banks, clinics, and supermarkets.

3.2.2.1 Attendance List

In the chart bellow there is the attendance list with the learner's real names and the way they have been coded for them to be identified during the process of this research. In other words, the students were assigned a specific code or "nickname" in order to protect their identity during the study. To do so, the researcher used the following technique. For group "A" the first letter of the students' names was taken and for those cases where the letter was repeated a number was added to make a distinction between them. For example: Juliana = J1, José = "J2". Further, for group "B" The first two or three letters of each student's name was taken and for those cases where the letters were repeated a number was added to make a distinction between them. For example, Yeilin = "Ye1", Yerlin = "Ye2".

Exhibit N° 3

Finca Seis School

Fourth Grade Groups

Regular Teacher: Licda Alexandra Vargas Alpizar

Teacher of English: Licda Daniela Salas Mora

Nº	Group A	Code	Nº	Group B	Code
1	Angulo Carpio Juliana	J1	1	Alfaro Rodríguez Maykel	Ma1
2	Araya Azofeifa Stacy	S	2	Barquero Mendoza Walter	Wa
3	Araya Mena Evelyn	E	3	Cruz Villegas Yeilin	Ye1
4	Araya Ruiz Osmel	O	4	Elizondo Amaya Reichel	Re
5	Calderón Díaz José David	J2	5	Esquivel Moya Kevin	Ke
6	Castillo López Susana	S1	6	García Jiménez Yanelli	Ya
7	Chaves Villegas Alisson	A1	7	Hernández Sandoval Kristell	Kri
8	Cerdas Aguilar Dilan	D1	8	Mosquera Bolívar Yoxal	Yo
9	Guillén Castillo Diana	D2	9	Morales Alvarado Yerlin	Ye2
10	Monge Corrales Kendall	K	10	Muñoz González M ^o José	Ma2
11	Núñez Gutiérrez Besabeth	B	11	Quintanilla Hernández Joel	Jo
12	Obando Morales Alisson	A2	12	Rosales Murillo Saray Fabiola	Fa
13	Salas Duarte Sharon	S2	13	Salas Rodríguez Marco A	Ma3
14	Sánchez Gamboa Sheila	S3	14	Soto Matarrita Katherine	Ka
15	Vargas Méndez Nicole	N	15	Urbina Manzanares Jeremy	Je
16	Velázquez García José Pilar	J3	16	VillegaS Marín Wendy	We
			17	Saenz Hidalgo Moserrath	Mo
			18	Rodríguez Leiva Anthony	An

Source: Attendance List provided by the Teacher of English

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

For the purpose of this study, the following data collection instruments were used: structured interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, field notes, participant and non participant observations, rating scales, checklists, artifacts, photoethnography, and any other document that can help to support the research. These instruments were used to find out whether or not the textbook is effective and suitable for the students to evaluate their language skills at Finca Seis School.

3.3.1 Unstructured Interviews

This type of unstructured interview allowed the researcher to investigate not only the overall effectiveness and suitability of the textbook, but also if this textbook contributes to the development of linguistics competence on the children of fourth grade when learning English as a foreign language at Finca Seis School. Unstructured interview states Wallace, "It is a quite free wheeling and open ended approach that engender a friendly relaxed atmosphere, this does not lack of structure since it has a specific purpose. Therefore, there is a certain degree of freedom with a certain degree of control" (1998, 47). The researcher used this instrument because this is a way to know, through a face to face conversation, not only what the learners' opinion about the textbook is, but also any other opinion that can become a very valuable information to validate the research . In this regard, LeCompte and Preissle cite, "an interview is a face to face questionnaire" (2003, 160). Through elicitation and personal interaction, the investigator will be

able to obtain data addressing the questions asked in the study to investigate problems that are not directly observable. It is also important to mention that the learners were not aware of being questioned. The interviews took place in the classroom number eight²⁷ at Finca Seis School; some others were at some of the students' houses. Finally, the information gathered from this instrument was analyzed, compared, and contrasted with other data collection instruments through a triangulation process to finally come up with a well-grounded conclusion and recommendation.

3.3.2 Closed Questionnaires

Questionnaires guided this research to get specific information about the influence that the "Play and Learn" textbook has on fourth grade students who are taking English as a foreign language at Finca Seis School. The questions were usually set out in a very systematic way and were more highly structured than interviews. The questionnaires could be answered by reading, writing, or ticking responses. Due to the type of instruments and questions, the researcher was open minded to pay attention to aspects of any type of information (details of information that can help a lot to support the research) that comes from the questionnaires as one of the main elements that provide true data. In this respect Batenson states that:

²⁷ This classroom is located in the first hall, and it is next to the first grade classroom. The students are sat in circles or rows.

In anthropology you usually cannot identify in advance what it will be important to pay attention to [...] one must be opened to the data, to the possibility that very small clues will prove to be critical and that accident will provide pivotal insights... (qtd in LeCompte and Preissle: 2003, 158)

As it was mentioned before, any aspect provided by the informants of the study might be important because these aspects may provide reliability and validity to the different findings of the research. Moreover, this instrument will be carried out again in the classroom number eight at Finca Seis School and some others were at some of the students' houses and the publisher²⁸. Once the information was collected the researcher compared it with the information gathered from the other instruments.

3.3.3 Field Notes

Writing is a stage that occurs in some cases when the researcher has finished each process of observation; however, it also occurs before, while and after the observation stage and is a straightforward process of telling what was done and what conclusions can be drawn. However, the process of research involved many forms of writing; for example, letters, academic papers, and formal research reports. Field notes provided a form through which the interaction of subjective and objective aspects of doing research can be openly acknowledged and brought into a productive relationship. The research field notes explain

²⁸ This information will be gathered via e-mail.

Newbury and Stanley "facilitates the research process through recording, observations, thoughts and questions as they happen, for later use by the researcher, and stimulate reflective thinking about the research" (2001: 2). In other words, field notes can be identified as a vehicle of reliability and validity in the research process to support every single aspect that the researcher needs to explain. In this case, the researcher wrote down information from the different activities that the students did in the school. For instance, there was an activity to celebrate a culture's day and the learners acted out in a show by singing, dancing, and giving a short speech to introduce the activity. Based on that activity, the researcher carried out some field notes to support the findings of this research paper.

3.3.4 Participant and Nonparticipant Observations

Observation was one of the main data collection instruments of research because it led the investigation with a very objective perception of what happened in the field of the research since the learners behaved naturally in the setting. In addition, LeCompte and Preissle add that observation "is the most important aspect of a culture for investigators to consider, because what people say about what they do is less important than what they actually do" (2003, 95).

The nonparticipant observations consisted of having the researcher explore the context where the research took place to assure if they provide important data from the students' natural environment and observe their natural behaviors by trying not to affect the setting. In this sense, the researcher would not modify this

natural environment. LeCompte and Preissle say that in nonparticipant observation "The researcher avoid interrupting to seek clarification [...] and that it is used as the initial exploratory method in addressing problems, topics, and settings" (2003, 205, 206). This process of avoiding interrupting the students' natural environment helped the researcher to be concise and objective from what he/she observe.

Different from nonparticipant observations, participant observations were used to approach the students in order to get more revealing information from them through the different activities the English teacher developed with the textbook and the learners. Burnett explains, "In participants observations researchers watch what people do, listen to what people say, and interact with the informants. Researchers become learners, so as to be socialized by students into the group under investigation" (qtd in LeCompte and Preissle: 2003, 196). Participant observations helped to collect the information from a more precise perspective. These participants and nonparticipants observations carried out from Monday to Thursday which means that the researcher was at school observing the students five times a week, and twice on Tuesdays. This information helped to support the final conclusions of the investigation.

3.3.5 Rating Scales

Rating scales helped the researcher to identify in a more precise way and to elicit information more successfully to interpret and anticipate expected levels of performance of the students while using the textbook. Therefore, rating scales

could help not only the researcher to find out what the weaknesses of the textbook were but also to design support materials to overcome those weaknesses. Through the development of rating scales, students interpreted their own level of language proficiency and know to change to improve and achieve higher standards of communicative competence. Rating scales are descriptive guidelines in which each level of performance is described. Additionally, these rating scales were applied in the classroom number eight to the students and to the English teacher of fourth grade, Daniela Salas Mora. Further, the researcher went to some students' and English teachers' houses from IDA Otoya, El Bambu, Finca Dos Schools, and the publisher²⁹ to apply the rating scales in order to obtain more information compare and contrast with the data gathered from the English teacher and students at Finca Seis School.

3.3.6 Checklists

Checklists are instruments used to measure the level of knowledge or skills people are good at. Through a checklist the researcher, students, and the English teacher could check the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook and see those areas that still need improvement. Checklists were applied to the learners and the English teacher to note whether or not the textbook demonstrates the effectiveness to cover the students' needs to develop their language skills. Checklists are instruments used to measure the reliability and validity of something. In this regard, the researcher applied two different checklists. Two checklists for the students and

²⁹ This information will be gathered via e-mail.

the English teacher at Finca Seis School, two for some students at Finca Dos School, and Two for the English teacher at IDA Otoyá, El Bambu, Finca Dos Schools, and two for the publisher. The purpose of these instruments was to know what the teacher's and students' perspectives about the textbook were to finally come up with an analysis to make sure whether or not the textbook really meets the needs of the students in terms of pedagogical tasks for language skills.

3.3.7 Artifacts

Artifacts are those materials that can be collected from archival materials such as files or just simply directly from the learners such as books, notes or any other material that can give support to the research. Moreover, LeCompte and Preissle mention that artifacts "Constitute data indicating people's sensations, experiences, and knowledge and which connote opinions, values, and feelings. They include symbolic materials such as writing and signs and non-symbolic materials such as tools and furnishings" (2003, 216). After the identification of artifacts and the process of analysis, it should be important to interpret the information elicited from them. It was necessary to evaluate the artifacts collected. Some of the artifacts gathered to elicit the information were photoethnographies, national English syllabus, Institutional plan at Finca Seis School, lesson plans, English tests, textbooks, teacher's guide, copies, recordings, material designed by the students, and letters and other documents provided by the publisher. This process of getting the artifacts took place during the whole process of the

investigation. These artifacts provided reliable information to validate the investigation.

3.3.8 Photoethnography

Some pictures were taken in order to see not only the way teacher works with the textbook when teaching English to the learners, but also some of the tasks and activities students participate in the development of the class. Hawkins says, "Photographs show a blur jumping over a chain-link fence" (2008, 1). According to the anthropology department, photoethnography is, "the study of a specific kind of photography informed by the anthropological knowledge and, as a consequence, engaged in making a detailed list of the cultural and social elements of human groups". Photography is composed of patient observation, and a minute elaboration of different strategies of approaching an object to grasp the event in the moment it takes place. In other words, photoethnography is the art of representing other cultures visually. It can be the realization of an ongoing research project using an ethnographic lens while observing others. The research demonstrated through this artifact the process of the investigation. The researcher took place in and out the classroom, in some of the students' houses, and in some activities in which the pupils have to apply what they learn in the English class.

3.4 Possible Constraints in the Development of the Project

During the development of this research, it is possible that the researcher can find many limitations which could stop the process of investigation unless the researcher finds ways to overcome these limitations. Throughout this process of investigation it is central to inform that due to the fact that this school is a public institution, there may be some changes in the schedule of the institution or both the English or the regular teacher which at the same time may affect not only the students but also the teachers and the researcher. Then, there may also be some changes in the school since he also works for a public institution. These changes caused the researcher to rearrange his schedule to match with the schedule at Finca Seis School. The researcher may also change the sample population due to reasons such as convenience or suggestions from the principal or the English teacher. It is also important to mention that the celebration of school events may stop the observation process. Another necessary aspect to consider is the approval of the principal, the regular teacher, and the English teacher to observe and conduct the investigation in the groups chosen because in some cases someone may object the permission required. One more limitation that can be found is the lack of time (40 minutes per day) to carry out the observations, and the students' attitude or behavior may be affected when observing. Further, the researcher found that the regular teacher has some heart problems and this circumstance may cause classes to be cancelled without previous notification.

Once these limitations were set, the researcher looked for possible solutions to overcome them. First of all, the researcher talked to the English teacher to find

ways to rearrange the schedule if it is required. Second, both the researcher and the English teacher looked for a sample population in which the research can be conducted. For this selection the English teacher had to look for group size, behaviors, time, support of the parents, motivation, family problems, and the researcher requirements such as flexibility of both the English teacher's and the researcher's schedule, group size, and motivation. Third, regarding the forty minutes the English teacher has to teach, there was nothing that can be done because this is part of MEP's policy to teach each group just forty minutes per day. Fourth, considering that the regular teacher is ill³⁰ there were some days in which she did not go to class, but there was solution to this limitation. Finally, regarding the possibility for getting the institutional plan, the researcher talked to the principal and the English teacher and explained the importance of having access to this document to achieve the objectives of the research.

Considering the above limitations and solutions, the researcher must urgently arrange everything to save time and organize this investigation process the best way he can in order to finish the research on time.

³⁰ The regular teacher has many appointments with the doctor because of some heart problems.

IV Presentation and Analysis of Results

Although we are living in a technological world that boost learners to be up today with new sets of innovative tools such as computer laboratories, smart boards, digital portfolios, and videoconferences there is always a need to use innovative approaches to reach new goals. Considering these important technological advances, textbooks are still the most commonly used of source materials for most instructional situations.

This section presents the results and the analysis of the data collected from two fourth grade groups of students at Finca Seis Elementary School in terms of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, teaching methodology, and pedagogical activities like board games, puzzles, crosswords, letter soups, jeopardies, songs, flashcards, videos, pictures, memory games, and extracurricular activities such as extra class assignments to work individually or in groups.

The information gathered from the instruments was described, analyzed, and interpreted. This information was also compared, and contrasted to establish connections and relationships between the information provided from the instruments to process results and draw the conclusions.

4.1 The Textbook

The fourth graders textbook is entitled "Play and Learn" published by Publitex. Publitex is the publishing house which designed these textbooks for teachers of English in Costa Rica. The textbook has seven units and each unit was designed to achieve the contents set by MEP's English department. The content is about Costa Rican social and cultural issues. The textbook focuses mainly on reading and writing basically; as a result, the teacher has to complement the textbook with listening and speaking activities. In other words, the textbook is reading and vocabulary oriented. In addition, the textbook is student-centered since it guides the learners to be more independent because it asks the students to develop the different activities on their own. Some types of activities are for example crosswords, puzzles, letters soups, matching exercises, readings, or mini projects that the teacher assigns to be completed individually or in groups. The English teacher commonly assigns students to make short oral presentations after introducing or concluding each unit which at the same time helps them be more confident in English.

The topics of the units are culturally appropriate because they tell about Costa Ricans' daily life, history, traditions, natural resources, national symbols, holidays, celebrations, and others from which the learners can relate to their life and contextualize them in their own communities. Culture has an influence on students when learning a foreign language. The perception teachers and students have on culture is very important because it leads the students to develop an

interest to learn more about different cultural issues. Learning about the language and its cultural development in society can make learners be aware of the social interaction with other people. Sapir says that culture, "is a way of life. It guides the behavior of people in a community and helps them to know how far they can go as individuals" (qtd in Wang Su-chun: 2007, 5). The use of language in general is related to social and cultural values, language could be considered as a social and cultural phenomenon.

When using a textbook students need to know about the cultural factors that trigger the use of the language where it is spoken. Tang suggests that, "to speak a language well, one has to be able to think in that language. Language is the soul of the country and people who speak it" (qtd in CAKIR: 1999, 155). Language and culture are inextricably linked, and we might think about moving away from questions about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in foreign language curriculum, but students must understand its important for them as learners of a foreign language and the advantages of using it when looking for job opportunities participating in cultural exchanges and traveling.

Culture is not only made up of facts; there are deep structure aspects to take a look at, like people's assumptions, beliefs, verbal and non-verbal communication, concepts of time, customs and traditions. Duranti states that, "to be part of a culture means to share the propositional knowledge and the rules of inference necessary to understand whether certain propositions are true. What one might do is add the procedural knowledge to carry out tasks..." (qtd in Thanasoulas: 2001, 7). Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the

communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted; culture is the foundation of communication.

In fact, culture can be seen as a dynamic system of symbols which help people to understand messages. These symbols are totally different from one town to another and from one nation to another and due to this, learners must learn about the different perspectives of foreign language. Students should be enabled to discuss their native culture with their foreign and native speaking friends at the same time that they are provided with a real experiential content in the classroom and outside of it. Unlike, teachers are often the only language model that students encounter in their language study at school. For this reason, the language (English) teacher has a significant and central role to play in aiding students to acquire both a linguistic and cultural competence in the foreign language.

Furthermore, the textbook also has short readings with some cloze exercises, information questions, filling in the blanks, matching or identification exercises. In addition, the pictures presented in the textbook make reference to the Costa Rican daily life and its natural wealth which exposes learners to different values suggested in the National English Syllabus. However, it does not have any aspect related to culture from other countries which would make the textbook lose credibility because having the students get in contact with the culture where English is spoken can make them be aware of the fact and the importance of learning a foreign language.

4.1.1 Students' Perception of the Textbook "Play and Learn"

In order to teach a foreign language effectively, teachers should look for and design materials that can accomplish the content or reach the objectives of a particular course. One of the most commonly used materials is textbooks and some factors that should be considered about using them in the classroom are for example, price, suitability of content, length of lines, space between lines, activities for the four skills, pedagogical activities, color, pictures and vocabulary

To achieve the objectives of this research, a closed questionnaire was applied to both groups (A and B) in order to find out the students' perception of the textbook. The first question was asked to elicit information about how students' think the book helps in regards to writing activities. The information provided by the students was crucial to understand that the textbook "Play and Learn" enhances English proficiency skills during the teaching and learning process. Following are the graphs with the information provided by the students.

Exhibit N° 4

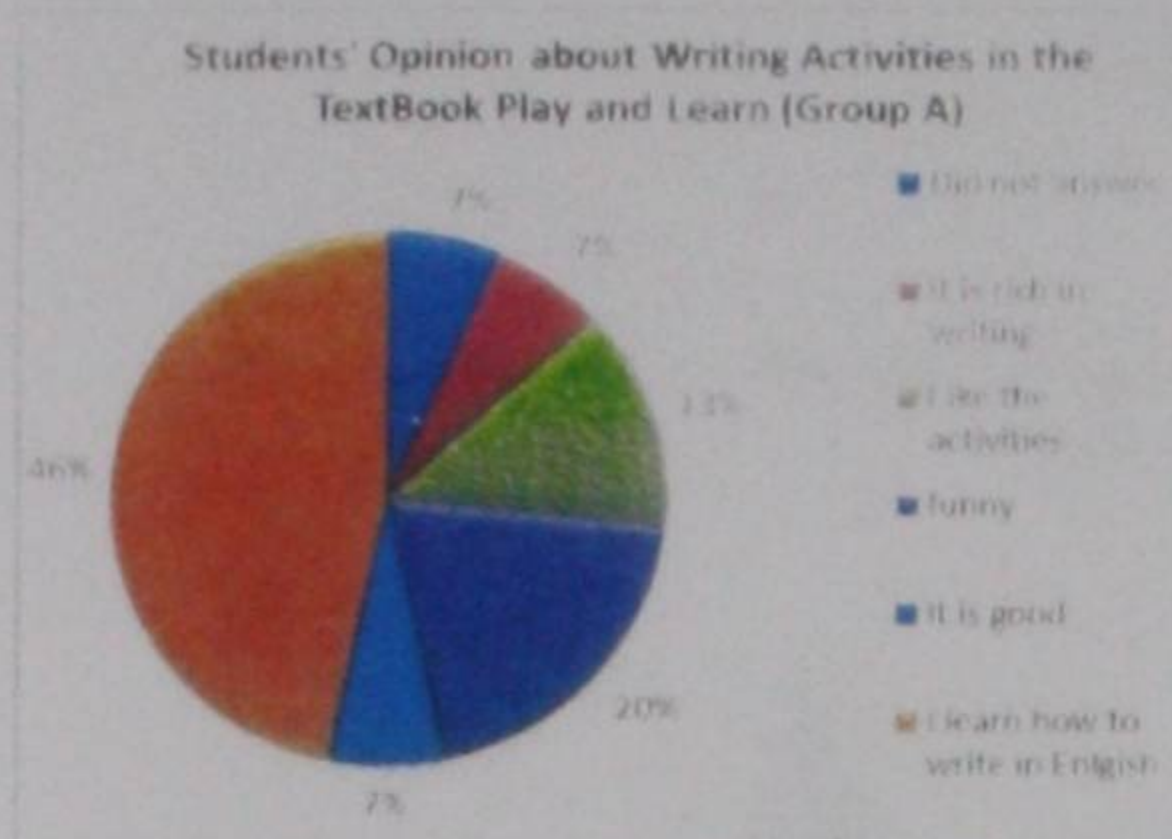
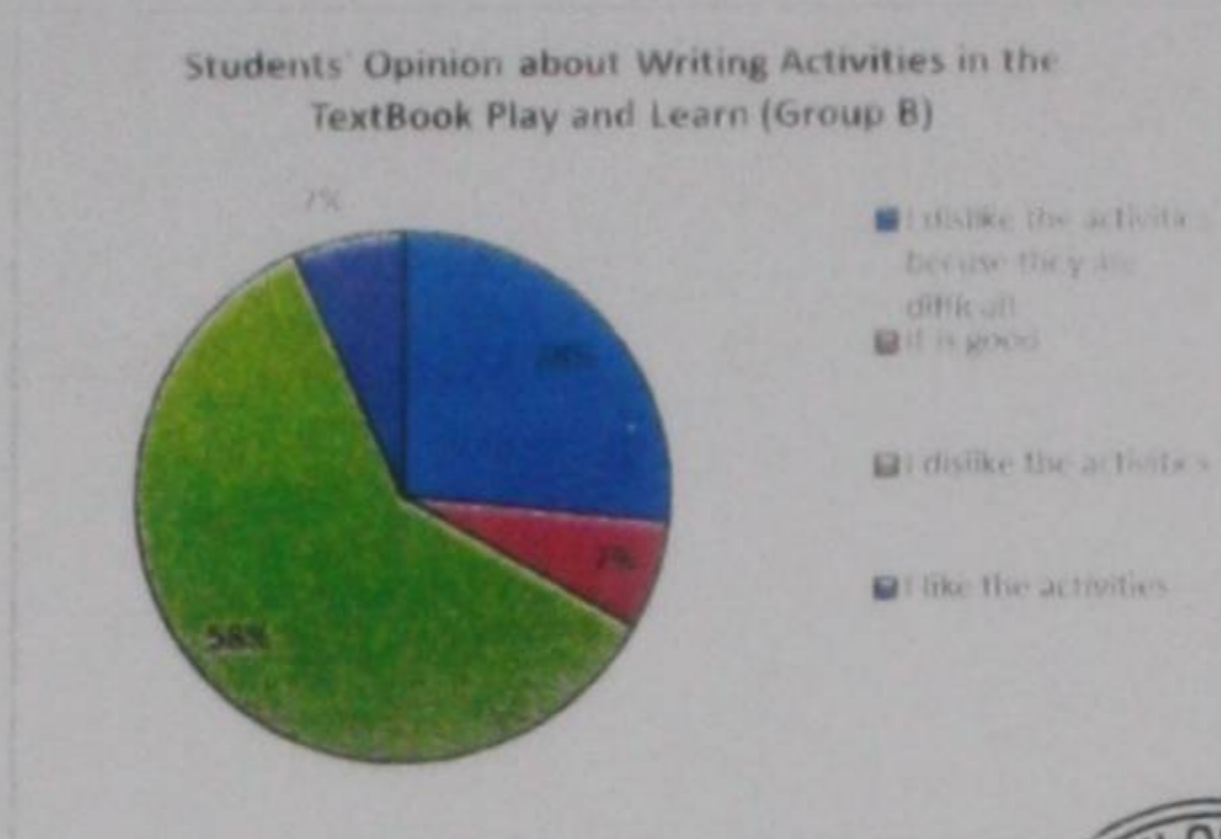


Exhibit N° 5



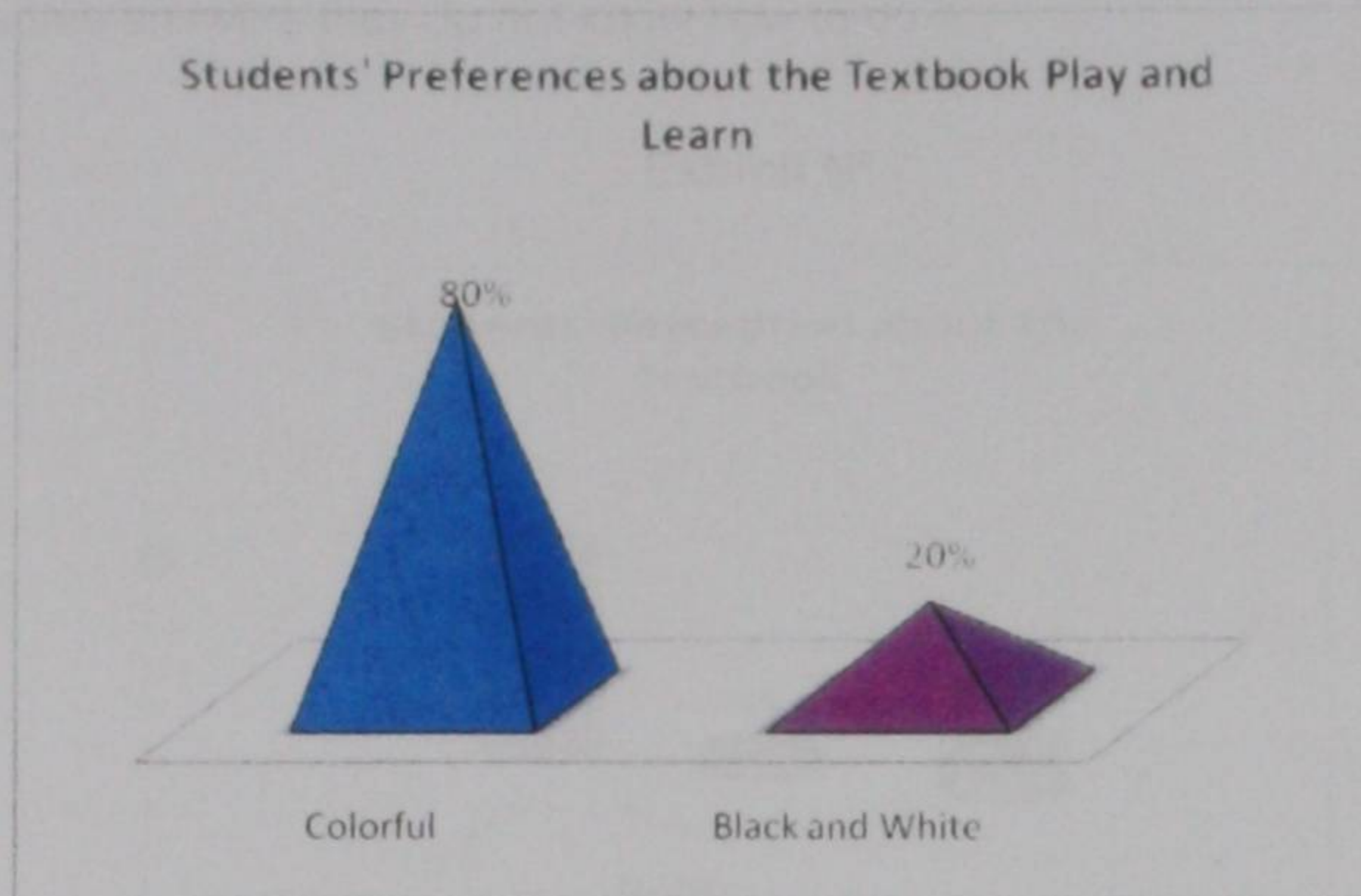
Source: Closed questionnaire for the fourth graders at Finca Seis School



As noticed in the pies above, the students from group A and B gave different opinions concerning the writing activities in the textbook. In both groups there was a sampling population of fifteen students per each, which means that there was a total population of thirty students. In group A, 47% of the students agreed they like the textbook and 46% mentioned that through the textbook they learn how to write in English. These students followed the teacher's suggestions and structures to write short paragraphs. Nevertheless, group B showed that there was 86% of the students who did not like the textbook because the activities for writing and reading are very difficult and they did not understand them.

Likewise, in exhibit N°6 both groups were asked to point out what they prefer from the textbook and about 80% said that they would like to have a more colorful textbook because coloring a black and white book sometimes becomes boring. They also mentioned that a more colorful textbook is more attractive. Moreover, only 20% of the students said they like the book in black and white.

Exhibit N° 6

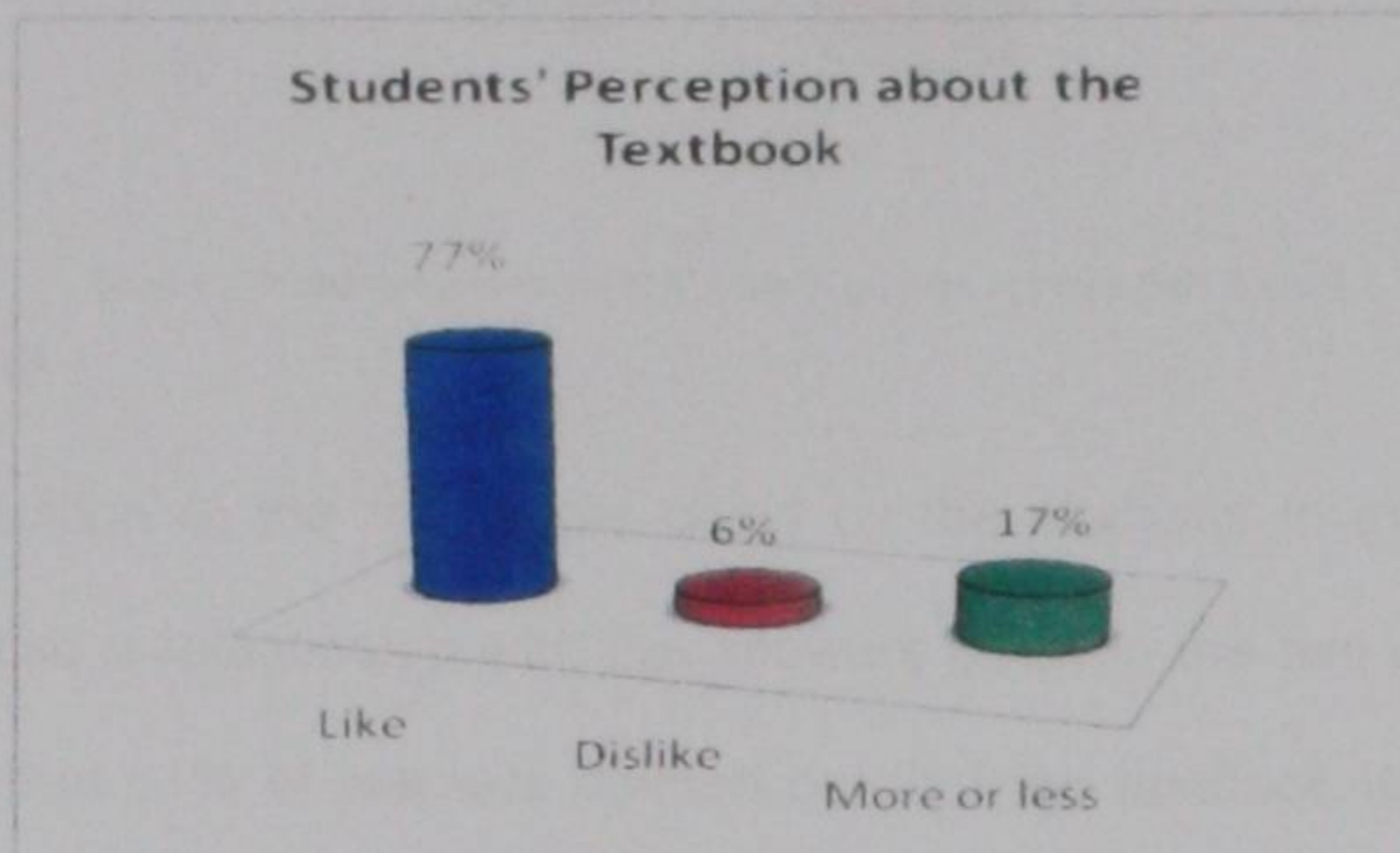


Source: Closed questionnaire for the fourth graders at Finca Seis School

In fact, both groups differ in what they like or what they do not like about the textbook. Group A, for instance, likes the textbook the most because they are aware of the importance of learning English through writing and also because the learning activities are fun. On the contrary, group B mentioned that they do not like the writing activities because they are difficult to understand. The final question was made to find out whether or not the students like or dislike the textbook. Exhibit N°7 indicates that 77% of the students like the textbook because it is entertaining and appropriate for their English level, it has beautiful pictures, and they can color it as it happened in non-participant observation number four which says "student D was asking for some colored pencils to finish the activity in the textbook which was about coloring the picture of a Costa Rican typical dress".

Then, 17% agreed that they like the book somehow because it is black and white and they have to color it. Finally 6% mentioned they do not like the textbook because the readings are difficult to understand and when they have to read or write some answers they do not know how to do it.

Exhibit N° 7

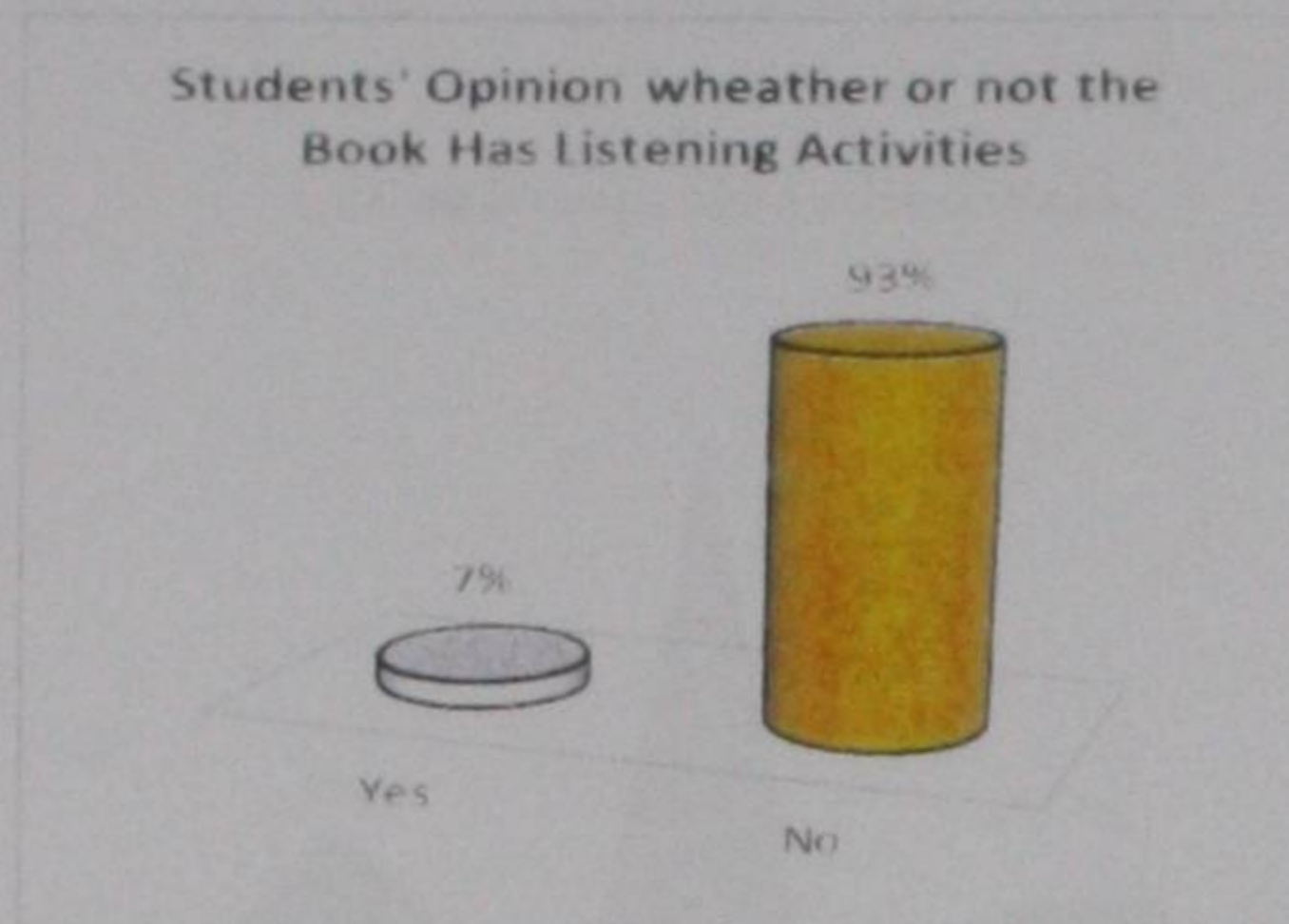


Source: Closed questionnaire for the fourth graders at Finca Seis School

4.2 A Micro Evaluation of Language Skills

Another aspect of the textbook is the skills it emphasizes to work on, as well as the skills developed by the teacher during the development of the lesson. Comparing and analyzing the questionnaires and the checklists, it was found that the textbook "Play and Learn" lacks listening activities as shown in exhibit N°8. The learners were asked for their opinions about whether or not the textbook has listening activities. Moreover, 93% said that the textbook does not have listening activities and 7% said the teacher supplies it when she speak in English

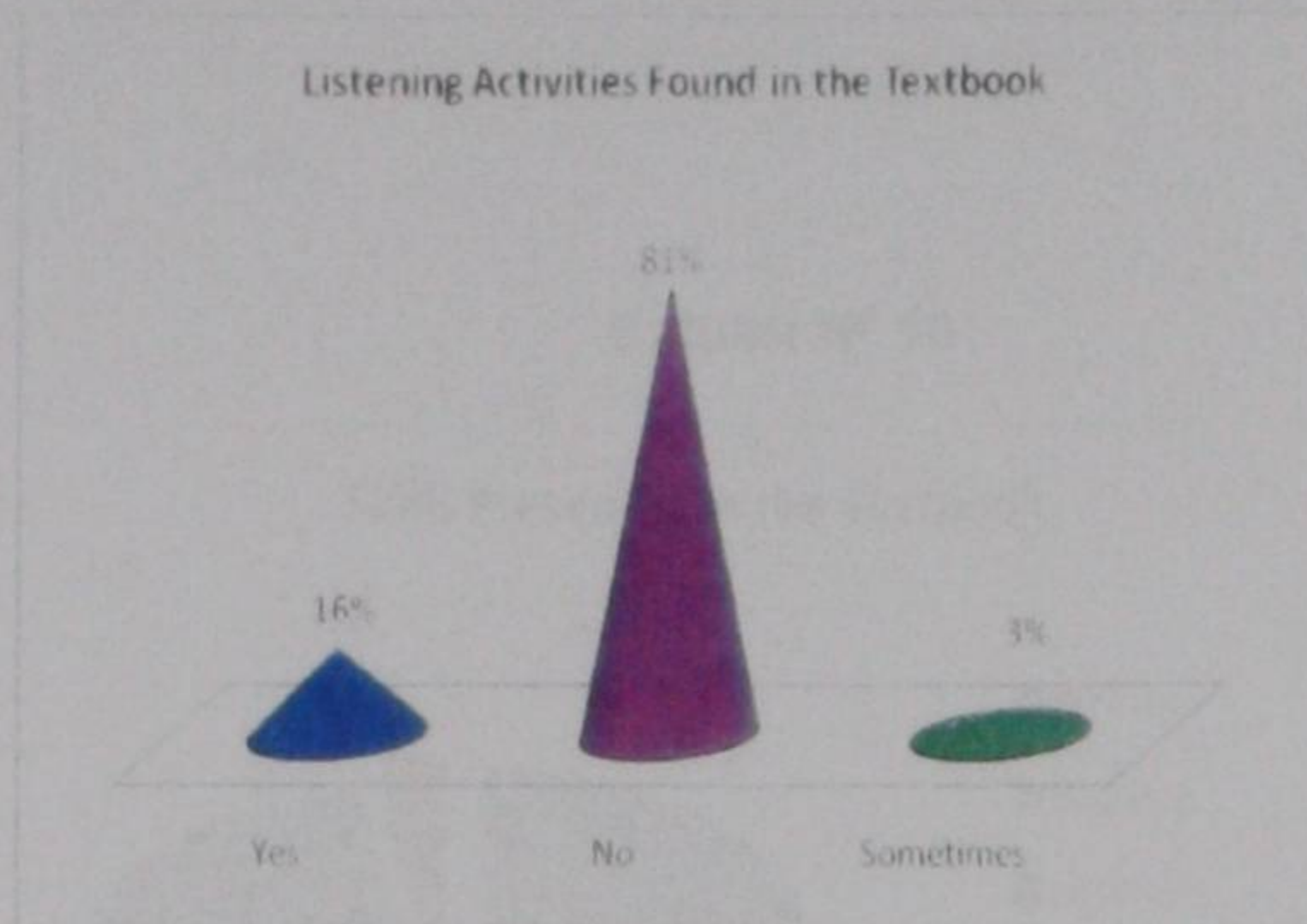
Exhibit N° 8



Source: Closed questionnaire for the fourth graders at Finca Seis School

In addition to the responses given by the students in the questionnaires, there was also a relationship with the answers given in the two checklists. Exhibit N°9 shows that 81% of learners pointed out that the textbook does not have any listening activities. This information was gathered from the second checklist and from question N° 7 that asked if there were listening activities in the textbook.

Exhibit N° 9



Source: Checklist for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

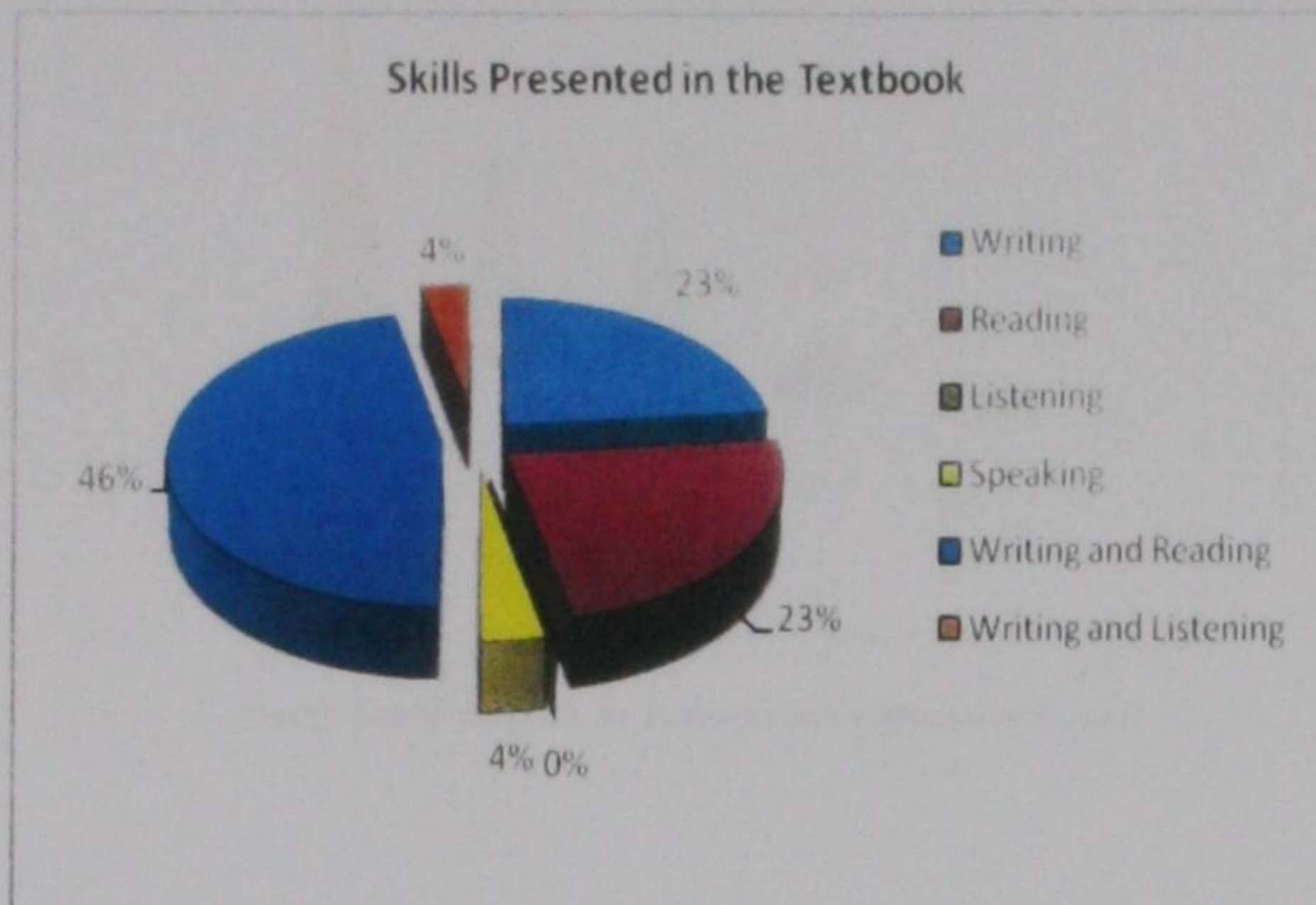
It was also necessary to mention what the English teachers' opinions were about the listening activities of the book. Firstly, the English teacher at Finca Seis School said that the book does not have listening activities and what she does is to create listening tasks when developing oral presentations with the students. Secondly, the English teacher from El Cruce School mentioned that the textbook does not have listening activities. Thirdly, the English teacher from IDA Otoyá School and Finca Dos School agreed that the book does not provide any activity to reinforce this skill³¹.

The data shows that the textbook does not have listening activities. Then, it was necessary to determine the skills the book develops. For this reason, the

³¹ Information collected from an unstructured interview applied to these teachers of English.

researcher applied an unstructured interview. As shown in exhibit N°10, 92% of the entire population agreed that the textbook emphasizes reading and writing.

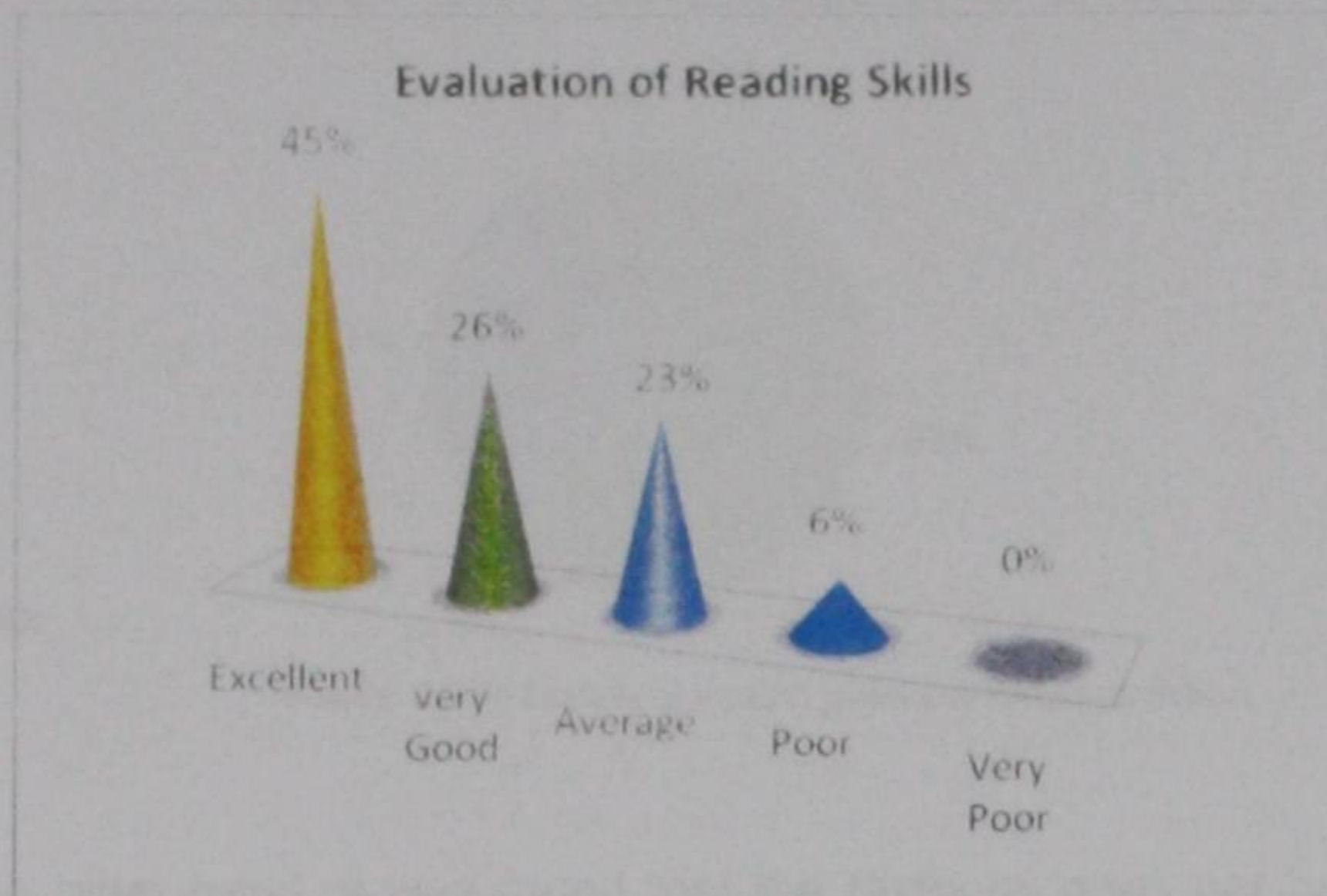
Exhibit N° 10



Source: Unstructured Interview for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

The majority of the students pointed out that the textbook makes a remarkable emphasis on writing and reading and the other two skills (listening and speaking) are the teacher's responsibility. In addition, a checklist was applied to make sure that the textbook mostly works on reading and writing. Exhibit N° 11 shows the application of the rating scale to both groups A and B. In conclusion, 71% refers to the accomplishment of writing activities that the textbook has. The learners agreed that the textbook provides "outstanding activities that connect students to the real world use of the language. They also said that the book is appropriate for their English proficiency level.

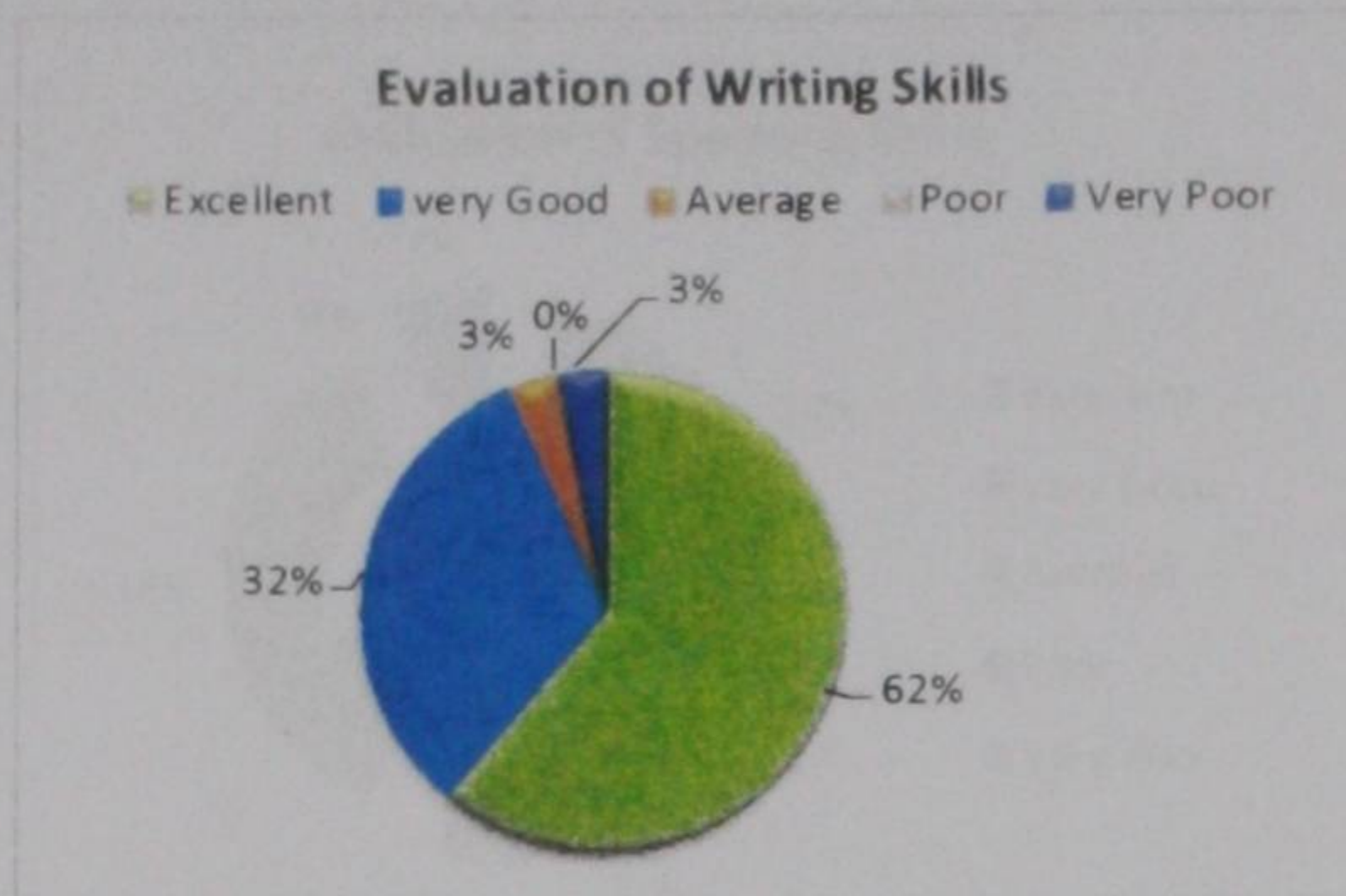
Exhibit N° 11



Source: Rubric Scale for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

Similar to the reading part, most of the students qualified the writing skill as excellent. Exhibit N ° 12 shoes that 94% said that the writing exercises, details and the information are always appealing, clear, and well-developed. This indicates that this result promotes students' autonomy.

Exhibit N° 12

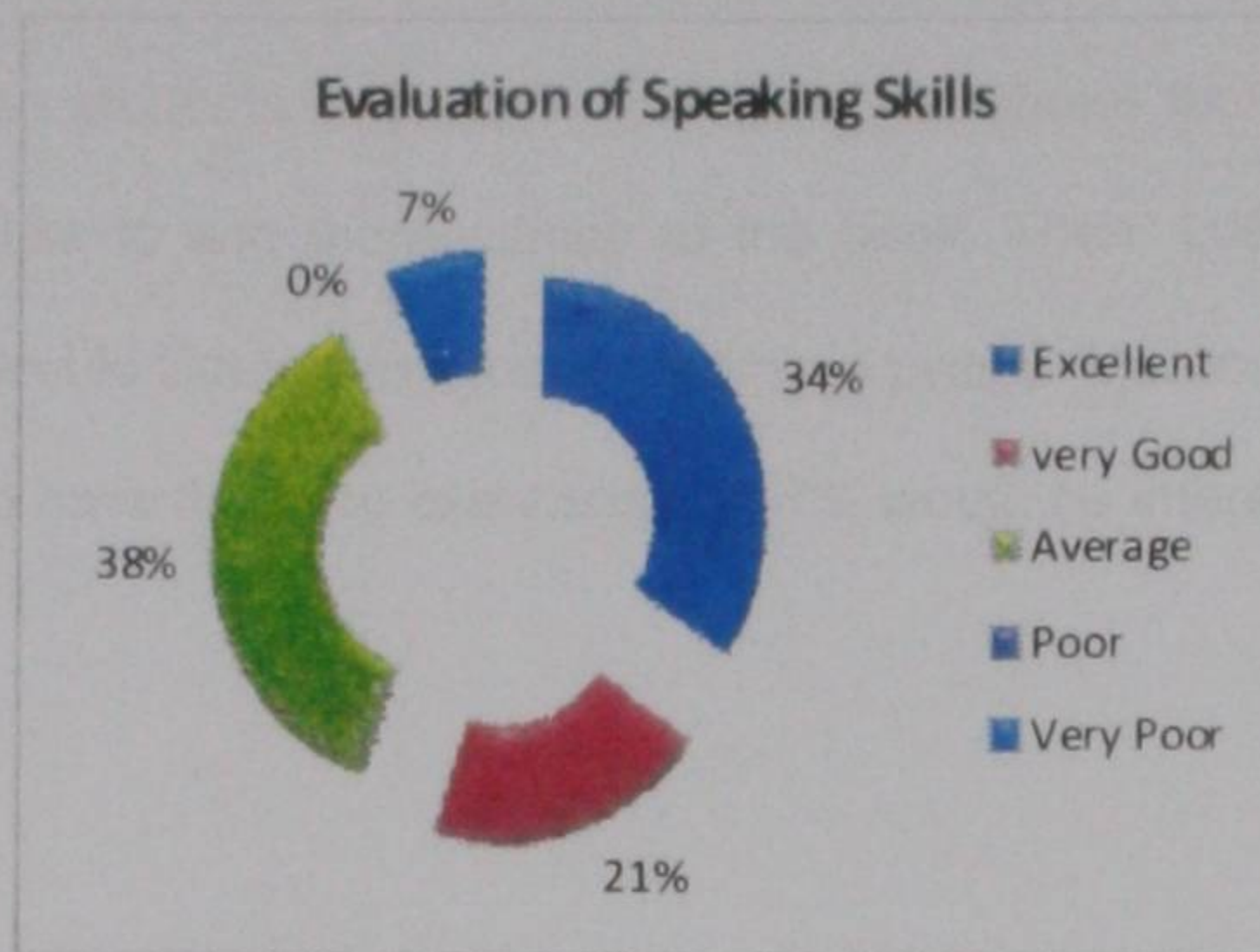


Source: Rubric Scale for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

On the other hand, it was found that the textbook does not have speaking activities. As an illustration, the first unit of the textbook is "Socializing" and some communicative activities are dialogues, short conversations and asking for and giving information questions. However, the textbook indicates some web pages to go through to practice more speaking and listening.

Exhibit N° 13 shows whether or not the textbook promotes speaking activities. The rubric scale was applied to students from which 55% of the students said that the textbook provides outstanding speaking activities, but these activities most of the time are created by the teacher of English through oral presentations or short dialogues. Then, there was a sample population of 38% of the students that mentioned that the textbook is sometimes appropriate for developing speaking activities. Finally, 7% of the learners said that the book does not fulfill the students' needs in terms of speaking skills.

Exhibit N° 13



Source: Rubric Scale for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

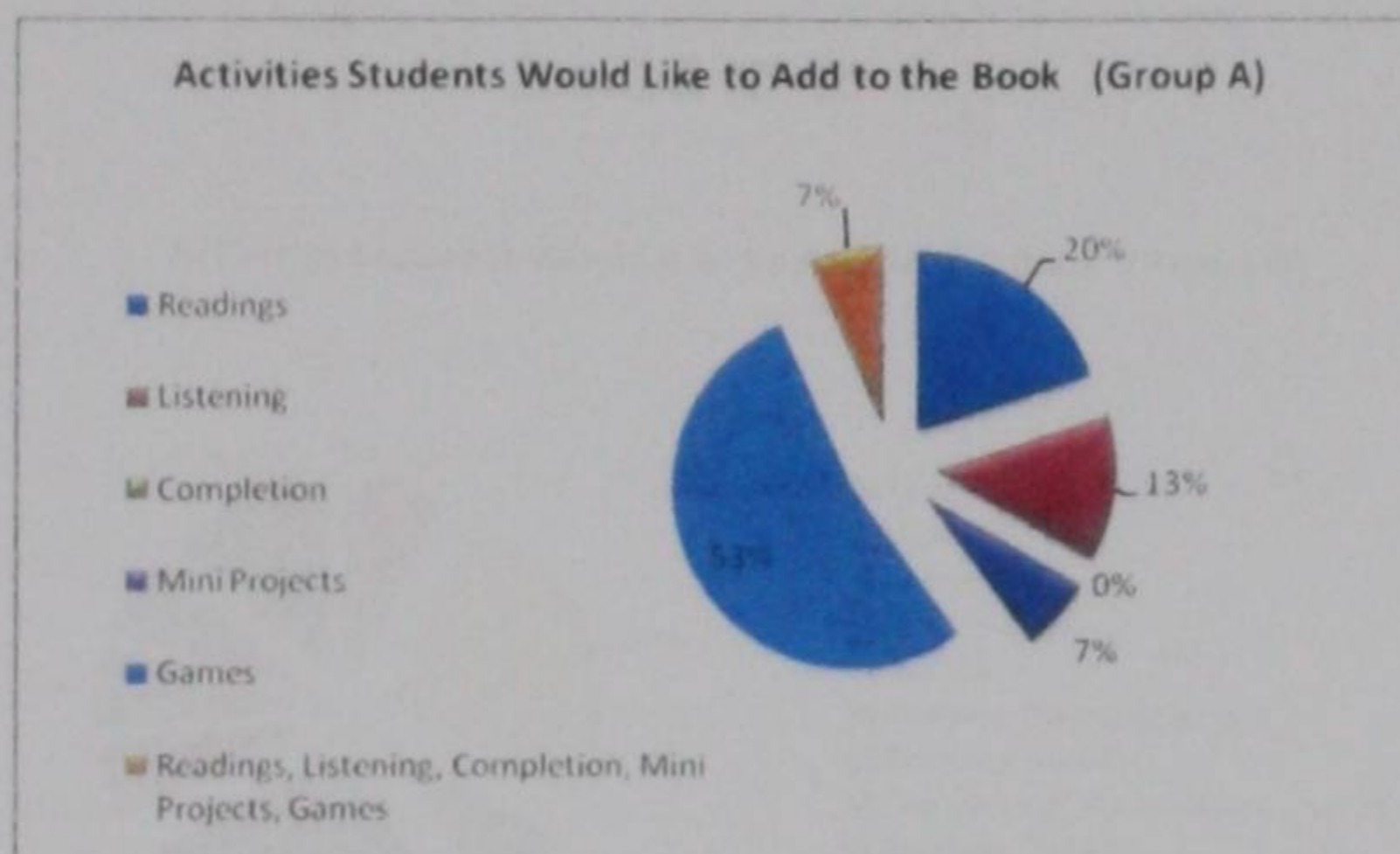
To sum up, the textbook is mostly based on reading and writing and the teacher is the one in charge of developing listening and speaking. The textbook provides reading and writing activities that encourage the students to create their own written works. The pictures and the pedagogical activities it has promote a very positive environment when working with the learners in the classroom.

4.3 Teaching Activities to Enhance Students' Communication

There are aspects to consider in regards to the type of activities provided by the textbook. As mentioned before, the book has some activities, such as crosswords, letters soups, mazes, matching, fill in the blanks, and cut and paste exercises. Considering this variety of activities it was important to know which of the students like the most or the least and which ones they would like to add or eliminate.

The process of collecting this information was guided by the application of an unstructured interview. The instrument was applied to both groups A and B. There were fifteen students in group A. Exhibit N° 14 shows that 53% pointed out that they would like to add more games to the book. Then, 20% of the students added that they would like to have more reading activities. Moreover, 13% said that they would like to have listening exercises and 7% would be interested to add more mini projects.

Exhibit N° 14



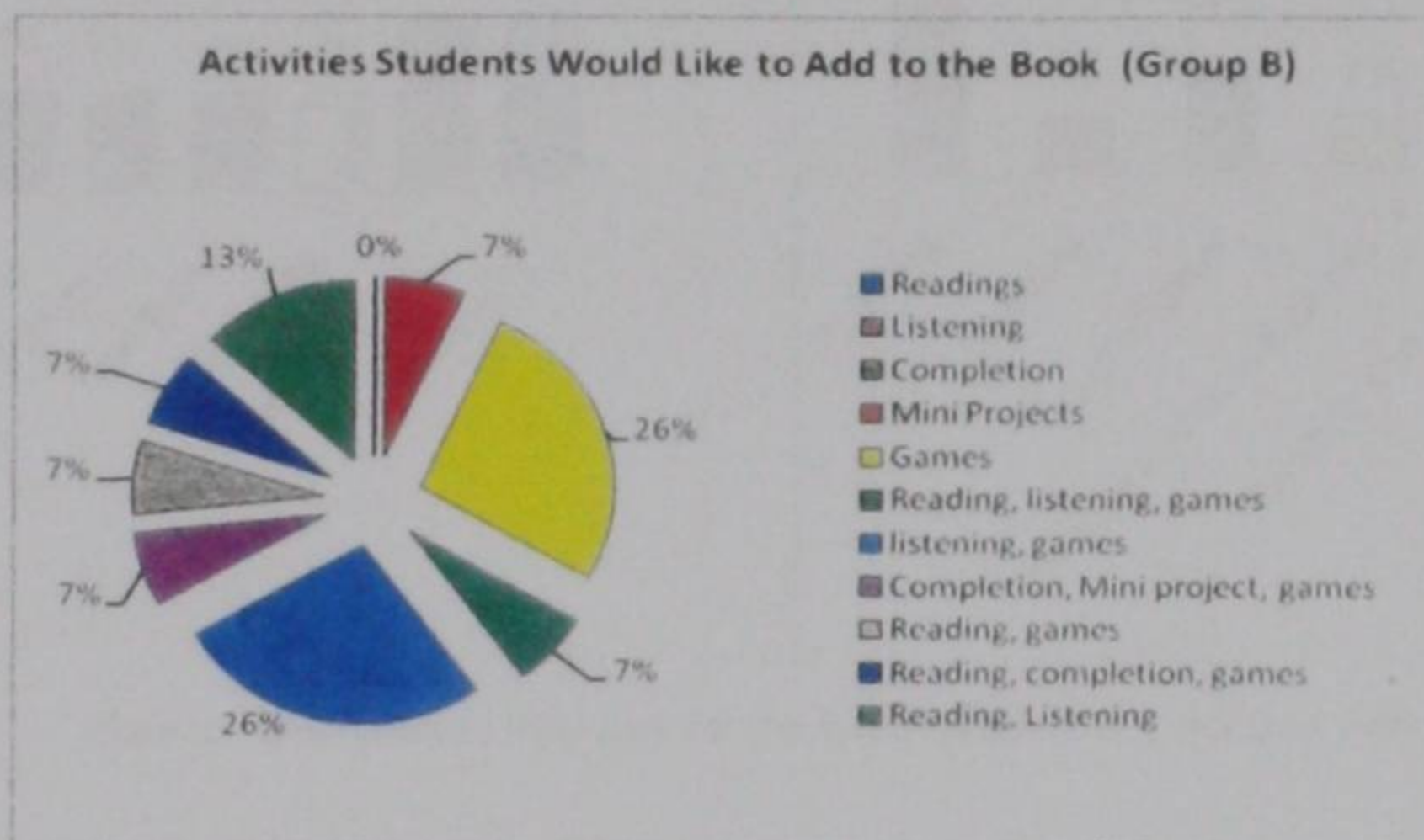
Source: Unstructured Interview for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

In group B, exhibit N° 15 indicates the researcher the types of activities students would like to add to the book. In regards to games 26% of the students agreed they would like to have more of them. Additionally, 26% of the learners mentioned they would like to have games and some listening activities to strengthen their English skills. Moreover, 13% of the total population said they

would like reading and listening activities. Finally, 35% of the students suggested having different activities such as readings, listening, mini projects and fill in the blank activities.

In brief, considering what group A and group B pointed out in regard to the activities that would be necessary to integrate in the textbook, it can be concluded that most of the students agreed the textbook would be more helpful for them if it included board games. In addition, both groups also added that for a better understanding of the book and learning of the foreign language it is essential to add more speaking and listening activities.

Exhibit N° 15



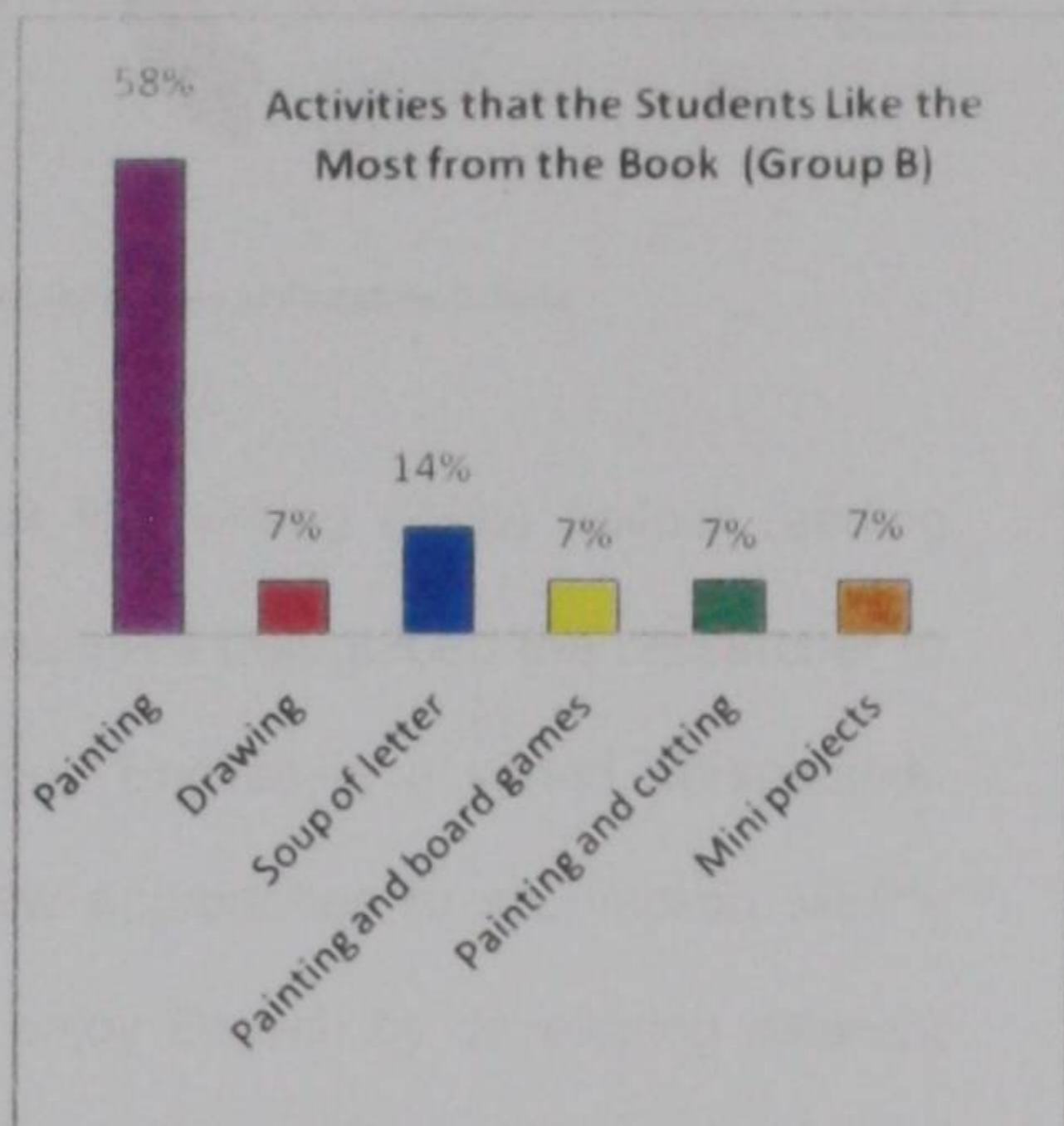
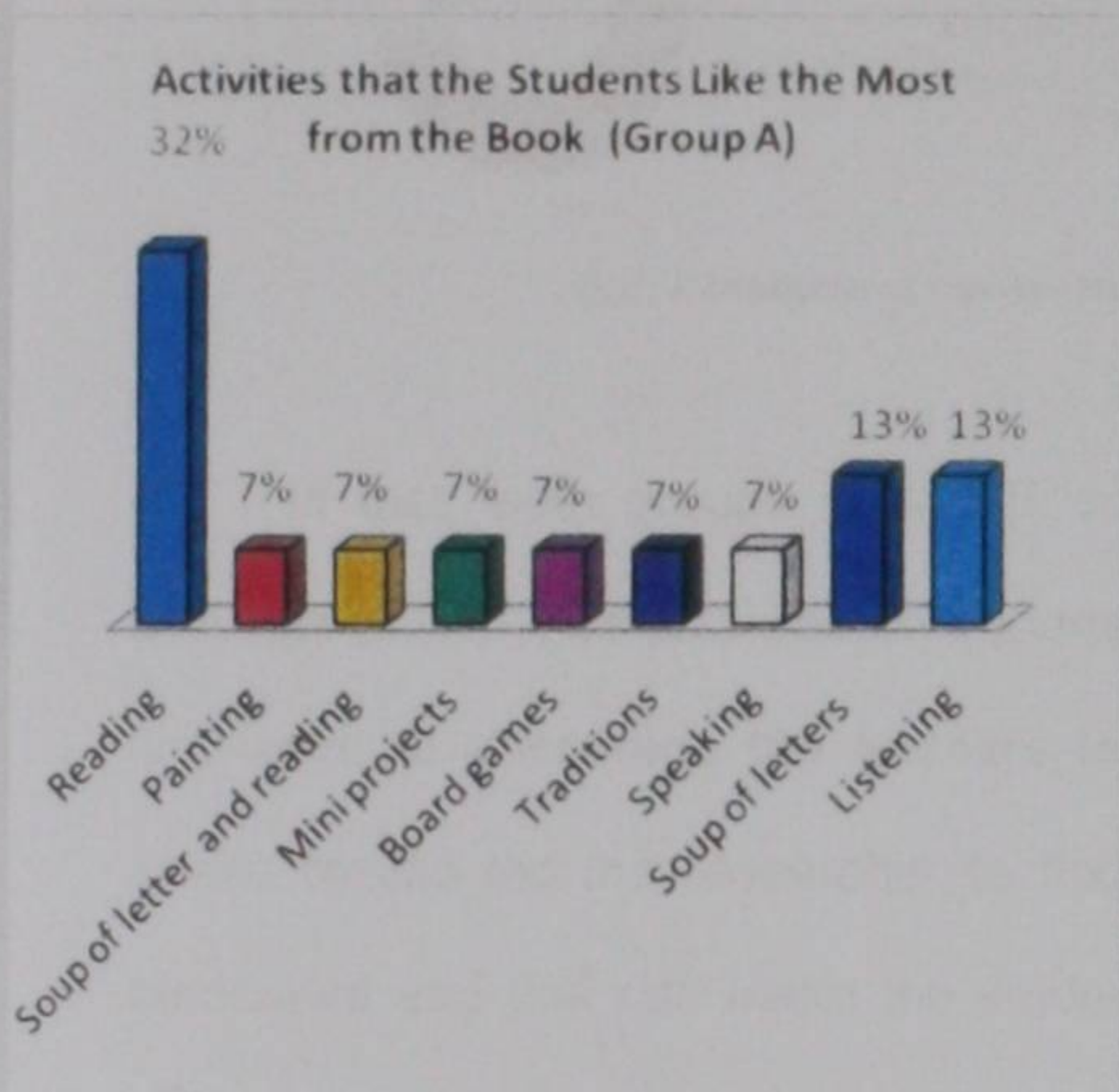
Source: Unstructured Interview for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

There were two more questions designed to find out what activities the students like the most in the textbook and which ones they like the least. Both questions were asked and analyzed separately from each group. Group A enjoys reading the most in the classroom. This stands for 32% while in group B, 58% of

the students agreed they like coloring. Then, 13% of the learners mentioned they would like more soup of letters. Additionally, there was another 13% that mentioned that they would like more listening activities in the textbook. Finally, 42% said they would like some other activities. Regarding group B, the students pointed out that the second activity they like the most was soup of letters and 28% indicated they would like some other different activities.

Exhibit N° 16

Exhibit N° 17



Source: Unstructured Interview for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

In exhibits N° 18 and 19, the learners pointed out the activities they like the least. In group A, 53% of the students declared they like every single activity that the textbook has. Then, 20% said they do not like writing, 13% agreed they do not like reading; and finally, 14% said they do not like listening activities neither crosswords. In group B, 53% of the learners mentioned they do not like writing

activities, 40% said they do not like reading activities and 7% of them said they do not like writing and reading activities.

Exhibit N° 18

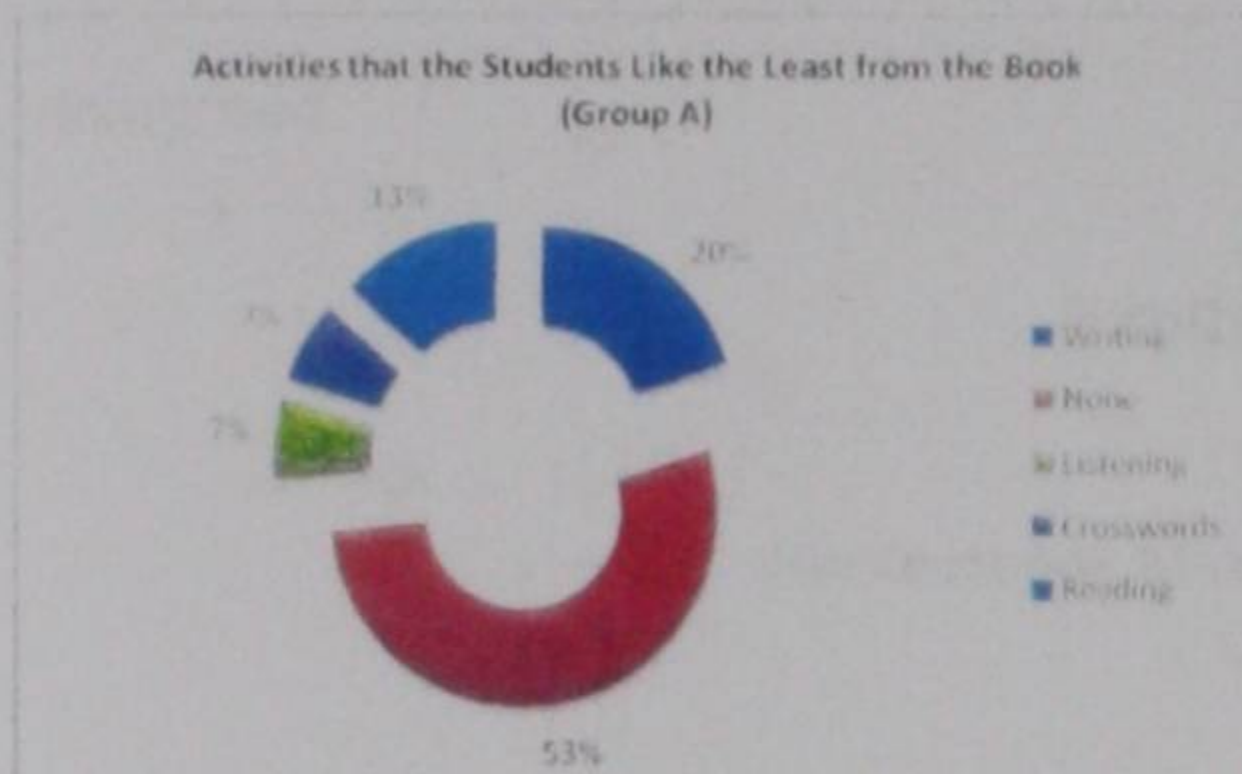
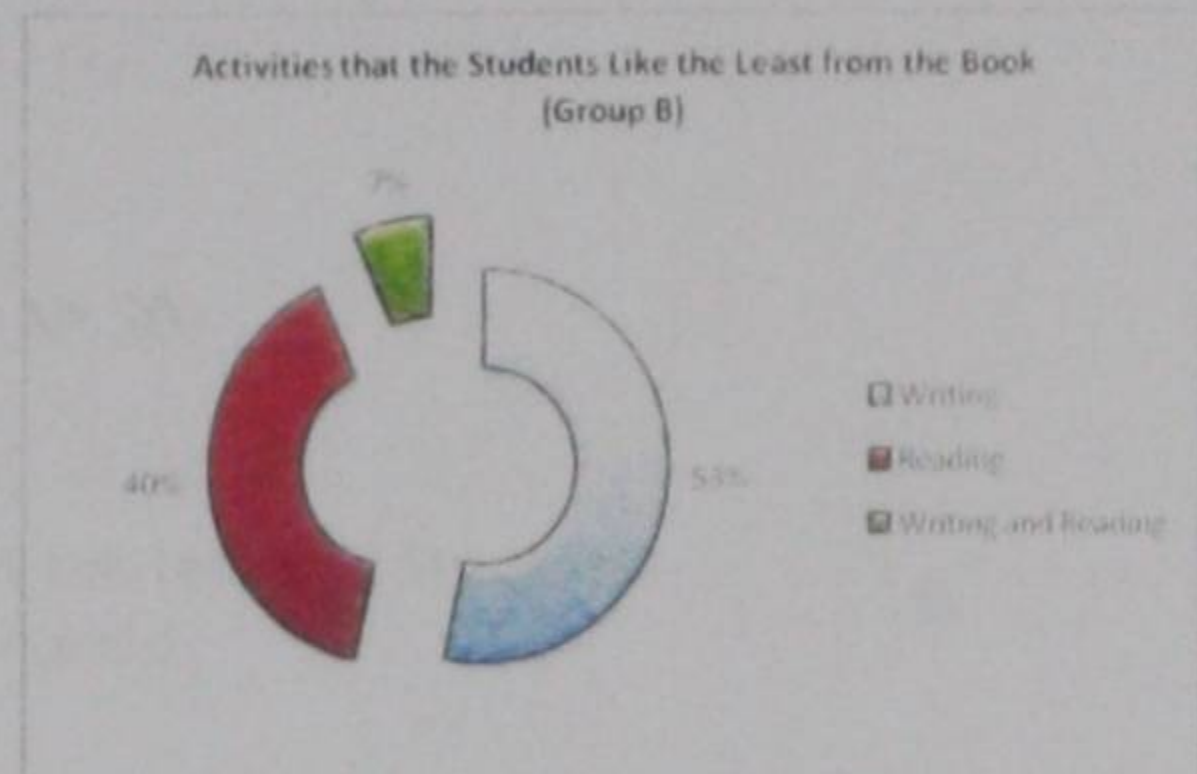


Exhibit N° 19



Source: Unstructured Interview for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

In fact, both groups A and B do not like writing (73%) neither reading activities (53%). This fact was an important element that guided the researcher to find ways to encourage the learners to enjoy English in a varied perspective. These results led the researcher to find new approaches to accomplish MEP's curriculum and that can make the students enjoy English by developing different activities, in this way English would become their favorite subject and a tool for future jobs.

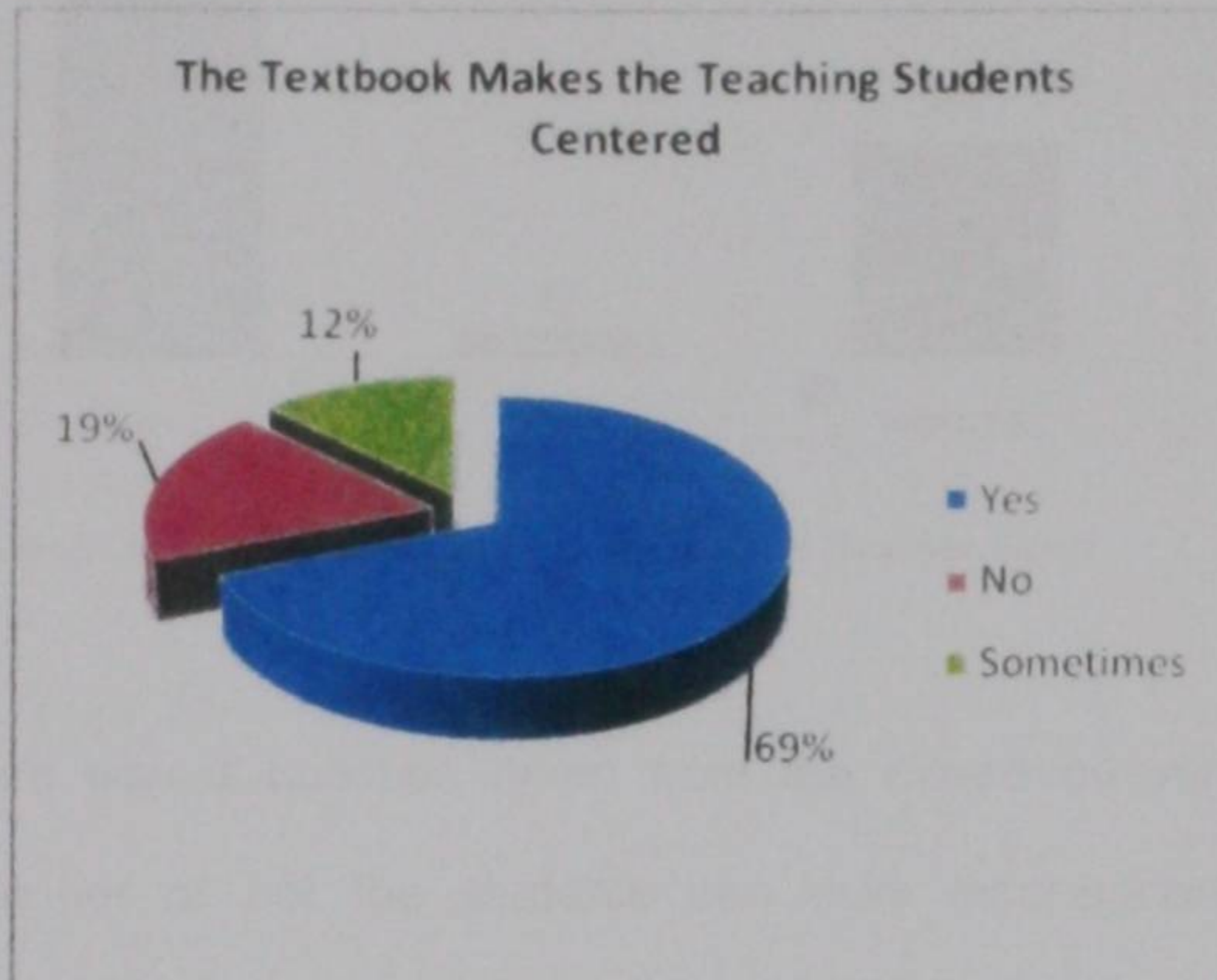
4.4 Teachers and Students as Teaching Developers

In today's world the role of a teacher in the classroom is mainly as a guide or facilitator who organizes and leads the teaching and learning process. Teaching must be student-centered and students should learn by doing. Due to this fact, the

researcher designed a checklist to ask the students if the textbook really helps them to improve their English.

These learners were asked whether the textbook can make the teaching student-centered or not. In the graph N° 20, 69% of the learners agreed that the textbook makes the teaching student-centered, but 19% of the population disagreed.

Exhibit N° 20

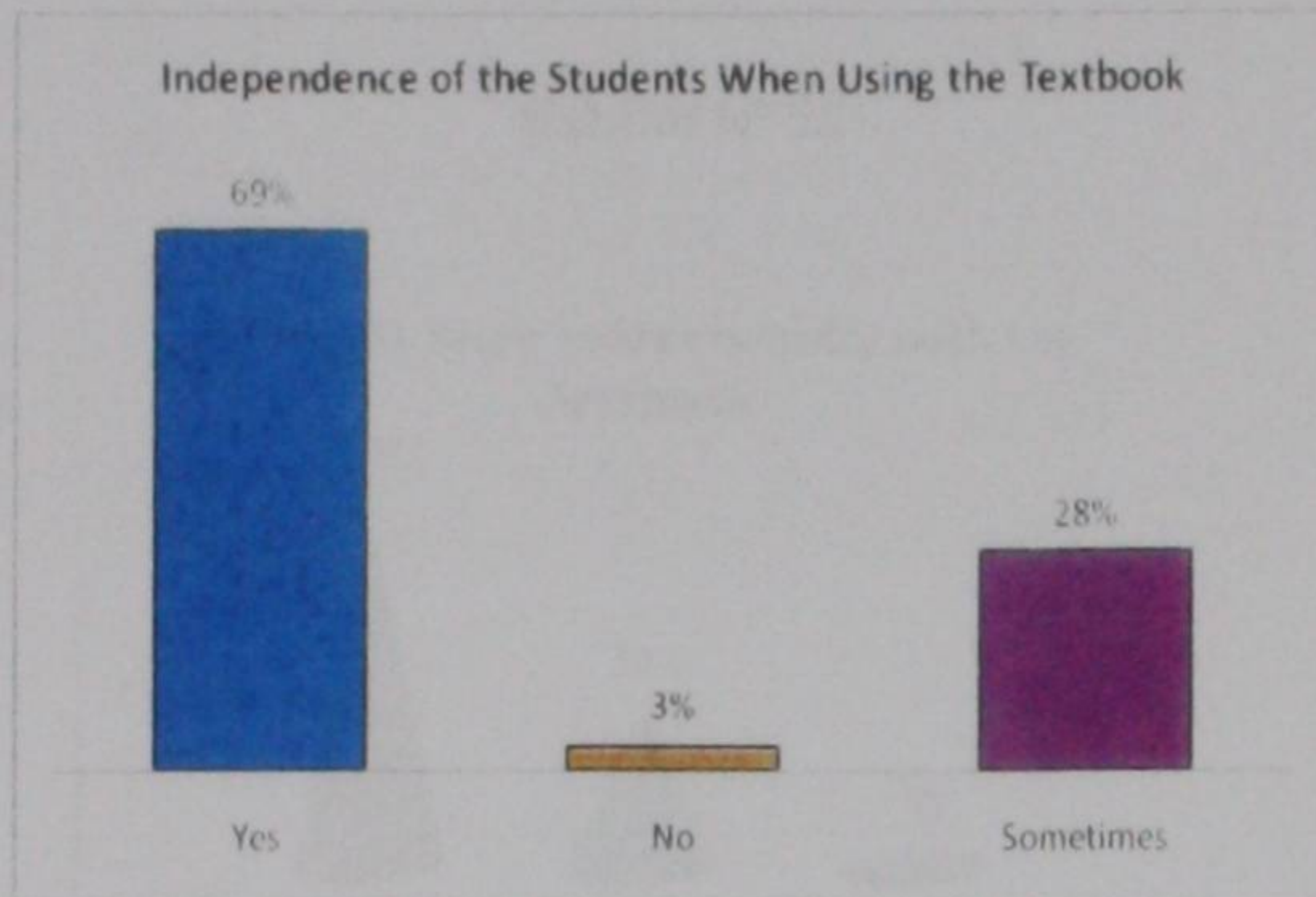


Source: Checklist number two for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

Additionally, in exhibit N°21, 69% agreed that the textbook makes them more independent when they work in the classroom with it and 28% of the learners mentioned that the textbook sometimes makes them more independent. The role of the teacher is just a guide to make sure the students understand what they have to do with the textbook. The teacher just gives instructions and explanations and

the students have to develop each activity individually or in groups according to the teacher's instructions.

Exhibit N° 21



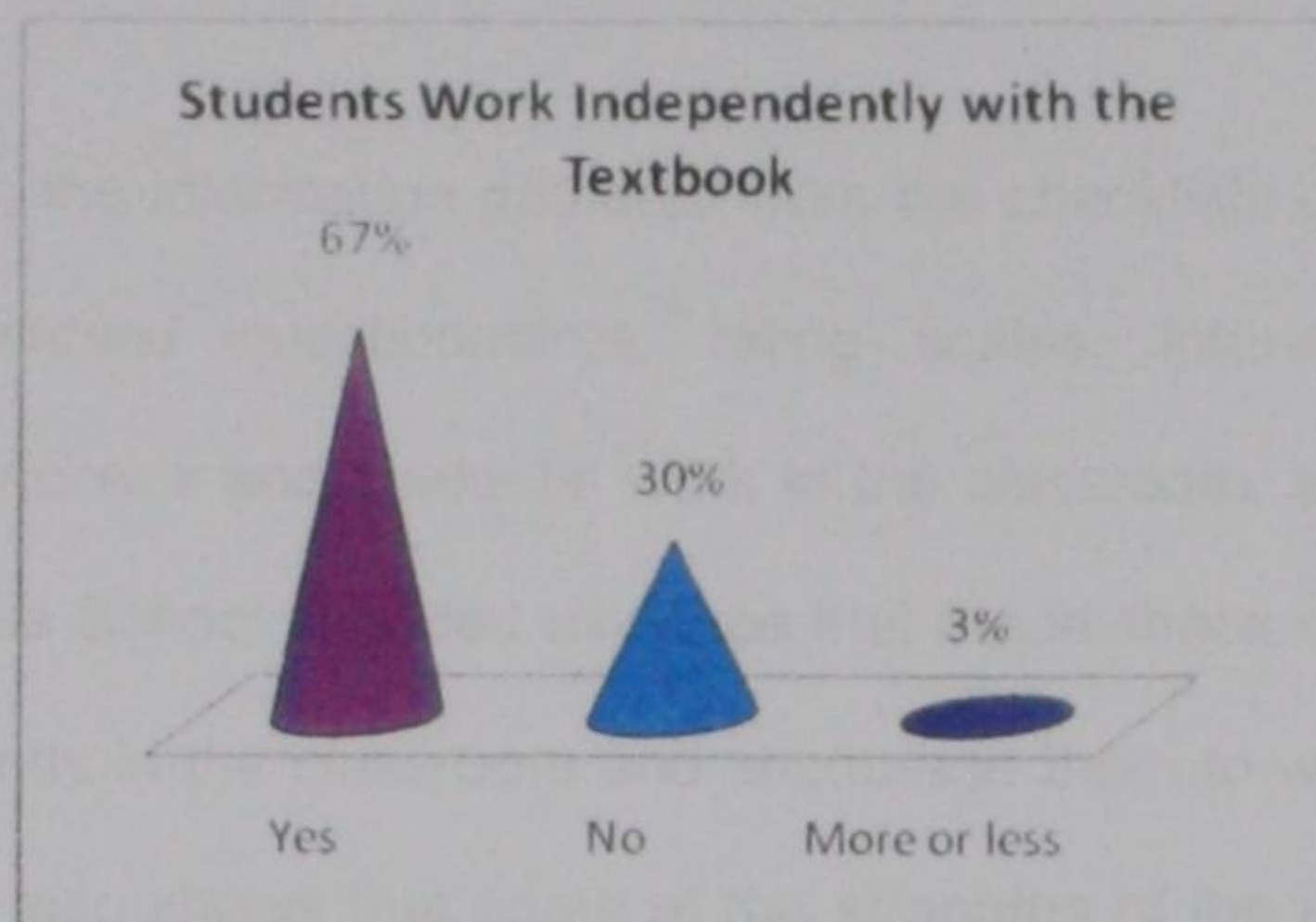
Source: Checklist number two for the fourth graders at Finca Seis School

Finally, there was a question taken from the closed questionnaire. The question was whether or not the students can work independently with the textbook. As can be seen in exhibit N° 22, there was a 67% of the students who said that they could work independently with the textbook. In addition, 30% said they could not work independently and finally, they said that they sometimes could work independently which represents 3% of the total population.

To sum up, the information gathered from the unstructured interview, closed questionnaire, and checklists indicated that the students thought that they could work individually without having any teacher's help because they were the ones

who should learn; however, they recognized that there was always a need to ask the teacher for help. They agreed that the English teacher is always a guide who helps them to complete tasks.

Exhibit N° 22



Source: Closed questionnaire for the fourth graders at FincaSeis School

As mentioned before, the MEP does not provide teachers of English with textbooks; this situation allows some publishers to create their own textbooks. Some of these textbooks do not follow the MEP's curriculum but some others do. The selection of this particular textbook was done to make sure it accomplishes the objective established in MEP's curriculum. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the efficiency of the textbook "Play and Learn" for fourth graders at Finca Seis elementary school. The procedure of data collection and the analysis went simultaneously. The textbook was explored thoroughly with a particular focus on

language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) including grammar, and language factions such as exercises, and activities as complementary materials.

In conclusion, the students of fourth grade at Finca Seis School are able to work independently with the textbook. They enjoy having fun with it. Also, they have learned how to work in groups and individually with each of the activities suggested in the textbook and the ones suggested by the teacher. They say that the textbook made them use the language more accurate by writing short paragraphs.

Moreover, the information gathered from the checklists of the students and the teachers, closed questionnaires, rating scales, interviews, field notes, observations, teacher's and students' work in the classroom, and the institutional plan at Finca Seis School provided evidence that the textbook makes the students work independently in the classroom and encourage them to work actively with it. The information also shows that some of the strengths of the textbook are based on the reading, writing and pedagogical activities such as crosswords, letter soups, and matching exercises.

The weaknesses of the textbook are listening and speaking. There is a gap between two skills even the publishing house mentions that they suggest some links to watch on the internet as stated in the this report:

... The book does not have an audio CD, for that reason we have provided the teacher's guide with some tips with special instructions for the teacher to reinforce the listening activities. Moreover, we added links to visit some web pages with interactive exercises to accomplish the needs of the students

and teachers... (Spanish unstructured interview made On October 31st, 2011, at 4:32 pm via e-mail to the representative of the publishing house)

The textbook is well designed with an appropriate length size and images that catch the students' attention, but it requires listening, speaking and culture activities to complement the needs of the students and the teacher.

As this analysis and interpretation of information shows, the teachers, students, and authorities at Finca Seis School are conscious of the fact that the textbook is helpful in terms of reading, writing and pedagogical activities. Further, the textbook is not culturally appropriate because it does not teach the students the culture of the English speaking countries.

V Conclusion

This study is the result of an attempt to analyze descriptively the English textbook series, 2010 edition of the Book "Play and Learn", which covers all the seven units suggested by the Ministry of Public Education and it is meant to be for students in fourth grade at primary school whose ages are from nine to eleven years old.

This study explored the efficiency of the textbook "Play and Learn" used at Finca Seis Elementary School concerning the developing of the four English skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and the accomplishment of the MEP's objective in Costa Rica. Another aim of the study was to design a complementary and pedagogical material for the textbook. The results showed that the participants agreed on the efficiency of the textbook in regards to reading and writing activities, but its evaluation depicted lack of listening and speaking activities. Also, there are some other deficiencies of the book such as instructions since they are not clear; they are just commands like, write, color, listen, repeat, read, practice, answer, cut and paste, match, draw, circle, unscramble, and complete. This does not mean that the instructions are incorrect, what the textbook intends to is make it easy for the students when working alone. However, it is necessary to make the instructions clear in order to guide the students specifically to complete the tasks.

Even though the results indicated that the textbook is appealing for the students in terms of price, images, length size, and content, it is not appropriate to teach the target culture because it does not contain information about the countries where English is spoken as a native language. In other words, it is ineffective in

terms of reflecting the representations of the target language culture (L2). This research intended to analyze whether or not the textbook is useful for the students in terms of cognitive and linguistic needs. The information gathered said that the textbook matches the students' English proficiency and cognitive level which allow them to work without any problems in the classroom. Additionally, it is useful for both teachers and students since it meets some of their pedagogical and social needs when interacting in the classroom.

Finally, the textbook accomplishes the seven units of study set by MEP. It also develops reading and writing well because it makes the students create short paragraphs (a three or four lines paragraph) without teaching them grammatical rules since grammar is taught by the teacher inductively. The book uses a discovery learning approach in which the students learn throughout an inductive approach. As a result, to reinforce the four English skills was designed complementary pedagogical material to facilitate the process of learning. This complementary material intends to help the students develop pedagogical wrap-up activities. However, since there is no single textbook that can provide adequately all the needs of the learners, they should, therefore, be exposed to enrichment supplementary materials as complements. It is recommended that teachers provide extra-materials to guide the learners in every single activity and make the textbooks learner-centered.

VI Recommendations

Based on the information gathered from the different instruments applied to collect the data there are a series of recommendations for both teachers and authorities, as well as the publishing house.

6.1 Recommendations for the Teachers of English and the Authorities

Every teacher should be conscious of the fact that teaching a foreign language is time – consuming and requires materials development. They should have in mind that a textbook is not the only tool to work with the students. Textbooks just help them to accomplish their work. The teachers' responsibility is to complement the activities provided in the book with some others designed by them. Textbooks can be used as a syllabus or pedagogical guide to direct the process of teaching and learning in a course. They serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting the lessons. This study was based on the development of the four language skills but further research can be made based on teaching culture.

On the other hand, the application of the instruments and their interpretation should be conducted three months before going through the field. For example, observations can be carried out this way; the researcher would observe the possible reactions of the teachers and students to the elements of the textbook. Similarly, the most and the least required aspects of the textbook can be determined by taking into consideration the students' participations. But again, it requires time and the researcher should be aware of it. Finally, a teacher must design his/her own materials because if the textbook does not have appropriate or enough tasks for different skills, the lesson would become boring. Moreover, the

authorities (principal and regional advisor), the English teachers and parents should meet to make the decision on the kind of textbook to be used, ways to encourage students to use L2 and communicative activities that make them work successfully. This researcher will gladly contribute to future researches considering in details some of the complement that a textbook should have.

6.2 Recommendation for the Publishing House

The study made the teacher and students identify some of the virtues and weaknesses of this textbook. For example, it should include the aspect of culture not only from Costa Rica but also from the countries where the target language is spoken so, students understand other ways of living. Instructions should be clear to avoid misunderstandings. Colorful images should be included to catch the students' attention better. Finally, listening, speaking activities and the cultural background should be included that the features mentioned above become part of this textbook.

VII. Proposal for Designing Interactive Software for Students of Fourth Grade at Finca Seis School

1. General Objective

The main goal of this proposal is to present and provide the English teacher with computer software based on wrap up activities that can enable students to develop the foreign language through a more interactive way such as board games, videos (CD), songs, flashcards, games like, puzzles, crosswords, letter soups, jeopardy, memory games, and will help both teachers and students on how to use voice thread, scribus and wikis among other technological tools.

2. Specific Objective

1. To help students to solve activities to enhance their English proficiency level.
2. To raise the students' motivation in working independently in the classroom through games.
3. To make the students understand the importance of learning English.
4. To inspire the English teacher to design, or adapt new activities as complement for the development of the content of the English curriculum.

3. Procedure for Conducting the Workshop on the Development of the Software

Chronogram

Chronogram				Resources	
Objectives	Contents	Procedures	Place and time	participants	Materials
<p>1. To develop a workshop for the teachers of English, regular teacher, students of fourth grade, and the English regional advisor on how to use the software designed for the students.</p> <p>2. To explain how to develop the activities in the software which are based on MEP's curriculum.</p> <p>3. To ask for suggestions on the material to improve it if necessary.</p> <p>4. To supply the English advisor, the English teachers, and the principal of the school with the software.</p>	<p>1. Presentation on the use of the software as a complementary pedagogical material to develop the content of MEP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing • Keeping Healthy • Family Ties • My Social Life • Holidays and Celebrations • Costa Rican Identity • Environmental Education 	<p>The presentation of the software will take place in the computer Laboratory at Finca Seis School. There, the software will be installed and all the participants will be in contact with it. At the same time, all of the participants together with the presenter will use the software.</p>	<p>The computer Laboratory 80 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Presenter of the project. ✓ Regional English Advisor ✓ Principal of the school ✓ Regular teacher ✓ The teachers of English at Finca Seis School ✓ Students of fourth grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CD of Software ✓ Twenty Computers ✓ Video beam ✓ Two Speakers ✓ Screen projector ✓ One white Board ✓ One eraser ✓ Four Markers ✓ One computer Classroom

4. Participants

Exhibit N° 23

Participants	Numbers of Participants
Presenter of the project	1
English Regional Advisor of Sarapiquí	1
English teachers of other schools	3
Principal of the School	1
Teachers of English at Finca Seis School	2
Regular Teacher of the Student	1
students of fourth grade	34



5. Presentation and Description of the Software During the Workshop

In order to have a good textbook, it is not necessary to have the most wonderful, colorful, expensive, or cheapest textbook. What is important is to make this book a useful and helpful tool for the students to be communicative in the classroom and outside of it. The textbook should accomplish the teacher's objectives and cover the students' interest, needs, and attention. Moreover, the techniques that will be used by the teacher should be applicable in the four skills, providing input by listening and reading and eliciting from students written and oral performance.

The most important feature is that the teaching should be according to the students' ages, level, and knowledge in which the teacher may use an inductive or deductive approach. Due to this fact, a software was designed and it will be presented to the regional English advisor of Sarapiquí, the authorities of the school, the English teachers, and the students of fourth grade at Finca Seis School. The explanation of the development of the software will be divided in two sessions. The first session will be only directed to the authorities and will be based on how to use the program. The second session will be done for both the authorities and the students and will be mainly based on the development of the software. This means that the authorities will look at the students developing and playing with the software which includes games for applying what was taught before. The main purpose of having the students facing the software is to show to the authorities how the students can learn through out an inductive way. In other words, how children can learn by doing.

On the other hand, based on the information gathered from the structure and unstructured interviews, checklists, and rubric scales conducted to the students and some of the English teachers, the main constrain both students and English teachers agreed with was the development of more listening activities in the textbook and more games to develop speaking and to strengthen reading and writing. Consequently, it was designed this software to guide the students to strengthen their English proficiency level not only in listening and speaking, but also in reading and writing.

As a result, the main content of the software was based on the seven units proposed by the ministry of public education. This means that the English teacher may use the software as a complementary proposal to reinforce what was taught during the development of the unit. The software includes a summary of each unit for the students to solve puzzle, soup of letter, hidden picture, hang man, jeopardy, bingo, matching, face down game cards, game boards, flashcards and others. As it was mentioned before, the software is just a complement to reinforce each lesson and the students' English skills not the main core to guide the lesson or a path to save the teacher when there is not any plan designed.

In addition, the Ministry of Public Education proposes to work on the following units.

1. Socializing
2. Keeping Healthy
3. Family Ties

4. My Social Life
5. Holidays and Celebrations
6. Costa Rican Identity
7. Environmental Education

The purpose of this software is to reinforce the students' knowledge about the language and encourage them to continue working with each activity proposed in the book and the ones that the teacher brings to class to raise their background knowledge. By the end of each unit the teacher will apply the activities in the software and let the students be more independent by the development of them.

Further, the software is an integrated learning method that tries to stimulate the children's imagination and their creativity through the different learning games. The characters and situations that the software describes during its seven units refer to the students' real names and some of the activities that they are familiar with in the classroom. This software lets the children put into practice all what they learned in the classroom through games, exercises, and songs related some of the topics presented in the seven units.

Finally, the software is mainly based on an inductive (covert) approach. This is that some of the activities that will be developed will start without any explanation and grammar is inferred. In fact, this is a discovery learning approach where the learners will learn by doing. Consequently, at the very end of each activity the

students will be able to understand better the content of each unit and will be more independent.

6. Evaluation of the Software

At the end of the presentation of the project the participants will fulfill a handout to evaluate the success and usefulness of the software in terms of pedagogical task and functional materials as a complement to assess students' knowledge, reinforce their English skills and the effectiveness and efficacy of the textbook. In regards to pedagogical task, Nunan defines it as "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning" (4). Based on this approach each activity will face both, students and teachers to real life situations considering their needs. Additionally, Brown refers to needs as the, "... the identification of the language forms that the students will likely need to use in the target language when they are required to actually understand and produced the language" (20)

The purpose of this evaluation section is to know whether or not the software really accomplishes the content of MEP's curriculum and if it is appropriate for the students' ages, English level, background knowledge, and needs, as well as the teachers'.

In order to evaluate the content of the software, the researcher will create a checklist that can measure participants' perception about the software and

effectiveness (activities) on students' English proficiency level. It is also mandatory to mention that as soon as the activities are done the students will be given feedback in order to improve their knowledge.

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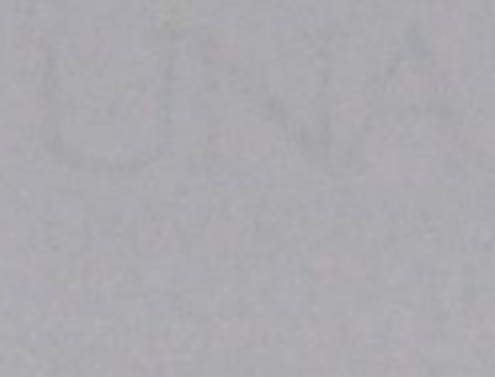
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Appendixes



Appendix 1

Universidad Nacional
Escuela de Filosofía y Letras
Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje
Escuela de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

General Objectives

Información: Escuelas de Filosofía y Letras, de Lengua y Literatura
Populares: Escuelas de Ciencias Sociales
Núcleo Cultural
San Fernando

Appendixes

General Objectives: The primary goal of the University is to provide the students with a high quality education and promote the linguistic skills of the students of foreign languages through the course.

Specific Objectives:

1. To know whether or not the students have the necessary skills to be able to use the language in the development of their academic work.
2. To figure out if the textbook that the course is based on is suitable for the students in the development of their academic work.
3. To find out what is the students' perception of the textbook's content.



Appendix 1

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Closed Questionnaire

Informantes: Estudiantes de la Escuela Finca Seis, Rio Frio, Sarapiquí

Población: Estudiantes de Cuarto Grado

Nombre Completo: _____ (Opcional)

Sexo: Femenino: () Masculino: ()

General Objective: The purpose of this instrument is to know if the textbook Play and Learn is effective and suitable to evaluate the language skills of the students of fourth grade at Finca Seis School.

Specific Objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook Play and Learn is effective for the students in the development of their linguistic competences.
2. To figure out if the textbook Play and Learn is suitable for the students in the development of English as a foreign language.
3. To find out what is the students' personal perception of the textbook Play and Learn.



Appendix 2

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Unstructured Interview

Informantes: Estudiantes de la Escuela Finca Seis, Rio Frio, Sarapiquí

Población: Estudiantes de Cuarto Grado

Nombre Completo: _____ (Opcional)

Sexo: Femenino: () Masculino: ()

General Objective: The purpose of this instrument is to determine if the textbook *Play and Learn* is suitable for the students of fourth grade at Finca Seis School to evaluate their language skills.

Specific Objective:

1. To know whether or not the textbook *Play and Learn* is suitable for the students in the development of English as a foreign language.
2. To find out if the textbook suits the students needs.

Questions to be Answered

1. Is the textbook Play and Learn suitable for the students to develop English as a foreign language?
2. Does the textbook suit the students' needs?

Note: This instrument will be done in Spanish due to the students' English proficiency level and to avoid misunderstandings and limitations when answering the questions.

Unstructured Interview

1. ¿Por cuanto tiempo ha usado este libro?
2. ¿Que otro tipo de actividades le agregaría al libro para un mejor aprendizaje del idioma?
 - () Mas lecturas
 - () Actividades de escucha (canciones, historias, diálogos, otros)
 - () Mas actividades de completar
 - () Mini proyectos al finalizar cada unidad
 - () Juegos (sopas de letras, laberintos, crucigramas, otros)
3. ¿Que actividades le quitaría al libro? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Le gustaría seguir usando el libro? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Considera usted que el libro le ayudada a mejorar sus habilidades de comunicación oral?
6. ¿Cual área refuerza más el libro?
 - () Escritura
 - () Lectura
 - () Escucha
 - () Habla
7. De las actividades que el libro ofrece, ¿Cuál disfruta más? ¿Por qué?
8. De las actividades que el libro ofrece, ¿Cuál disfruta menos? ¿Por qué?



Appendix 3

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Checklists para el Estudiante

Informantes: Estudiantes de la Escuela Finca Seis, Rio Frio, Sarapiquí

Población: Estudiantes de Cuarto Grado

Nombre Completo: _____ (Opcional)

Sexo: Femenino: () Masculino: ()

General Objective: The purpose of these checklists is to know the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook from the students' perspective when learning English as a foreign language.

Specific objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook is effective in terms of oral and listening skills during the teaching of English.
2. To realize if the textbook is suitable to the students to develop their language skills.
3. To determine whether or not the textbook is used as the main source to develop the English lesson.

Checklist N° 1 Para el Estudiante

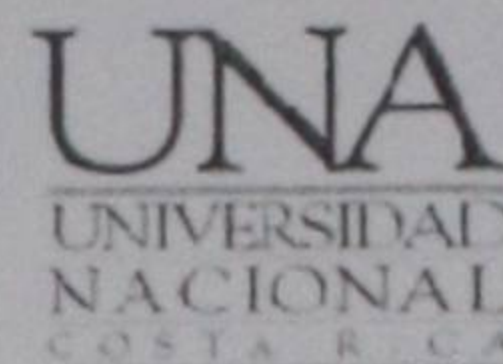
Lea los siguientes descriptores y luego en las columnas de la par marque con una equis (X) la opción que mejor describa el libro que usted esta utilizando.

El Libro	Excelente	Muy bueno	Regular	Pobre	Muy pobre
Tiene un vocabulario entendible de acuerdo al grado escolar					
Tiene un apropiado contenido de los temas					
Promueve una metodología comunicativa					
Permite que el desarrollo del idioma extranjero se fortalezca					
Fortalece las necesidades del estudiante en el aprendizaje del idioma					
Es apto para la edad y nivel de inglés del estudiante					
Permite el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades (escucha, escritura, lectura, y producción oral)					
Es culturalmente apropiado					

Checklist N° 2 Para el Estudiante

Lea los siguientes descriptores y luego en las columnas de la par marque con una equis (X) la opción que mejor describa el libro que usted esta utilizando.

N°	Criterios	SI	No	Algunas veces
1	¿Responde usted de una forma positiva cuando trabajan con el libro de Inglés?			
2	¿Cree usted que el libro promueve de una forma diferente el aprendizaje del inglés?			
3	¿El libro ofrece actividades de aprendizaje diferentes a otros libros?			
4	¿El libro permite que el desarrollo de la clase gire alrededor del estudiante?			
5	¿El libro es un material fotocopiado?			
6	¿El libro es colorido?			
7	¿Posee el libro actividades de escucha?			
8	¿El libro le brinda oportunidades de trabajar individualmente y en grupo?			
9	¿El libro permite que usted sea independiente?			
10	¿Posee el libro suficientes ilustraciones para reforzar la enseñanza?			
11	¿El tamaño de las letras es apto y brinda con facilidad una lectura apropiada?			
12	¿La calidad de las imágenes permite entender con facilidad su significado?			
13	¿El costo económico del libro es accesible para los estudiantes?			
14	¿El libro esta recargado de actividades?			
15	¿El libro presenta actividades de reforzamiento después de cada unidad?			
16	¿El libro es apropiado para cuarto grado?			



Appendix 4

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Check Lists for the English Teacher

Informants: Students at Finca Seis, Rio Frio, Sarapiquí

Population: Fourth Grade Groups

Teacher's name: _____ (Optional)

Gender: Male () Female ()

General Objective: The purpose of these checklists is to know the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook from the teacher's perspective when teaching English as a foreign language to students of fourth grade.

Specific objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook is effective when teaching oral and listening skills to the students of fourth grade.
2. To realize if the textbook is suitable to the students to develop their language skills.
3. To determine whether or not the teacher uses the textbook as the main source to develop the English lesson.

Questions to be Answered

1. Does the textbook accomplish English skills (writing, reading, speaking, and listening)? If so, which ones?
2. Does the textbook help students to develop their four language skills?
3. Does the English teacher use the textbook as the main source for the teaching?

Note: This instrument will be done in Spanish due to the students' English proficiency level and to avoid misunderstandings and limitations when answering the questions.



Checklist N° 1 for the Teacher of English

Read the following descriptors and then in the column next to them write a check mark to express the narrative that best describes the textbook you are using.

The Textbook	Excellent	Very good	Average	Good	Poor
Fits the curriculum goals					
Has appropriate linguistic content					
Has appropriate thematic content					
Fits the communicative approach principles					
Fulfills the students' language needs					
Contains the topics or the cognitive targets proposed by the MEP					
Matches the language learning needs of the students					
Is appropriate for the learners' ages and level.					
Integrates the four language skills					
Follows the official and institutional syllabus					
Is culturally appropriate					

Checklist N° 2 for the Teacher of English

Read the following descriptors and then in the column next to them write a check mark to express the narrative that best describes the textbook you are using.

N°	Criteria	YES	NO	Sometimes
1	Do the students respond positive when you use the textbook?			
2	Does the textbook promote communication?			
3	Is there any follow up activity?			
4	Does the textbook make the teaching students center?			
5	Does the textbook contribute to a positive environment?			
6	Are the topics of the textbook related to the content of the MEP?			
7	Does the textbook addresses the main objective of each unit?			
8	Is the textbook suitable for the students?			
9	Is the textbook effective for the students?			
10	Does the textbook allow the students to work individually and in group?			
11	Does the textbook make the students to be independent?			
12	Does the textbook provide enough pictures that may encourage them to work on it?			
13	The size of the length is appropriate?			
14	Are the images clear enough?			
15	Is the textbook expensive?			
16	Is the textbook crowded enough?			
17	Is the textbook appropriate for fourth grade?			



Appendix 5

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Rating Scale

Informants: Students at Finca Seis School, Río Frío, Sarapiquí

Population: Fourth grade students

Teacher's name: _____ (Optional)

Gender: Female: () Male: ()

General Objective: The purpose of this rubric scale is to measure the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook Play and Learn from the teacher's perspective when teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to students of fourth grade.

Specific objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook is effective when teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking to the students of fourth grade.
2. To realize if the textbook is suitable to the students to develop their language skills.

Questions to be Answered

1. Is the textbook effective to teach the reading, writing, listening, and speaking?
2. Is the textbook suitable to help students to develop their four language skills?

Rating Scale for the English Teacher

Read the following descriptors and then, in the column next to them write a check mark to express the score achieved that best describes the textbook. Five scores the highest grade and one scores the lowest grade achieved.

1. Speaking:	Scale from 1 to 5	Score achieved
Excellent: The textbook provides outstanding activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Always appropriate.	5	
Very good: The textbook provides appropriate activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Almost appropriate.	4	
Average: The textbook sometimes provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Average appropriate.	3	
Poor: The textbook rarely provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Seldom appropriate.	2	
Very poor: The textbook never provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language nor clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Inappropriate.	1	
2. Reading		
Excellent: The textbook is always adequate for the students' English proficiency level and presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Always appropriate.	5	
Very good: The textbook is often adequate for the students' English proficiency level and presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Almost appropriate.	4	
Average: The textbook is occasionally adequate for the students' English proficiency level and sometimes presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Sometimes appropriate.	3	
Poor: The textbook is seldom adequate for the students' English proficiency level and rarely presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Hardly ever appropriate.	2	
Very poor: The textbook is never adequate for the students' English proficiency level and does not present pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length which facilitate comprehension. Inappropriate.	1	

3. Listening		
Excellent: The textbook always has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are clear. Outstanding listening activities.	5	
Very good: The textbook usually has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are clear. Very good listening activities.	4	
Average: The textbook sometimes has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are sometimes clear. Average listening activities.	3	
Poor: The textbook rarely has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are not often clear. Deficient listening activities.	2	
Very poor: The textbook does not have current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are not clear. No listening activities.	1	
4. Writing		
Excellent: The writing details and the information are always appealing, clear, and well developed and promote students' autonomy. Always appropriate.	5	
Very good: Most of the writing and vocabulary used is often appropriated and related to the students' natural environment which promotes students' autonomy. Almost appropriate.	4	
Average: Some exercises motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook and promote students' autonomy. Sometimes appropriate	3	
Poor: exercises rarely motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook and hardly ever promote students' autonomy. Rarely appropriate	2	
Very poor: exercises never motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook. Inappropriate to promote students' autonomy.	1	

Final Grade

1	Producción Oral	
2	Lectura	
3	Escucha	
4	Escritura	
	Total	

Comments:



Appendix 6

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Checklists for the Publishing House

Informants: Publisher House Publitex

Name: _____ (Optional)

Gender: Male () Female ()

General Objective: The purpose of these checklists is to know the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook from the teacher's perspective when teaching English as a foreign language to students of fourth grade.

Specific objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook is effective when teaching oral and listening skills to the students of fourth grade.
2. To realize if the textbook is suitable to the students to develop their language skills.
3. To determine whether or not the teacher uses the textbook as the main source to develop the English lesson.

Checklist for the Publishing House

Read the following descriptors and then in the column next to them write a check mark to express the narrative that best describes the textbook you are using.

The Textbook	Excellent	Very good	Average	Good	Poor
Fits the curriculum goals					
Has appropriate linguistic content					
Has appropriate thematic content					
Fits the communicative approach principles					
Fulfills the students' language needs					
Contains the topics or the cognitive targets proposed by the MEP					
Matches the language learning needs of the students					
Is appropriate for the learners' ages and level.					
Integrates the four language skills					
Follows the official and institutional syllabus					
Is culturally appropriate					



Appendix 7

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Informants: Publisher House Publitex

Name: _____ (Optional)

Gender: Male ()

Female ()

Rating Scale

General Objective: The purpose of this rubric scale is to measure the effectiveness and suitability of the textbook Play and Learn from the teacher's perspective when teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to students of fourth grade.

Specific objectives:

1. To know whether or not the textbook is effective when teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking to the students of fourth grade.
2. To realize if the textbook is suitable to the students to develop their language skills.

Rating Scale

Read the following descriptors and then, in the column next to them write a check mark to express the score achieved that best describes the textbook. Five scores the highest grade and one scores the lowest grade achieved.

1. Speaking:	Scale from 1 to 5	Score achieved
Excellent: The textbook provides outstanding activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Always appropriate.	5	
Very good: The textbook provides appropriate activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Almost appropriate.	4	
Average: The textbook sometimes provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Average appropriate.	3	
Poor: The textbook rarely provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language and clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Seldom appropriate.	2	
Very poor: The textbook never provides activities that connect students to the real world use of the language nor clear instructions that can make the learners develop the exercises without having any problem when working individually or in groups. Inappropriate.	1	
2. Reading		
Excellent: The textbook is always adequate for the students' English proficiency level and presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Always appropriate.	5	
Very good: The textbook is often adequate for the students' English proficiency level and presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Almost appropriate.	4	
Average: The textbook is occasionally adequate for the students' English proficiency level and sometimes presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Sometimes appropriate.	3	
Poor: The textbook is seldom adequate for the students' English proficiency level and rarely presents pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length to facilitate comprehension. Hardly ever appropriate.	2	
Very poor: The textbook is never adequate for the students' English proficiency level and does not present pictures, new vocabulary, clear, appealing and readable texts with an appropriate length which facilitate comprehension. Inappropriate.	1	

3. Listening

Excellent: The textbook always has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are clear. Outstanding listening activities.

5

Very good: The textbook usually has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are clear. Very good listening activities.

4

Average: The textbook sometimes has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are sometimes clear. Average listening activities.

3

Poor: The textbook rarely has current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are not often clear. Deficient listening activities.

2

Very poor: The textbook does not have current issues, concrete exercises and examples and the instructions are not clear. No listening activities.

1

4. Writing

Excellent: The writing details and the information are always appealing, clear, and well developed and promote students' autonomy. Always appropriate.

5

Very good: Most of the writing and vocabulary used is often appropriated and related to the students' natural environment which promotes students' autonomy. Almost appropriate.

4

Average: Some exercises motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook and promote students' autonomy. Sometimes appropriate

3

Poor: exercises rarely motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook and hardly ever promote students' autonomy. Rarely appropriate

2

Very poor: exercises never motivate students to work on the activities established in the textbook. Inappropriate to promote students' autonomy.

1

Comments:

Final Grade

1	Producción Oral	
2	Lectura	
3	Escucha	
4	Escritura	
	Total	



Appendix 8

Universidad Nacional

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje

Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua

Schedule Interview

1. ¿Los textos que el libro posee son textos auténticos tomados de alguna revista o periódico de habla Inglesa?

Si ()

No ()

¿Por qué?

2. ¿Contiene el libro estructuras gramaticales explícitas?

Si ()

No ()

¿Por qué?

3. ¿El libro coincide con los temas propuestos por el MEP para primer y segundo ciclo?

Si ()

No ()

4. ¿Promueve el libro el desarrollo de actividades de escucha?

Si ()

No ()

¿Por qué?

¿Promueve el libro el desarrollo de actividades de producción oral?

Si ()

No () ¿Por qué?



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