

# A Study of the Dominant Type of Technique (Controlled, Semicontrolled and Free) of Two English Teachers from a Languages Teaching Program

Estudio acerca del tipo de técnica dominante (controlada, semicontrolada y libre) de dos profesores de inglés de un programa en licenciatura en idiomas

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This article shows the process and emerging results from a study held at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. It aims at describing and interpreting the dominant kind of language teaching technique: controlled, semicontrolled and free (Brown, 2001) within the context of two first semester English teachers of a languages teaching program. Data collection was based upon class observations, teachers' logs and a semi-structured interview that permitted triangulation of information in order to figure out the central research query. The analysis showed that the controlled technique predominates in both teachers' classes. Thus, this study intends to foster reflection and pedagogical debate regarding its implications for ELT instruction within that university.

*Key words:* Teacher education, controlled, semicontrolled and free techniques, ELT

Este artículo describe el proceso y resultados de un estudio realizado en una universidad privada en Bogotá, Colombia. Busca describir e interpretar el tipo dominante de técnica en la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera: controlada, semicontrolada y libre (Brown, 2001), en el contexto de las clases de inglés de dos profesores de primer semestre de un programa de licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras. La recolección de información se basó en observaciones, fichas de clase y una entrevista semiestructurada, las cuales permitieron triangular los datos con el objetivo de resolver la principal pregunta de investigación. El análisis de la información indicó que la técnica controlada predomina en las clases de ambos profesores. Por tanto, este estudio busca promover la reflexión y debate pedagógico sobre las implicaciones de dicha técnica en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en esa institución.

*Palabras claves:* Formación docente, técnica controlada, semicontrolada y libre, enseñanza de la lengua inglesa

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report on the main components that are part of a study I carried out with a partner to obtain my degree in foreign languages from a private university<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, inquiring into the types of language teaching techniques of two teachers of English is due to the fact that I was involved as an assistant in a research project of the research line on foreign language didactics from such an institution<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, I purport to describe the activities implemented by two first semester English teachers and categorize them within the frame of language teaching techniques stated by Brown (2001), since the taxonomy presented by him provides the best form of illustrating those English teachers' practice, which allows determining the principal kind of technique applied in their lessons.

Accordingly, I will present the main theoretical constructs that support this research; thereafter, I will delve into the issues related to the settings and participants, the type of study, the instruments implemented and the data collection procedure. Subsequently, the data analysis will be described regarding the two categories used for it. Then, I will state the conclusions that emerged from the data analysis, and finally, I will highlight the implications and suggestions for further research.

With the aim of developing this research project, I posed the following question and

subquestions that were the guidelines so as to carry out the mentioned study:

- What is the dominant language teaching technique (controlled, semicontrolled and free) of two first semester English teachers in a Spanish, English and French languages teaching program?

Subquestions:

- What are the teaching activities that materialize the techniques implemented by the participants of the study?
- What are the most common activities developed by the two participant English teachers?

## Theoretical Framework

The practice of teaching English as a second or foreign language has been a matter of discussion for many decades. For instance, a plethora of strategies which shows how to teach a specific language item can be observed in several handbooks in order to provide teachers with a “reliable” path to walk on. Nevertheless, such tips cannot be taken in isolation; on the contrary, they must be thought to fit classroom variables and to fulfill students' needs, and also they are expected to be adopted and adapted by teachers on the basis of an ongoing reflection upon their teaching practice.

With this in mind, the meaning of **technique** will be tackled from different authors' perspectives in order to present how it is understood or taken for the development of this research. Thereafter,

<sup>1</sup> Diana Rocío Romero Guzmán was my partner during the development of the research project.

<sup>2</sup> The title of the project was “A descriptive study of the English teachers' didactic sequences in the Languages Teaching Program”

I will introduce the sort of techniques for English language teaching as well as types of activities.

The term technique concerning ELT instruction was coined by Anthony (1963), who was the pioneer who established a seminal work on such a concept since he asserted that *a technique* is implementational; that is, it is a particular trick, stratagem or contrivance that is intended to achieve a goal. On the other hand, Doff (1988) claims that teaching techniques have to do with the organization of learning activities. That is to say, an activity can be developed in different ways so as to obtain different results in accordance with the steps followed by the teacher. By the same token, Brown (1995) introduces his own assertion of the term technique which, according to him, constitutes the ways teachers select for presenting language items to learners taking into consideration that they must fulfill students' needs.

Conversely, Brown (2001) goes beyond as regards what technique means within ELT instruction. Thus, he claims it is a superordinate term to refer to various activities that either teachers or learners perform in the classroom since they include all tasks and activities. In addition, they are almost planned and deliberate, considering they are the product of a choice made by the teacher that can be addressed to the pedagogical units or components of a classroom session.

As can be noticed, the word technique has been redefined since Anthony's groundwork, and, notwithstanding some modifications triggered over the years, we can see how Edward Anthony's foundations

remain solid despite new studies on this subject. Consequently, I will discuss the term *technique* along this research not only bearing in mind his assertions but also drawing attention to the fact that techniques have to do with a teleological and procedural view of language teaching with respect to the teacher's stance, his/her personal traits, the specifications posed on the syllabus, the institutional policies, the objectives expected to be achieved through a particular activity that is framed within a lesson, as well as the particular conditions that characterize an EFL classroom; besides, the extent to which such factors might affect learners' performance in the target language has to be considered.

### *A Menu of Language Teaching Techniques*

As I have already pointed out, this research is focused on Brown's taxonomy of language teaching techniques (2001). Therefore, it is worth presenting his work in relation to that classification. Thus, he asserts that techniques move from a manipulative to a communicative dimension; that is, when it is manipulative, the technique is absolutely controlled by the teacher with a predicted response from students. For instance drilling, dictation and reading aloud are typically controlled. When talking about communicative, learner's answers have an open-ended nature in which the teacher has less control and therefore students interact in a freer and spontaneous form. Story-telling, brainstorming, role-plays, and information gaps, among others, are samples of such a technique.

Next, in order to clarify what control means, Brown underscores there is always control in the classroom whether it is overt or covert. Consequently, this author explains the differences between controlled and free techniques. Table 1 will explain those concepts. See also that it has two approaches: one characterizes the controlled and free techniques whereas the other defines what semicontrolled is:

As a result, Brown illustrates a taxonomy of techniques adapted from Crookes & Chaudron (1991). Here he indicates he uses the term technique to what was referred as “activity” by those theoreticians; thus, such a taxonomy is divided into three categories: controlled, semicontrolled, and free. (See Appendix 1). The first authors to propose this taxonomy were Crookes & Chaudron. It was centered on classroom observation done by Chaudron with the purpose of displaying a list of activities grouped into three levels of teacher and student control with respect to the performance of the activity. Likewise, they pointed out that the topic and the teacher’s goals can vary the degree of control.

It is also worth noting that Brown asserted that many techniques might be

difficult to categorize due to the control continuum; besides, some others will overlap in more than one category. Nonetheless, he claimed that the taxonomy can be considered as follows:

- An aid to raising the awareness of the variety of techniques
- An indicator of how techniques differ from controlled to free
- A resource to apply the different types of techniques for the classroom

Taking into consideration the previous overview of the three types of techniques in accordance with Brown, we can now move to what he states in relation to *activity*. In his view, the term activity is anything that students do in the classroom involving their participation and not the teacher’s. By contrast, Crookes (2003) contends that an “activity is a segment of classroom life... is intended to cover all distinguishable behavioral segments in a classroom...” (p. 144). However we look at those definitions, it can be inferred that Crookes’ concept of activity is very similar to what Brown stated regarding techniques. In other words, both terms have to do with everything done by teacher and students in the classroom and

Table 1. Types of language teaching techniques.

Controlled	Semicontrolled	Free
Teacher-centered	Use of language in a less restrictive way than the controlled, but taking into account linguistic patterns already set up by the teacher.	Student-centered
Manipulative		Communicative
Structured		Open-ended
Predicted student responses		Unpredicted responses
Pre-planned objectives Set curriculum		Negotiated objectives Cooperative curriculum

that is why they are connected. Nonetheless, along this study we will refer to activity as what is done by students, and technique as the intent that underlies the activities proposed by the teacher.

We can notice in this sense that the concerns and theories underlying language teaching have triggered the emergence of teaching techniques that have appeared in harmony with a particular educational paradigm. For this reason, the aim of this conceptual framework was to be aware of the main concepts dealt with in this research.

### **Methodology**

This study adhered to a qualitative approach to research which, in accordance with Taylor & Bodgan (1987), Merriam (1998) and Burns (1999), draws on data collected by the researcher to try to understand and explain the meaning of human behavior or social phenomena. Moreover, it is a descriptive –interpretative study that is characterized by the use of questions which do not contain any kind of variable. The study only describes and attempts to interpret the phenomenon under study (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990).

### ***Participants and Setting***

This research project was held at the Languages Department of a private university in Bogotá, Colombia, particularly in the English area of a languages teaching program. The selection of the participants for this study was nonrandom or purposeful (Bonilla-Castro & Rodríguez, 2005), keeping in mind that the two English

teachers, who are the main subjects of this article, come from the group of six that participated in the aforementioned project on which I worked as assistant. Within the group of six teachers, two belonged to first semester, two taught in third semester and the remaining two in fifth semester, including both day and night shifts.

First of all, the teachers were told about the insights of the research project and then every one was asked about their willingness to be part of the study. Subsequently, they signed the consent forms to become participants of the research. Our two participants were the two first semester teachers Sarah<sup>3</sup>, from the day shift, and Robert, from the night shift. Their ages ranged between 30 and 40 years old. Furthermore, they had been teaching for over 10 and 15 years, respectively, at different schools and universities and had been working for the university for more than two years.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

We implemented the following instruments to collect data: Firstly, class observation forms that were considered the most suitable form to register all realities found in an L2 classroom. As stated by Seligner & Shohamy, 1990, this type of non-structured observation permits obtaining a great amount of data. It is also worth clarifying that the researchers, who adopted a non participant role as observers with the aim of not disrupting teacher and students' performance, applied such an instrument.

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<sup>3</sup> The names used for the participants along this paper are pseudonyms to protect their real identity.

This is related to Burns' (1999) concept of non-participant observation that has to do with recording with a highly descriptive narration without subjective evaluation of the facts observed.

The second source of information was teachers' logs that were completed by the participants who should describe in detail the development of their class from their own view (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). And the last one, a semi-structured interview, was carried out by the researchers to inquire about teachers' daily professional activity. As Burns remarks, this type of interview is open-ended in order to provide more flexibility by using a guideline of questions and giving rise to a more equal balance between interviewer and interviewee. The piloting process was developed in 2006, while the data gathering stage was from January to March, 2007.

### *Categories for Data Analysis*

When the data collected were being analyzed, we adopted two main categories so as to group such information and achieve the principal research goal, which was to identify the dominant language teaching technique. Therefore, the categories implemented were *language teaching techniques* and *teaching activities*. Consequently, to enhance internal validity for our study we established *triangulation* that is carried out by using multiple investigators, sources of information or methods to confirm the emerging findings (Merriam, 1998). In this sense, we completed a deep reading of the raw data provided by the three instruments. This intended to establish a dialogue among the

instruments to verify whether the outcomes would be similar or not.

Moreover, we made a statistical analysis to go through the two mentioned categories based on the two participants' instruments (observation sheets and teachers' logs) as the interview did not provide enough information to gather statistics. It is important to emphasize that statistics were used in order to organize and categorize the results in terms of a frequency criterion in order to then analyze them and interpret them in the light of the elements already determined. Likewise, an a priori approach was implemented to analyze data since it is centered on established categories to find patterns and frequencies (Freeman, 1998). Additionally, to identify common patterns in the three instruments, the subsequent coding procedures were established:

A= Activity

1,2,3...39 = Type of activity

Controlled Technique =  $\Delta$  (triangle)

Semiconrolled Technique = O (circle)

Free Technique =  $\square$ (square)

### **Findings of the Study**

After analyzing the information gathered and bearing in mind the two established categories, we will look first at the core of this study; that is to say, the three types of language teaching techniques: controlled, semiconrolled and free. It means that we will see the emerging results in regards to the dominant technique and thereafter the four activities most developed by the participants on the basis of the taxonomy presented by Brown. Diagrams 1 and 2 illustrated that



the dominant technique for teacher Sarah is the controlled with 84% and the most highly ranked for teacher Robert is also the controlled that obtained 81%.

Now, the emerging statistics in relation to the teachers' logs are displayed in diagrams 3 and 4.

The comparative chart (Table 2) below depicts the results obtained for every teacher concerning the two main instruments applied.

These findings determine that the controlled technique is the most used by teacher Sarah with 57% in

Language Teaching Techniques (Class Observation Sheets)

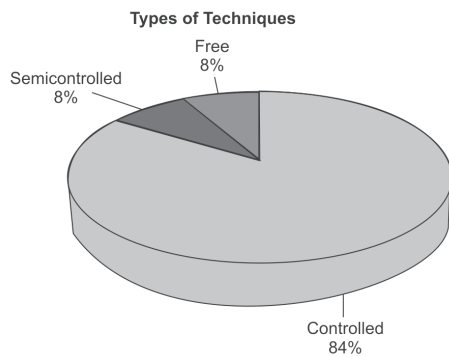


Diagram 1. Sarah

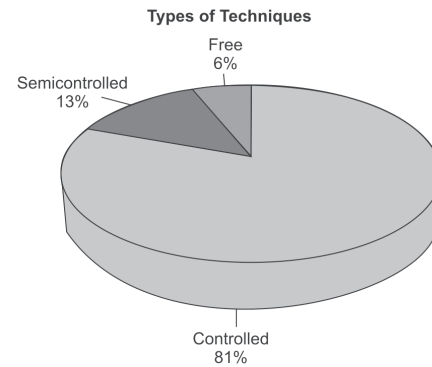


Diagram 2. Robert

Language Teaching Techniques (Teachers' logs)

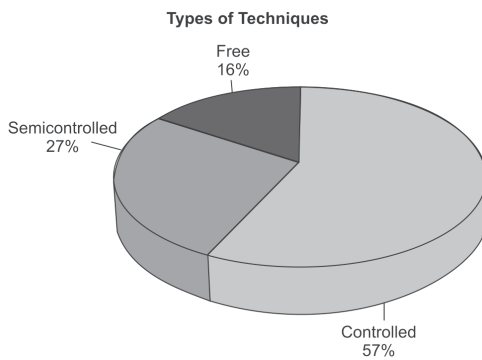


Diagram 3. Sarah

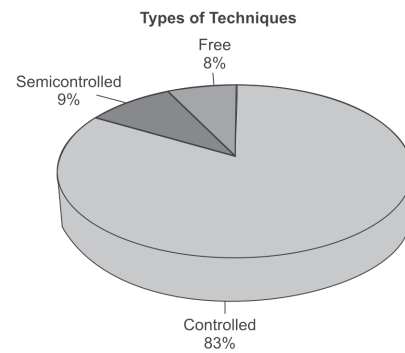


Diagram 4. Robert

Table 2. Comparative Chart Language Teaching Techniques.

Sarah's Techniques		Robert's Techniques	
Observations	Logs	Observations	Logs
Controlled= 84%	Controlled= 57%	Controlled= 81%	Controlled= 83%
Semiconrolled= 8%	Semiconrolled= 27%	Semiconrolled= 13%	Semiconrolled= 9%
Free= 8%	Free= 16%	Free= 6%	Free= 8%

the logs; by contrast, it obtained 84% on the observation sheets. The semicontrolled showed 27% over an 8% from the observations; whereas, the free technique had 6% in comparison to the observations which ranked 8%. Relating to the emerging outcomes from teacher Robert's instruments, we can say that both observation sheets and teacher's logs displayed very similar results. The controlled technique obtained 83%, over 81% in the observations; then it was followed by the semicontrolled with 9% on the logs, with 13% in the observation sheets. The free technique had 8% on the logs according to a 6% in the observations.

Accordingly, what the participants have in common is that the controlled technique is paramount concerning the statistical results. Thus, I will examine the second category of analysis -teaching activities- in order to find out whether the preceding outcomes can be validated or not. In other words, when analyzing such a category, I will highlight the four activities most developed by every teacher, taking into consideration a frequency criterion. Subsequently, I will determine which kind of technique each activity corresponds to in accordance with Brown's taxonomy. To do this, the emerging results from class observation

sheets and teachers' logs are displayed in Table 3.

To understand the previous chart, the letter A means the abbreviation for activity, while the number comes from the 39 activities described in Brown's classification (see Appendix 1). Besides, the chart indicates that both teachers' classes are very similar in relation to the activities applied. In other words, among the four kinds of activities more highly ranked for each of them, they just differ in the last one, so that the fourth activity developed by teacher Sarah is the 16th, "Identification", whereas the fourth for teacher Robert is the 10th, "Correction or Feedback". Thus, what can be concluded from these findings is that both professors Sarah and Robert often implement activities referring to controlled language teaching techniques, which have to do with a few creative or spontaneous uses of language of students so that the teacher knows beforehand the responses that will be given by students.

Teachers' logs had the same system of coding data as the one of the observation sheets since the purpose was to establish relationships between the two instruments. Nonetheless, it is important to clarify that teachers' logs were not as descriptive as the observation sheets; for that reason, what teachers

**Table 3.** Comparative chart Language Teaching Activities (Class Observation Sheets)

Sarah	Robert
A3 "Organizational" = 33%	A3 "Organizational" = 30%
A9 "Checking" = 22%	A9 "Checking" = 15%
A4 "Content Explanation" = 8%	A4 "Content Explanation" = 10%
A16 "Identification" = 6%	A10 "Correction or Feedback" = 7%



wrote down from their own perspective should be considered carefully when analyzing data because activities might have been described differently from the observations due to the fact that every teacher has his/her own theoretical and experiential background regarding ELT instruction. In this sense, the statistics that emerged as concerns the most representative activities for teacher Sarah and Robert according to the logs were the ones shown in Table 4.

To have a simpler view from such statistics, tables 5 and 6 make a comparison of the outcomes obtained in each instrument.

The previous pie chart from professor Sarah's logs indicates changes with respect to the observation sheets. For example, the activity more highly ranked was A16 "identification" with 24%, while on the observation sheets it was the last with 6%; the second was A9 "checking" with 14%, which had 22% in the observations; however, the most noticeable difference was A38 "composition" with 8%, which belongs to the free technique and did not appear as a relevant activity on the observation sheets. Now, the outcomes concerning Robert's logs were the following:

**Table 4.** Comparative chart Language Teaching Activities (Teachers' logs)

Sarah's Logs	Robert's Logs
A16 "Identification" = 24%	A3 "Organizational" = 17%
A9 "Checking" = 14%	A4 "Content Explanation" = 17%
A38 "Composition" = 8%	A9 "Checking" = 17%
A19 "Testing" = 6%	A16 "Identification" = 9%

**Table 5.** Comparative Chart Sarah.

Observation Sheets	Logs
A3 "Organizational" = 33%	A16 "Identification" = 24%
A9 "Checking" = 22%	A9 "Checking" = 14%
A4 "Content Explanation" = 8%	A38 "Composition" = 8%
A16 "Identification" = 6%	A19 "Testing" = 6%

**Table 6.** Comparative Chart Robert.

Observation Sheets	Logs
A3 "Organizational" = 30%	A3 "Organizational" = 17%
A9 "Checking" = 15%	A4 "Content Explanation" = 17%
A4 "Content Explanation" = 10%	A9 "Checking" = 17%
A10 "Correction or Feedback" = 7%	A16 "Identification" = 9%

What Robert's findings tell us is that there is a correlation between the logs and the observation sheets regarding the most practiced activities. That is to say, A3 "organizational" obtained the highest percentage with 17% and in the observations it was the first with 30%; the second rank in the logs was A4 "content explanation" with 17% while it was the third on the observation sheets with 10%; the next activity scored on the logs was A9 "checking" with 17% whereas in the observations it had second place with 15%; the last activity more highly ranked in the logs was A16 "identification" with 9%, but it did not appear among the ones with the highest percentages on the observation sheets.

### *A Perspective of the Language Teaching Techniques from the applied instruments*

In what follows I will illustrate some samples taken from the observation sheets, teachers' logs and semi-structured interviews to clarify how teaching techniques were handled by Sarah and Robert. To do this, I will display excerpts obtained from the information collected, drawing attention toward the activities that were more highly ranked. Therefore, as the activity with the highest percentage was A3 "Organizational", I will define and describe it from a sample as follows:

The managerial structuring of lesson or class activities is also called "organizational". It includes disciplinary action, organization of class furniture and seating, general procedures for class interaction and performance, structure and purpose of

lesson, assigning homework or any other out of class task, etc. (Adapted from Brown, 2001).

(3Δ) Teacher passes out a handout to classify expressions related to work. Students are told they may be given 10 minutes to work in pairs, check in dictionaries and match expressions (Observation sheet, Sarah, February 8, 2007)

This excerpt demonstrates that the teacher gives learners instructions which are intended to guide them for their task completion: "Students are told they may be given 10 minutes to work in pairs, check in dictionaries and match expressions". That is why she distributes some material, gives students some time limit, and arranges the class activity by pairs. Thereby, activity 3 was linked to this passage since the teacher organized the activity steps for students to follow and thus achieve its objective. Likewise, it is an organizational activity in which the teacher plays a role that has to do with the control of the class, because she is the one who says what should be done; besides, it can be inferred that there is not a creative use of language since learners' response are already known by the teacher. Hence, it belongs to a controlled technique (Δ).

Despite the organizational activity being mostly recorded on the observations (33 and 30% for Sarah and Robert, respectively), it was never registered on the logs by the participants. This may be due to the fact that such an activity is considered by them as an innate aspect of foreign language teaching so that giving instructions, arranging classroom seats, scolding students, etc. is part of an L2 classroom life. Notwithstanding, it is worth

highlighting that the organizational activity is part of the controlled technique when pupils are directed in an explicit way by the teacher because his/her directions have been clearly specified.

Similar to Sarah, the third activity scored in Robert's statistics was A4 which had 10%. That is known as **Content explanation** that, according to Brown, has to do with the explanation of the lesson content: grammatical, phonological, lexical (vocabulary), sociolinguistic, pragmatic, or any other aspects of language. The upcoming samples will describe this activity as follows:

(4A) "The teacher explains saying that in Spanish we use "una/un" and gives more examples".

(4A) "He says the second rule is with "h". He says the word hotel is voiced, it sounds like a "j" and in other cases when the pronunciation is voiceless, (no sound) you use "an". He has written these examples on the board." (Observation sheet, Robert February 2nd, 2007).

The first passage as well as the excerpt of log shed light on the participant's purpose of making clear to the students the use of indefinite articles in English by translating what they mean: "The teacher explains saying that in Spanish we use "una/un" and gives more examples". Besides, he stated the activity intent: "To clarify the use of indefinite articles A/AN". Likewise, he points out the use of such articles by giving a phonological explanation: "When the

pronunciation is voiceless (no sound), you use "an". It is also a controlled technique (Δ) because what this professor purports is to lead the explanation of a language item for students to internalize it. Besides, it is assumed that he is the only one with the pertinent knowledge and therefore the one who controls the way this input is conveyed to students.

On the whole, what I might infer from these outcomes is that every single instrument applied to collect data (observation sheets and teacher's logs), revealed that the controlled technique is dominant regarding what was displayed by statistics. Additionally, it is important to remember that the semi-structured interview did not undergo statistical analysis since it did not provide enough information. However, there were very useful excerpts which contribute to support what has been found in the other instruments.

On the other hand, to validate the results that assert the controlled technique is dominant over both professors' lessons. It is clear that the participant English teachers used most of the time activities such as 3 "organizational", 4 "content explanation", 9 "checking" and so forth. Yet, Sarah and Robert developed such activities in their own way; that is, activities were not developed literally as they were posed by Brown, which confronted somehow his

Activity	Objective	Material used
(4A) To clarify the use of indefinite articles A/AN.	Describing your room.	Pictures

(Teacher Log Robert, February 2nd, 2007)

taxonomy, so that his foundations were not utterly fulfilled by what was found in the information gathered.

Relating to the semicontrolled and free techniques, it is worth noting that despite not obtaining very high percentages they are remarkable features within those teachers' lessons since there were overt activities recorded that evidenced the professors' attempt to promote such techniques. Therefore, as I have previously pointed out, the existing implications to these findings will be commented on in the forthcoming section.

## Conclusions

Keeping in mind that the first category of analysis and the research question were to identify the dominant language teaching technique of two teachers of English, I can say that the results of the study revealed that the technique most developed by both professors is the controlled, which pinpoints activity-centered lessons as a helpful form of guiding students' learning process. In other words, what the analysis of data indicated is that most of the time students had to work on language activities which were intended to practice linguistic forms.

The second category of analysis was concerned with identifying the four activities most practiced by Sarah and Robert as regards the 39 taken from the proposed taxonomy of Brown. Thereby, what the statistical analysis portrayed is that the activities favored the most were 3 "organizational", 4 "content explanation", 9 "checking", 10 "correction or feedback", 16 "identification", 19 "testing" and 38

"composition". Except for the last one, what all of them have in common is that they belong to the controlled technique framed within Brown's classification. In this sense, the fact of having a controlled technique to teaching a foreign language can be due to several variables. For instance, it is worth noting that the two participant teachers were observed while they were teaching first semester students, which may constitute a relevant factor of such an instructional decision-making. That is to say, it is important to highlight that teaching English as a foreign language to first semester students of a teaching program requires the adoption of a directive role, since learners are at the initial phase of their learning process and, therefore, they need to be led concerning the input provided and the output expected from them.

When looking at the emerging results from the instruments applied, there were overt activities that revealed that the expected outcome was linguistic rather than communicative because the teachers' intent was to teach students the accurate form of language utterances. Therefore, such a purpose indicates that what both professors purport is to foster the linguistic competence of their pupils. Yet, when the participants were interviewed, they asserted their language teaching approach was mainly communicative. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the communicative approach faces two main stages according to Littlewood (1981): pre-communicative activities and communicative activities. The first refers to giving the learners a complete control over language forms by emphasizing on the production of

accurate utterances; that is, such activities are intended to prepare learners for future communication, which means the progression from controlled practice to a creative language use. The second concentrates on an effective production of meaning in which the activities provided should enhance the emergence of the skills acquired by the student within the previous phase. Hence, its objective has to do with the capacity of conveying what a speaker purports.

Bearing in mind the above foundations, it could be asserted that teachers Sarah and Robert are fostering the former stage of the communicative approach, since they draw attention to language forms and that is why they implemented a controlled technique to language teaching. Accordingly, their methodological choice would be reasonable so that they were in charge of beginner students who require the knowledge of the target language to succeed in further communication. Furthermore, although teachers intended to promote communicative activities, the final result was assessed in terms of grammatical or linguistic features, which disregarded the original communicative purpose of the activity developed.

In short, implementing a controlled technique to language teaching is not a decision at random since, as stated in the theoretical framework part, techniques are considered within this research as a teleological and procedural view of language teaching. Therefore, we can see there are many variables to bear in mind when teaching a foreign language, and due to those concerns, professors Sarah and

Robert selected such a means to carry out their lessons.

### Further Research

It would be interesting to delve into other professors' lessons from more advanced semesters so as to compare whether the findings might be similar or not. Likewise, as my partner and I worked based on an a priori research approach, it could be more challenging to focus on a grounded research approach in accordance with the information gathered. In regards to the instruments applied, implementing journals, doing member-checks or participatory research (Merriam, 1998) would make teachers active subjects regarding their teaching practice and the study itself.

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## Appendix 1: Taxonomy of Language Teaching Techniques

(Brown, 2001, adapted from Crookes & Chaudron, 1991, p. 52-54)

### Controlled Techniques

1. **Warm up:** Mimes, dance, songs, jokes, play. This activity has the purpose of getting the students stimulated, relaxed, motivated, attentive, or otherwise engaged and ready for the classroom lesson. It does not necessarily involve use of the target language.
2. **Setting:** Focusing in on lesson topic. Either verbal or nonverbal evocation of the context that is relevant to the lesson point by way of questioning or miming or picture presentation; possibly tape recording of situations and people. Teacher directs attention to the upcoming topic.
3. **Organizational:** Managerial structuring of lesson or class activities. Includes disciplinary action, organization of class furniture and seating, general procedures for class interaction and performance, structure and purpose of lesson, assigning homework or any other out of class task, etc.
4. **Content explanation:** Explanation of lesson content involving grammatical, phonological, lexical (vocabulary), sociolinguistic, pragmatic, or any other aspects of language.
5. **Role-play demonstration:** Use of selected students or teacher to illustrate the 11 procedure(s) to be applied in the lesson segment to follow. Includes a brief illustration of language or other content to be incorporated.
6. **Dialogue/Narrative presentation:** Reading or listening passage presented for passive reception. No implication of student production or other identification of specific target forms or functions (students may be asked to “understand”).
7. **Dialogue/Narrative recitation:** Reciting a previously known or prepared text, either in unison or individually.
8. **Reading aloud:** Teacher or student reading directly from a given text.
9. **Checking:** Teacher either circulating or guiding the correction of students’ work, providing feedback as an activity rather than within another activity. It can happen when students socialize work or after activities when it is necessary to check students’ answers to a given exercise. It also includes students’ peer correction.
10. **Correction or feedback:**<sup>4</sup> Teacher or students jumping in during students’ performance to make corrections, provide feedback, make related comments, complete or finish students’ sentences, add information (it includes short content reviews).

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4 The addition of such an activity was thought of because when we were reading the raw data, it was very common of the participants to disrupt students when they made mistakes with respect to linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and so forth).

11. **Question-answer, display:** Activity involving prompting of student responses by means of display questions (i.e. teacher or questioner already knowing the response or having a very limited set of expectations for the appropriate response). Distinguished from referential questions by means of the likelihood of the questioner's knowing the response and the speaker's being aware of that fact. Students' questions to the teacher or their partners comprise part of this activity. Remember that the fact of using yes/no questions is not the only criterion, the main criterion is the fact that the questioner knows the answer.  
In class students usually don't know the answer, so their questions would fit into referential questions.
12. **Drill:** Typical language activity involving fixed patterns of teacher and student responding and prompting, usually with repetition, substitution, and other mechanical alterations. Typically with little meaning attached.
13. **Translation:** Student or teacher provision of L1 or L2 translations of given text.
14. **Dictation:** Student writing down orally presented text.
15. **Copying:** Student writing down text presented visually.
16. **Identification:** Student picking out and producing/labeling or otherwise identifying a specific target form, function, definition, meaning or other lesson-related item. Reading comprehension exercises comprise part of this activity.
17. **Recognition:** Student identifying forms, etc., as in Identification, but without producing language as response (i.e., checking off items, drawing symbols, rearranging pictures).
18. **Review:** Teacher-led review of previous week/month or other period as a formal summary and type of test of student recall performance.
19. **Testing:** Formal testing procedures to evaluate student progress.
20. **Meaningful drill:** Drill activity involving responses with meaningful choices, as in reference to different information. Distinguished from *Information Exchange* by the regulated sequence and general form of responses.

### Semicontrolled Techniques

21. **Brainstorming:** A special form of preparation for the lesson, like Setting, which involves free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them; no explicit analysis or interpretation by the teacher.
22. **Story-telling** (especially when student-generated): Not necessarily lesson-based. Lengthy presentation of story or even by teacher or student (may overlap with Warm-up or Narrative recitation). May be used to maintain attention, motivation, or as lengthy practice.
23. **Question-answer, referential:** Activity involving prompting of responses by means of referential questions (i.e. the questioner does not know beforehand the response information). Distinguished from Question-answer, Display.

24. **Cued narrative/Dialog:** Student production of narrative or dialog following cues from miming, cue cards, pictures, or other stimuli related to narrative/dialog (e.g. metalanguage requesting functional acts).
25. **Information transfer:** Application from one mode (e.g. visual) to another (e.g. writing), which involves some transformation of the information (e.g. student fills out diagram while listening to description). Distinguished from Identification in that the student is expected to transform and reinterpret the language or information.
26. **Information exchange:** Task involving two-way communication as in information gap exercises, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must share information to achieve some goal. Distinguished from Question-answer. Referential in that sharing of information is critical for the resolution of task.
27. **Wrap-up:** Brief teacher or student produced summary or report at the end of a lesson or activity of point and/or items that have been practiced or learned.
28. **Narration/exposition:** Presentation of a story or explanation derived from prior stimuli (that is to say, a dialog or story that the student received before and is not the product of something the teacher is showing him/her like pictures or scenes for students to construct at the moment). Distinguished from Cued Narrative because of lack of immediate stimulus.
29. **Preparation:** Student study, silent reading, pair planning and rehearsing, preparing for later activity. Usually a student-directed or -oriented project.

### Free Techniques

30. **Role-play:** Relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions. Distinguished from Cued Dialogues by the fact that cueing is provided only minimally at the beginning, and not during the activity.
31. **Games:** Various kinds of language game activity, if not like other previously defined activities (e.g. board and dice games making words).
32. **Report:** Report of student-prepared exposition on books, experiences, project work, without immediate stimulus, and elaborated on according to student interests. Akin to Composition in writing mode.
33. **Problem solving:** Activity involving specified problem and limitations of means to resolve it; requires cooperative action on part of participants in small or large group.
34. **Drama:** planned dramatic rendition of play, skit, story, etc.
35. **Simulation:** Activity involving complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real-life actions and experiences.
36. **Interview:** A student is directed to get information from another student or students.

37. **Discussion:** Debate or other form of grouped discussion (between teacher and students or students among them) of specified topic, with or without specified sides/positions prearranged. In these discussions the teacher can also play an important role.
38. **Composition:** As in Report (verbal), written development of ideas, story or other exposition.
39. **A propos:** Conversation or other socially oriented interaction/speech by teacher, students, or even visitors, on general real-life copies. Typically authentic and genuine.