TEACHING SPEAKING AND SPEAKING SKILL ASSESSMENT IN A 10TH GRADE OF A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL FROM PEREIRA

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This study was done thanks to the support of our families, whose effort and faith in our capacities inspired us to work hard day to day and give our best in the development of this project. To our research work group, whose participants Marcela, Cristina and Sebastian, learned and grew professionally as teachers and researchers throughout the project, overcoming difficulties as the available time for the meetings, the amount of work done by each one of us, and the disagreements we had for any kind of problem. To our advisor, Lic. Humberto Uchima Tasama, who guided us with his knowledge and professionalism, and whose wise suggestions led us to the right path. To the high school and the participants who let us develop our research project. And the most important, to God, who gave us life, health, patience, and encouragement for finishing this research project. Thanks God.
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To my parents Liliana and Nelson, I love you so much, you are my blessing, thanks for everything.
To my future husband Jorge, you are my happiness.
To God who gave me the strength, health and capacities.

To my grandmother Dammars Agudelo de Gomez I love you so much, thanks for being my support and my beautiful angel.

To my mother Gloria Elena Gomez, thanks for giving me this beautiful life, despite the distance during a lot of time you were always in my mind and my heart.

To my uncles Juan Carlos Gomez and Maria Esther Gomez, you were always near to me and for that reason I consider you as my parents, thank you so much for everything during this twenty-five years.

To my parents Juan Norberto and Liliana Patricia, thanks for your love and your support.
To God who guided me all the time.
To my husband David Ospina and to our baby who is a God’s gift
La finalidad de este proyecto fue describir como se da el proceso de enseñanza y evaluación de la producción oral en el décimo grado de un colegio público de la ciudad de Pereira, teniendo en cuenta las percepciones de los estudiantes y de los profesores en cuanto a la instrucción y el aprendizaje del habla y los aspectos que emergen en la investigación con base en la exposición al idioma que se da en las clases de inglés. Los objetivos para el proyecto de investigación fueron: 1) describir como el proceso de enseñanza y evaluación de la producción oral es desarrollado por los profesores en el grado décimo de un colegio público en Pereira. 2) revelar las percepciones de los profesores y de los estudiantes acerca de la enseñanza y aprendizaje de la producción oral. Los datos fueron reunidos mediante cuatro instrumentos, como son los videos, las observaciones, las entrevistas y los cuestionarios. Los datos fueron analizados con el fin de responder a las siguientes preguntas: 1) ¿Qué nos dice la exposición a las clases de inglés acerca de la forma en la que la producción oral es enseñada y evaluada? 2) ¿Cuáles son las percepciones de los estudiantes y de los profesores hacia la enseñanza de la producción oral?
The purpose of this project was to describe how the process of teaching and assessment of the speaking skill is done in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira, taken into account the students’ and teachers’ perceptions related to the instruction and learning of the speaking skill and the aspects that emerge in the research based on the exposure to the language given in the English classes. The objectives for the research project were: 1) to describe how the process of teaching and assessing the speaking skill is developed by English teachers in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira. 2) To show the perceptions English teachers and learners have about the teaching and learning of the speaking skill. Data was gathered through four instruments such as videos, the observations, the interviews, and the questionnaires. Data was analyzed in order to answer the research questions: 1) what does the exposure to English classes in a public high school tell us about the way speaking is taught and assessed? 2) What are teachers’ and learners’ perceptions towards the teaching of speaking skill?
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INTRODUCTION

This project emerges from the lack of research developed in the field of the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill in the region of Pereira – Risaralda, with the purpose to contribute to teachers and the public institutions with a research that shows the results related to the oral production as a base for future improvement. The qualitative research project was developed in a public high school located in the city of Pereira - Colombia, with the contribution of six participants (two English teachers and four students from 10th grade) and three researchers. This study was aimed to identify how the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill was developed in a public high school from Pereira, taken as a base the perspectives that teachers and learners have towards the instruction of the oral production and the principal aspects that emerged from the research related to the exposure that learners had to the English language.

The document is divided into several sections that show the important aspects of the research project. In the first section of this study is found the statement of the problem which shows the gap in the knowledge that is based on the problems that are around the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill in public schools from Colombia and especially in Risaralda. Those problems are focused on several factors; among them, the fact that English teachers do not speak in English, implying a lack of knowledge and preparation for teaching speaking, so the same gap is presented at the moment to assess the speaking skill.

In the second section is found the literature review that was developed from the information found in books, articles and studies that provided the principals of the speaking skill, the relevant
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copyrights of this field, and the results derived from the research in the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill, and which served as point of reference for the discussions and support for the findings of project. Among the concepts that the literature review shows, are the theory of what speaking is, the aspects that the teaching of speaking implies, the definition of the assessment process, the types of assessment, and some studies related to the problems of the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill.

In the third section, the methodology shows how the process of gathering data was developed. It provides several concepts of the instruments used for gathering data; also, it involves the data analysis of the gathered information, describing how the process was developed starting from how each instrument takes place in the collection of data. The observations and video recordings support one to another providing the specific details from the action performed in the classes that were observed. The questionnaires and interviews served for collecting data of teachers and students perceptions about the teaching and assessment of the oral production, also for specific information about teachers’ background and preparation for teaching English.

Finally, through the processes of gathering data and data analysis using the four instruments, in the fourth section the project reveals how some gaps based on the limited resources, listening input limitations, and learners’ lack of confidence have an effect on the practice and improvement in the students’ oral production. In addition, in terms of the assessment of the speaking skill, the project shows that English language input is insufficient for the tasks learners have to perform, and that the main aspects that teachers consider as the most relevant for assessing are focused on elements of accuracy.
1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The demands of the current society have led governments from different countries to reflect and analyze the aspects required to be internationally competitive. Thus, if a country wants to be competitive in today's society, it is essential that its citizens have access to qualified education that enables them to be equipped with strong professional and linguistic competences so that they can interact with people from other countries in aspects of their interests such as economy and education. To achieve this, it is necessary to create a language policy as it was the case in Europe with the Common European Framework. An example in South America can be taken from the experience of countries such as Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Paraguay which realized that to become competitive, it was necessary to create a well-structured Language policy. In Colombia, the Ministry of Education started a Program of Bilingualism choosing English as the international Language to be taught in schools. The selection of such language is due to the opportunities English offers to its users in terms of business and education, not only inside the country but also abroad.

In Colombia and the coffee growing region, the commercial sector is hiring people with proficiency in English since alliances made with international companies require employees who can interact with people from other countries, in which the English language becomes the bridge to establish communication. For instance, sending emails, answering phone calls, interacting in a video conference, etc. are some of the situations in which the English language is required. In addition, people from several countries are visiting touristic places in the region which also demands employees with proficiency in English. In the educational sector, specially undergraduate and graduate programs, different universities, including the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, have started projects of
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internalization so that students and teachers can study abroad. Some agreements have been established with countries such as France and scholarships or programs like YMCM, Fulbright, AIESEC, etc. are also offered. The agreements and programs demand language users with proficiency in oral production. The University also receives students from other countries like China, in which one of the main aims is to provide students from the university and those from foreign countries with opportunities to study and learn from another culture. Therefore, it is evident that the chances to interact in English in and outside Colombia have increased lately, and one skill that requires English users to be equipped with strong competences measured by international standards is the oral production skill, which is the focus of the present study.

In order to make sure that students develop English competences with international standards, the Ministry of Education took the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) as the referent to create the document “Guía 22: Formar en Lenguas Extranjeras: el Reto”. The CEFRL (2001) states what language users must be equipped with in the speaking skill. It states the type of activities in which language users must produce oral texts in front of an audience such as reading aloud, sustained monologues, public announcements, etc. It also refers to elements of spoken interaction in which the language user alternates the role of speaker and listener with other interlocutors in order to negotiate meaning using the cooperative principle explained by Grice (1975). For instance, casual conversations, debates, interviews, among others are some of those elements. These aspects considered in speaking are organized in illustrative descriptors according to the proficiency levels that start from A1 (basic user) to C2 (competent user). Additionally, the CEFRL has a self-assessment grid that specifies what users can do in spoken interaction and spoken production. It also has the common
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reference levels, which include the qualitative aspects of spoken language use. Such aspects are described from A1 to C2, and they are categorized in aspects like range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence.

Taking into account the elements of the speaking skill specified in the illustrative descriptors from the CEFRL, the document “Guía 22” proposes general and specific standards. The specific standards referred to speaking are divided into two aspects, oral expression and oral interaction. The oral expression is the individual production of an oral text to an audience without any kind of conversation, while the oral interaction is the conversation among some people that negotiate meaning through sending and receiving messages. In this way, the document “Guía 22” divides the oral production in two columns: conversation and monologs, which are organized in different levels of performance that go from first to eleventh grade.

The aim of the Ministry of Education is that high school students can achieve a B1 proficiency level when they finish eleventh grade, as it is established in the document “Guía 22”. However, the goal has not been reached yet for several reasons such as the low linguistic and pedagogical competences English teachers have for teaching the speaking skill, the lack of speaking skill evaluation, the lack of resources in the institutions, the amount of learners per group, and the interest that institutions have for preparing learners for the Saber test, which does not include the speaking skill because it focuses on the use of grammar and reading comprehension. Gutierrez (2005) affirms that in the Colombian context, especially in public schools, the speaking skill is not sufficiently developed due to a set of factors such as the number of students per classroom, the lack of resources, and the exaggerated use of grammar, which causes some students to lack motivation in the learning of English;
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for that reason, a consequence of this, is that learners have many problems, especially in oral communication.

The lack of competences that Colombian English teachers have in the oral production is a factor that affects the development of students’ competences. According to the Minister of Education Cecilia Velez (2009) after a diagnostic evaluation done to the English teachers, from Colombia, the results showed that from 11,000 teachers that were evaluated, 5,000 of them did not speak English, and the 6,000 had a very low level of speaking. Velez also states that the reason for this situation is based on the fact that in Colombia the institutions only require teachers to instruct the English subject, but it is not required for them to speak in English, and now, the consequences are evidenced in the students’ English performance.

Based on the results obtained in the diagnosis made to identify English teachers’ proficiency level as part of the achievements of the National Bilingual Program, the MEN decided to start a project called “Proyecto de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras”, whose aim is to prepare and improve the teachers’ linguistic competence so that they can achieve a B2 proficiency level by 2014. However, according to the information corresponding to the results of diagnostic tests of language level progress carried out by the MEN, in association with the ICFES from 2008 to 2011, there is still a significant group of English teachers who are in the A2 level, as it can be seen in the following chart.
Even though there is no evidence in the Department of Risaralda that shows information of the evaluation of the speaking skill done to facilitators and students from state schools, the document “Proyecto de ordenanza” provides relevant data about the results taken from “Pruebas Saber” (2007 – 2010), which indicate that both English teachers and learners have low proficiency levels in reading, grammar and vocabulary. The chart below illustrates the results presented in the document about students and teachers competences in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level according to the Common European Framework of Reference</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with B2 level or superior</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with B1 level</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with A2 level</td>
<td>5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with A1 level</td>
<td>1,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROYECTO DE ORDENANZA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers (according to the test “Oxford English testing”)</th>
<th>Learners (according to the ICFES)</th>
<th>Learners according to the studied regions from Risaralda (Quinchia, la celia, Santa Rosa y Santurqao, Pereira and Dosquebradas).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16% were A – 0</td>
<td>55% of the students were A-0</td>
<td>45.7% of the students had the level A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51% were A1 level</td>
<td>35% of them were A1</td>
<td>13.7% had the level A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6% had the level B1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The document “Proyecto de Ordenanza” is relevant for the current study since an English teacher needs to have strong linguistic competences in all the skills. If a teacher wants to guide a learner to achieve a B1 in the speaking skill, it requires for him or her to be accurate; that is, use of high grammar control. Furthermore, teachers and learners also need sufficient range or use of sophisticated vocabulary to speak in different contexts and situations. An English teacher also needs to read theory in English about how speaking should be taught in schools and what the new trends in education are. Thus, if the teacher is not proficient in these aspects, he or she cannot guide learners to reach a B1 in oral production.

Another reason that affects the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill in Pereira has to do with the institutional interests. The experience lived by the researchers of the present study at the beginning of the process, when they had to ask for permission in different public institutions with a consent form to carry out the study (see appendix 12.1), allowed researchers to become aware of the preferences the institutions had regarding the teaching and assessment of speaking skill. The researchers of the present study visited five institutions and some of the responses obtained by the directors and teachers were that the oral production skill was not taught, nor was it assessed because this specific skill is not considered in the ‘Pruebas Saber’, and that their interest was to prepare learners in literacy skills and grammar since that is the test the MEN implements to rank the institutions in terms of quality. Directors and teachers added that such decision was also because of the number of students they had in each course and the lack of resources. Consequently, some institutions focus their attention and interest on the tests that the Ministry of Education implements.
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In addition, a survey implemented with 4 high school students from different public institutions, whose average age is 15, provided relevant information for the present study. The four students were asked about aspects such as how the English language was taught in their schools, and the activities or tasks of speaking implemented in the English classes they attend. The learners agreed to say that the English classes were based on the course books and the workshops were based on grammar without having any kind of speaking task. Furthermore, students added that the tests they had to present were written. This information allows researchers to see the gaps in the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill that some students are facing in the public high schools from Pereira.

Finally, another gap that is presented in Risaralda related to the speaking and assessment of the oral production skill is that there is no evidence of research studies around the field of teaching speaking in the region. Hence, this project aims at providing relevant information that can be useful for teachers and the local administrative education offices from Pereira and Risaralda about the way the speaking skill is taught and assessed in a public school from Pereira. Therefore, this research project aims at describing the way the speaking skill is being taught and assessed in a 10th grade from a public high school, as a sample of the way these processes are being conducted in this region. The present study can be also used as a source of information for public institutions from Pereira and the region so that they can start reflecting on their particular institutional conditions in order to find new alternatives to create a well-structured plan that will enable teachers and learners to achieve the proficiency level expected in their oral production skill.
2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What does the exposure to English classes in a public high school, tell us about the way speaking is taught and assessed?

2. What are teachers’ and learners’ perceptions towards the teaching of speaking skill?
3. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To describe how the process of teaching and assessing the speaking skill is developed by English teachers in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira.

- To show the perceptions English teachers and learners have about the teaching and learning of the speaking skill.
4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to have a clear idea of the main concepts related to the current study, which focuses on the teaching and assessment of speaking skill, this section starts from the basic concept of what speaking is, the features of speaking, the role of the speaking skill in the classroom, activities in order to develop the speaking skill, the assessment of the speaking skill, studies related to the speaking and its assessment and feedback as a way to improve in this ability.

4.1 Speaking

Kavaliauskienė (2006) defines speaking as a productive skill, whose objective is to facilitate communication. Similarly, Fulcher, (2003, cited in Itkonen, 2010) states that speaking is: “…the verbal use of the language to communicate with others” (p. 23). Speaking not only means interacting with people about different subjects in different places; speaking is also the resource through which people can reflect on their identity and their culture. For Louma (2004), speaking is a way to distinguish aspects of speaker’s personality and attitudes through the manner the spoken language sounds. According to Kavaliauskienė (2006), language is the tool to convey people’s identity in society and for this reason learning to speak in a foreign language is different to other subjects due to its social nature.

Some authors give their own definitions of speaking establishing a difference among the terms speaking, speech and spoken language. Itkonen (2010), in his study Spoken Language Proficiency Assessment, presents his own understanding of the three concepts, explaining that speaking refers to
the physical effort for producing sounds in pieces of language, while speech refers to the sounds produced in the act of speaking, and spoken language as the oral production of the language adhering the grammatical rules in a way to be understood in coherent and continuum utterances. Although Itkonen (2010) mentions that in prior literature these three concepts have been defined in different ways; he supports his study based on the notion that speech and spoken language are quite similar. The author states: “… given the interchangeable use of the terms speech and spoken language in prior literature […] I treat the term speech synonymously with spoken language in the present study”. And based on his discussion on the topic establishing his own differences among the three concepts, he finally treats speaking and spoken language as the same process, taking as point of reference the definitions given by Louma (2004) and Norton (2005), who agree in equating speaking and spoken language. Based on this, even the three processes are considered with some differences, all of them are enrolled to the same function, what it is to produce language.

### 4.2 Features of speaking

In the speaking process, some features are present while people are involved in interaction, Riggenbach, (1998, cited in Itkonen, 2010) states that pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, accuracy and fluency are commonly thought as the principal components of speaking; however, Itkonen (2010) mentions other relevant features as proficiency and coherence. Equally, Louma (2003) includes components of speaking as pronunciation, and spoken grammar. Below, the description of some of the relevant components of speaking is present.
Fluency: Richards (2006) defines fluency as the natural language use, which despite limitations in the communicative competence, the speaker engaged in an interaction maintains an understandable and current communication. For Crystal (1977), Bryne (1986), & Nation (1991, cited in Lan, 1994) fluency means the capacity to communicate without vacillation and pauses that makes fail comprehensible interaction. Similarly, the CEFRL (2001) defines fluency as the ability to articulate, and keep communication going.

Accuracy: Richards (2006) defines accuracy as the creation of correct examples of language use. In the same way, Bryne, (1988, cited in Lan, 1994) states that “accuracy refers to the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, semantic or discourse features of a language”. In other words accuracy refers to the right use of the grammatical structures, pronunciation, syntax, and meaning of messages of the language in the oral production without mistakes that can interfere in interaction.

Pronunciation: In oral production, the term pronunciation is defined as the way that the sentence is spoken (Harmer, 2009). It also involves several components as pitch and intonation. According to Harmer, intonation refers to the way that the voice goes up and down at the moment that people talk; it involves the pitch of the voices, which is based on the high or low level at which speaking is done. Furthermore, Chafe, (1994, cited in Itkonen, 2010) states that spoken language is produced by means of intonation units, and that these units are changes in pitch or voice quality. Dalton & Seidlhofer (2001) define pronunciation as the production of significant sounds in two senses; the first one is that pronunciation is the production and reception of sounds of speech, and the second one
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is that it means acts of speaking depending on the way and contexts in which sounds are produced. For Louma (2003), pronunciation is the sound of speech that “can refer to many features of the speech stream, such as individual sounds, pitch, volume, speed, pausing, stress and intonation” (p.11).

4.3 The speaking skill in the classroom

Learning a foreign language involves the development of four skills as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Although the four skills are important, it is necessary to focus on the relevance of the speaking skill since the interaction among people has as a base the understanding and utterances of ideas in order to handle the social communication. Louma (2004) states that “…the ability to speak in a foreign language is as the very heart of what it means to be able to use a foreign language” (p. 5). The author says that in the speaker’s foreign language performance it is reflected his or her personality, culture, and ways of expressing thoughts and opinions about the world. The aim of learning a foreign language is to be able to use the language for real and successful communication. In an EFL classroom, the learning of a foreign language implies to be able to handle social communication, and this is possible if learners are exposed to interactive speaking activities, in which they can utter and understand ideas, opinions and thoughts.

In the classroom, the development of the speaking skill allows learners to be able to interact meaningfully, which means to find a relation between the topics that are studied and the contexts in which those topics are used for communication. Through topics presented in a sequence of lessons
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learners improve in aspects as empowering them to submit arguments, to express points of view, support ideas, discuss in conversational tasks, among other activities that require them to use the oral production. Cotter (2007) expresses that working in the oral skill lets learners to interact and communicate in a meaningful way in several activities like exchanging information, negotiating meaning, supporting ideas, or facing oral defenses. This means that working on the oral production gives learners rehearsal opportunities to strengthen their ability to communicate a set of ideas in a range of different situations.

Harmer (2009) presents three main reasons to make learners speak in the classroom. First, the author states that using speaking activities gives learners the chance to practice real life oral production in the classroom. Second, the practice of the oral skill in the classroom through speaking activities provides feedback of the use of the language for learners and teacher. Finally, with the practice of oral interaction in the classroom, students have the opportunity to use the language they have learnt becoming more repeated, usual and automatic.

This means that the use of language is not focused only on the oral practice of grammar and structures posed as means of repetition in situations out of context or the production of words without an intention of communicating clear ideas about a proposed topic, but making learners be able to express orally in real life situations in which their thoughts can be comprehended by the listener. Then, through this process learners and teacher can enhance their oral production based on the feedback that they are given mutually being presented in this way a cooperative learning.
4.4 Speaking skill activities in the classroom

In order to teach speaking, it is necessary to clarify the activities that can be developed because the teachers can classify and take advantage of them. Bahrani & Soltani (2012) argue that any response or exchange in conversation that students use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt and also any communication situation such as greetings, apologies, compliments, and invitations can be included in speaking activities in the classroom. However, it is also necessary for teachers to be conscious about the learners’ needs and likes to offer them aiming class which they can enjoy and have a benefit from. Holmes (2004) states that teachers should do what students need to do and not what teachers need to do. It means that teachers should be aware of the activities they are doing to encourage students to speak, leading them to explore, learn and practice orally in the classroom.

Besides, Harmer (2009) in order to support his three main reasons to teach speaking mentioned in the subtitle above “speaking skill in the classroom”, also proposes the three examples of activities: Photographic competition, based on the careful observation and descriptions of pictures with the purpose to make the students use all the language they know and also encourage them to use their critical thinking. Role – play, whose idea is to simulate real life situations in which students can pretend to act with a different personality to their own; for example, a check – in encounter at an airport or a job interview or a presentation to a conference. Students have to act as if they were the pretended character and use their English in those situations that can be found every day. Finally, with the portrait interview based on old pictures which are used to ask questions to the students about aspects of it, the participants can activate various elements of English such us grammar, vocabulary and
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general knowledge about culture, taking advantage of the automatic these elements become through the practice.

Besides, Harmer (2009) also proposes several activities and games with the only purpose to practice speaking, using and exploring different scenarios. Acting from a script is one of them whose the idea is that the students can act from given scripts with stories like meetings, short stories, dialogues from the course book, in order to make learners activate their speaking skill. Another suggested activity is the Information-gap game, in which the students can be in charge of solving puzzles, describing pictures and giving opinions, arranging and putting things in a correct order. These activities are examples of information gap in a communicative game. Finally, the Television and radio games is an activity to be done in groups and the intention is to ask questions as it is done on TV shows, or the students can also perform popular programs from the radio or television without hesitation in order to check fluency. These activities have three main purposes: First, let students have fun and motivation; second, allow shy students to be more confident with their speaking, as they are not going to be responsible for their own opinions, and finally, the context of world outside can be included in the classroom.

In the same way, Richards (2006) exposes that the information gap activities are important because their purpose is to communicate and acquire the information that the people do not possess. The intention is to let the students use their linguistic and communicative resources to obtain the information. The author also mentions the Jigsaw activities, which are based on the information gap. The purpose of these types of activities is to complete the information gathering the parts of it that are distributed among the different participants of the activity. Role-plays are also mentioned by the author
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as important activity since the students have to exchange information about assigned roles and in that way improvise scenes and finally practice their speaking.

In addition, Holmes (2004) proposes in his compiled book of speaking activities around fourteen kinds of them, some examples are: **Warm up activities**, which according to this author “must be first, enabling teachers and students getting them to know one-another”. With this, Holmes means that activities such as asking for personal information or playing some short mingle games at the beginning of the class is suitable to engage students in speaking. The purpose of warm up activities is to make students comfortable and confident to speak. Another activity is the one called **Words, phrases and sentences**, which the author suggests as the ones which can help the students to search, to find, to remember and to express vocabulary, in order to create concepts, ideas, phrases and sentences by their own and/or in groups. Holmes classifies these activities as student-centered since the teacher only gives the students some sheets with the assigned task and let them work independently. Also the **Interactive role-plays** are mentioned by Holmes whose aim is to make learners feel pressure since they are responsible for what they have to say; hence, it helps them to interact with both teacher and classmates. Another activity is the **Traveling and touring**, which, as Holmes proposes, is ideal to go deeply into Anglophone cultural aspects using the language at the same time. Simulating students to be travelers would let them speak with a native person about several subjects as: asking for directions, places, destinations, tourism, geography and themes like those. Also it will increase their vocabulary and creativity with language. Finally, the activity **Fables, tales and stories**, has three main reasons: to make the students read aloud and check their pronunciation, to help the students with the difficult vocabulary words in order to enhance their reading comprehension and lastly, to make the participants interpret and exchange ideas about the meaning and the important aspects of the story.
4.5 Speaking tasks in the classroom

Louma (2004) defines tasks as “activities that people do, and in language-learning contexts, tasks are usually defined in terms of language use” (p. 30). Nunan, (1993, cited in Louma, 2004) defines communicative task as “…a piece of classroom which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form…” Speaking tasks are activities that make speakers use the language for a specific purpose in a determined speaking situation (Louma, 2004). Based on the author, they are classified into two groups: open-ended and structured speaking tasks.

On one hand, open-ended tasks have as main purpose to have the learners “To do something with language as an indication of their skills” (Louma, 2004, p. 48). This group of speaking tasks is divided into five categories: description, narrative, instruction, comparison, and role play tasks (Louma, 2004). The author gives some examples of these speaking tasks, some of which are: describing places, pictures, experiences, talking about a specific topic and role-plays, which she says are based on social or service situations, whose intention is to simulate real life situations.

On the other hand, structured-speaking tasks are characterized by the usual short answers given by the learners and the narrow items that the speaking is focused on at a time (Louma, 2004). The author provides some examples of these tasks as sentence repetition, reading aloud, and factual short answer questions. Since these types of tasks imply for the speakers a closed way to answer or perform the task, the purpose is to focus on specific aspects of the language while they are done; for example, in
the reading aloud tasks the focus is the pronunciation, rhythm and stress. In the sentence repetition task the focus is on the process of the language divided into sentences and meaningful chunks; then, the speaker also has to work with comprehension and memory of words and sentences that become to be longer each time.

4.6 Developing oral skills through interactive activities and tasks: difficulties and solutions

The development of the speaking skill in the classroom has as foundation the implementation of tasks and activities that allow learners to interact in the target language; however, several problems are exposed at the moment of producing orally. Khamkhien (2010) in his study “Teaching English speaking and English Speaking Test in the Thai context” exposes that although the speaking skill is important because it distinctly shows the correctness and language errors that learners make, some of the difficulties that learners present are the lack of exposure to genuine language interaction, affecting speaking and listening skills development (Khamkhien, 2010). Some other problems are exposed by Foley (2005, cited in Khamkhien, 2010), who states that “factors responsible for limited success of ELT in Thailand include the lack of proper curricula, dry teaching styles that overly focused on grammatical details… testing and evaluation” (p. 185). Meanwhile, the teachers do not understand how to design speaking activities, and they have difficulty in selecting the materials and activities that will connect the speaking practice with the content of the classes (Kanoksilapatham, 2007, cited in Khamkhien, 2010). This study is relevant for our study since it shows some of the problems that teachers not only in the Colombian contexts but also in other countries have for teaching and implementing speaking activities and tasks in the classrooms.
Similarly, Gutierrez (2005) in her study done with students of 9th grade in a public high school from Bogota in the Colombian context found in her diagnostic about the difficulties that learners have for speaking in English that particularly in the public schools, the four basic skills are not developed and specially the speaking skill. The author states that factors as the number of students in the classroom, the limited resources in the high schools for training in the foreign language, and the focus on grammatical aspects cause low motivation in language learning, giving as a consequence many problems that learners have specially in oral communication reflected in their low competence in this skill.

Likewise, Bahrani & Soltani (2012) state that a common characteristic in EFL classrooms is the attention that learners and teachers pay to the language system focusing on aspects as grammar and vocabulary, but not on the skills needed to use them. The authors also state that the lack of opportunities that learners have for practicing the language in the classroom discourage them for learning the language. Moreover, the authors highlighted the fact that, although people in the daily life speak more than what they write, teachers spend the majority of the class time practicing writing and reading skills, ignoring the speaking skill (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012).

Language learners in an EFL context have limited speaking activities inside the classroom, but if those activities are done in the right way, they can heighten learners’ motivation (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012). Gutierrez (2005) in her study found that most of the students were conscious about the relevance of improving oral skills and their problems for oral communication; however, they preferred to communicate in writing rather than orally since speaking involves aspects like good pronunciation
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and fluency, which they did not have. Given this situation, the author implemented three interactive speaking tasks in the population of a public high school that presented the difficulties described above. The tasks were based on conversations in small group work, narration of stories, and a final presentation done by each one of the learners, taking into account factors as exposure, interaction, feedback and final oral production. Gutierrez (2005) found that the implementation of interactive tasks helped to create a context of communication where students could practice the oral skills. At the same time students turned isolated words and sentences into meaningful messages and coherent texts about their feelings, opinions, and criticism exchanging information and negotiating meaning in their conversations; moreover, these kind of tasks let learners see the oral communication in L2 as a social skill in which interaction, feedback, and group work played an important role. This study is relevant for our research because it shows some of the common problems that public high schools in Colombia have in relation to the practice of the oral skill in the target language, and the positive effects that the implementation of speaking tasks can have in this population.

4.7 Assessment

Teachers usually implement activities and tasks in the classroom in order to know if learners have accomplished the goal of learning general and specific aspects of the L2. Teachers spend time testing, evaluating and assessing students for different reasons; it might be to see their performance in relation to a skill or to give learners a qualification; this assessment could be formal and informal and takes place in day to day lessons (Harmer, 2007). In comparison, the UNESCO defines assessment as
any kind of activity, procedure, chart, game, etc. designed to collect information about the students’ knowledge, development and attitudes towards the subject.

Besides, The Common European Framework of reference for languages (CEFRL) (2001) refers to assessment as broader than evaluation because any kind of assessment is a form of evaluation. CEFRL states that all language tests are a form of assessment, but there are also many forms of assessment which would not be described as tests because they can be observations or games, which would not be graded but assessed by the teacher. However, in order to consolidate the term assessment, the CEFRL offers three concepts: validity, reliability and feasibility. Validity refers to testing what has been actually taught. Reliability is when the test can be applied in any group or individual student, and has reliable results according to the rank and standard decided to the test. Finally, Feasibility is when the test takes into account the time to be developed and also the students’ abilities according to the type of test. These concepts are applied to the different types of assessment that the CEFRL suggests.

4.8 Types of assessment

The Common European Framework suggests 26 types of assessment which can be applied in different situations, in this case assessing speaking. Those types of assessment are exposed in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Achievement assessment</th>
<th>Proficiency assessment</th>
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</table>

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As the CEFRL establishes, not all of the types of assessment must be implemented in the classrooms in only one activity or task, but they should be chosen according to the necessity of the activity and also of the students. For example, the most used by the English teachers because of their necessities are: **Achievement assessment** that is an internal assessment in which the accomplishment of the goals is evaluated, if the course book has been worked on the stipulated time and also if the rest of the class objectives have been accomplished. **Continuous assessment**: is the assessment made by the teacher of pieces of the work at any time, in any activity, presentation or game. **Formative assessment** is the process of gathering information about students learning; here, it can be noted students’ strengths and weaknesses and also teachers can give feedback. **Summative assessment** is a sum of grades and it is not necessary proficiency assessment. **Subjective assessment** is the quality of a
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performance done by an assessor and finally **Objective assessment:** is the contrary of subjective assessment, which implies that only one answer is right. One example provided in the CEFRL is a multiple choice activity.

The common European framework exposes that any teacher should determine what type of assessment is more relevant for their students, schools and context’s necessities. They also need to take into account the pedagogical, cultural and students’ proficiency level since the requirements for the students to perform accurately should be according to those aspects.

Besides, and in order to make a comparison with the CEFRL, Harmer (2007) also speaks about these types of assessment: formative and summative. He states that “summative assessment is the kind of measurement that takes place to round things off or make a one-off measurement; such tests include the end-of-year tests that students take” (p, 379). Meanwhile, formative assessment relates to the kind of feedback teachers give to students as a course is progressing and which, as a result, may help them to improve their performance (Harmer, 2007).

4.9 Assessing the speaking skill

Although the speaking skill is considered by several authors as the main ability to be worked in an EFL classroom, some authors agree with saying that it is also the most complex skill to evaluate.
Kitao & Kitao (1996) say that speaking is the most difficult skill to test since it involves several factors as the phonology, grammar, and coherence, which implies a difficulty at the time to be objective with the speaking aspects to be tested. The authors denote that when testing oral production a speaker can produce orally with proper pronunciation, but lacking meaning or the speaker can utter understandable ideas, but making pronunciation and grammar mistakes. In this manner, it is complex to decide what aspects of the oral production can be assessed at a time. Equally, Standowicks (2007) states that speech involves a construct of several parts like fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and intonation and when testing an interaction, they should not be separated. Moreover, the author says that speakers tend to sacrifice features of their oral production in order to achieve another one. Another concern is the listening skill as a factor for the speaking assessment due to the relevance of comprehending the spoken input; there is an interchange between speaking and listening; therefore, it is difficult to know if both, speaking and listening are assessed together or only the speaking skill (Kitao & Kitao, 1996).

In the same way, Knight (1992) affirms that sometimes speaking is thought as the central skill to be worked and currently for testing speaking, teachers do not apply adequate tests, or they do not test the oral production. Knight exposes several troubles that teachers usually have at the moment to test the speaking skill such as the available time that teachers require to assess all the students, the problem for scheming significant speaking, and the concern teachers have at the moment to choose the criteria for making assessment. Testing speaking is also a concern when there are a large number of learners, and even if each one of the learners is tested in one minute, the process with all of them takes a lot of time (Kitao & Kitao, 1996). Similarly, Seligson (1997) argues that usually teachers do not implement oral
tests because of the number of students in the classroom and the time that it takes to hear speakers’ oral production.

In addition to the difficulties exposed about the assessment of the oral production, Kitao & Kitao (1996) present the aspects that must be assessed in speaking, among which are found: grammar, pronunciation, fluency, content, organization, and vocabulary. Likewise, Knight (1992) suggests similar aspects to be assessed in speaking like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, non-verbal skill, and content. Kitao & Kitao propose to test these aspects of the oral skill in a series of activities like reading aloud, conversational exchanges, through visual material, oral interviews, role plays, and group or pair activities.

Knight exposes that when teachers have to assess the speaking skill, one of the principal problems is the difficulties they have at the moment to choose the correct criteria. Standowiks (2007) states that even if speaking tests have been relevant, the lack of proper criteria for testing oral production has given written test a most significant role in EFL classrooms. Knight presents 8 categories as criteria for the assessment of the oral production: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, conversational skill, sociolinguistic skill, and content. Also, the CEF considers 14 categories to assess the oral skill, among which, it can be found fluency, vocabulary control, flexibility, coherence, and sociolinguistic competence. However, according to the CEFRL, fourteen categories are too much to take into account at the moment to assess a speaking task. What CEFRL suggests is to select the categories to assess based on what is more suitable for the kind of activity, the pedagogical needs of the
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students and finally, based on the specific requirements of the given task, that means to use feasibility at the time to chose the criteria.

4.10 Giving feedback

According to Ur (2003), feedback is “…the information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving the performance”. Some examples given by Ur are “yes, right”. Besides, the author exposes that feedback has two main components which are: assessment and correction. Thus, a question from this statement emerges: Can you separate assessment from correction or correction from assessment? The answer to this question as said by the author is that, even if there is a relationship between both of them, a teacher can assess without correcting but cannot correct without assessing because it is not correct to say something positive or negative about an issue which has not been assessed before.

Being the oral production the focus of this research, Ur (2003) also includes giving feedback in oral production stating that ideally when giving feedback in oral production it should not be at the moment of the speech (for example correcting fluency), because even if sometimes it can be helpful and of course there are moments that deserve correction, most of the time it would be distractive.

As it was shown before, giving feedback is relevant, especially in formative assessment since it is a support for both teachers and learners for the improvement of the teaching-learning process.
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4.11 Teachers’ beliefs about assessment in an EFL context in Colombia

In a study done by Muñoz, Palacio & Escobar (2012) from the EAFIT university about the beliefs teachers have over the assessment system focused on the speaking and writing skills implemented in a university from Colombia, the researchers expose that the goals of assessment are identified into pedagogical and accountability and certification purposes. The authors found that, among the different beliefs teachers have about assessment, the relevance that teachers give to this practice is mentioned as means of academic improvement; hence, teachers think that assessment serves for formative purposes since it helps them to recognize and make the necessary changes to improve their teaching practices. Although teachers have a clear idea about assessment for formative purposes, they tend to use assessment for summative purposes that show a gap between teachers’ beliefs and their common practices (Muñoz, Palacio & Escobar, 2012).

In the same way, Muñoz, Aristizabal, Crespo, Gaviria, Lopera, & Palacio (2003) focus their attention on aspects as knowing what teachers understand by assessment, why teachers make assessment, how teachers make the assessment an ongoing process, the available resources they use for the oral assessment, and the aspects of speaking that teachers assess. In the study, the authors found that teachers have a weak understanding about what assessment is. The teachers mainly understand assessment as the evaluation of students’ oral competence and performance, as a way to know students’ weaknesses and strengths, to know learners’ progress, and for giving feedback; however, the teachers also considered assessment as a system for giving grades (Muñoz et al. 2003). In the aspect of the reasons for assessing speaking, the study shows that teachers mainly consider the process for
summative purposes rather than formative. According to the authors, teachers usually give grades because they think of it as duty, giving more relevance to the administrative purposes of the assessment rather than the formative ones for pedagogical purposes.

The study revealed that among the aspects of speaking that are assessed, pronunciation is the most salient feature, grammar is in the second place; meaning, fluency, vocabulary in the third place, and the least assessed: comprehension, and competence. The common activities for assessing these features are presentation as the most salient activity, role-plays, informal conversation, recording on tape, picture description, games, question and answer, and interviews in a second place; and the least used activity: drilling (Muñoz et al. 2003). Finally, the study showed that of 30 teachers that were participants in the study, 10 of them made speaking assessment only between two or four times during the complete course, 6 teachers assess daily, and the rest of the participants said having never done a formal assessment.

These studies are relevant for this research because they show evidence of the beliefs that Colombian teachers have about the assessment of the speaking skill, the aspects that they assess, the frequency with which they assess, how they assess and their considerations about the assessment for formative and summative goals.
5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Type of study

The research project was based on qualitative research because, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005; cited in Merriam, 2009), “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (p. 13). Also, a qualitative research is characterized by different variables, which can be mentioned the descriptive data collection, the study of a natural setting and a context, the participants, the instruments for the data collection, and the role of the researchers in the study. This research was focused on describing how the speaking skill was taught and assessed in a public school, so a qualitative research was the appropriate type of study to be used involving those variables mentioned before in order to answer the questions that went around this phenomenon. According to Key (1997), a qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of looking at these variables in the natural setting in which they are found.

Merriam (1988) states that for a research project to be qualified as a case study; it must contain a limit, which means that what is going to be studied is evidently defined. In a case study, it is also important to get a wide understanding of what is being observed. For these reasons, the study qualifies as a case study; the population and conditions under which the phenomenon was studied were already
limited, it means that the people, the time, and the circumstances from the research project were already limited.

In the case study established for this research project, we are concerned on describing what perceptions teachers and learners had about the teaching of the speaking skill and the aspects that came from the exposure to the English classes related to the teaching and assessment of the oral production. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989) “the case study approach is used where the investigator is interested in describing some aspects of the second language performance or development of one or more subjects as individuals.” (p.125)

5.2 Context

The research was conducted in a public high school in Pereira, which was located in the north area of the town in a lower class neighborhood. The population that attended the school was mainly students from lower class neighborhoods. The institution had 12 courses (of about 36 students per course) from 1st grade to 11th grade. In terms of physical resources it had 30 classrooms, 1 computer room, 1 library, 1 cafeteria, and a soccer field in order to practice this sport.

In terms of population, it had an average of 1400 students in the different grades (1st to 11th) which were from low stratum. It had 45 teachers (20 for primary and 25 for secondary), most of them (the teachers) had the appropriate academic background, which means that they were graduates from
the areas they normally teach and the rest of the teachers were practitioners. Besides, there were 5 people who were in charge of the administrative labors of the school (the director, the academic coordinator, the discipline coordinator, the accountant and the secretary).

5.3 Setting

The project was carried out in a public high-school of Pereira/Risaralda - Colombia. This school had four English teachers for the different grades (two for primary and two for secondary), who worked an average of 24 hours per week; this institution offered to the students six hours of English classes per week to each grade. This educational institution guided its English classes based on the Basic Standards of Competence proposed by the National Ministry of Education (MEN) and its English teachers´ staff had a proper academic background because they were English graduates from the University of Caldas with an average of 4 years of experience as English teachers.

5.4 Participants

This research project was based on the study of two groups of tenth grade from a public high school; the participants were two English teachers and eight students (four students from each 10th grade). The teachers came from the city of Manizales; their age range was among 25 years old and 30 years old with a middle economic status, and they were English graduates. The students came from the
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city of Pereira; their age range was between 15 years old and 17 years old with a lower economic status. The two teachers were selected as participants because they were the only secondary English facilitators. The students were selected randomly, and from each 10th grade there were selected four students in order to gather information from different participants; there was not a specific aspect at the moment to select the students; for this research project each member of the population had the same chance of being selected as subject; Castillo (2009) states that “One of the best things about simple random sampling is the ease of assembling the sample. It is also considered as a fair way of selecting a sample from a given population since every member is given equal opportunities of being selected”.

5.5 Researchers’ role

According to Don Ratcliff (1996), the researcher is an instrument in conducting qualitative research, which has an important role since he gets involved with the participant. The research project was conducted by three researchers, and all of them were complete observers, who according to Merriam (1998) a complete observer is hidden from the group or in a completely public setting. The researchers had the same role; all of them were in charge of observing the different English classes (there was an observer per class) and collecting the appropriate data to develop this study, taking into account aspects from the classes such as oral classroom activities, oral tasks, and oral interaction between the facilitator and learners, and assessment procedures.
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5.6 Data Collection Methods

The instruments used in order to conduct this research project and collect the data were: video recordings, questionnaires, observations and interviews.

The role of video recording

According to Ur (2004) the video recording is the instrument that allows the researcher to record and replay the pictures and sounds of an event. Hall (2011), states that video recordings capture the actions when they occur in real life. This instrument was used in the research project in order to document the process with evidence, since the video recordings permit to record the incidents, behaviors and aspects from the classes, without losing any details of every section. In order to gather information from classes; fourteen video recordings were done by the researchers with the purpose of extracting different aspects related to oral production tasks or activities and the way they were assessed.

Observations

According to Hall (2011), observe imply to be for a period of time in the context that is studied. The researchers were observing the English classes for five weeks in order to collect data. Merriam (1998) says “observational data represent a firsthand encounter of the phenomenon of interest” (...).
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The observations were used in this research project with the aim of observing different aspects from the English classes such as oral classroom activities, assessment procedures, and oral interaction between the facilitator and learners that were relevant to answer the research questions. This instrument was purposeful in this study since in the observation process data was collected from the natural environment of the English classes. In order to collect data from the classes, fourteen classes were observed by the researchers with the aim of observing aspects related to the teaching of the oral production and the assessment of them.

The interviews

According to Seidman (1998) “interviews provide access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provide a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior”. In the study, interviews were conducted in order to know the participants’ perceptions about teaching speaking and speaking assessment. The type of interview implemented in the study was the semi structured interview. According to Hall (2011) semi – structured interviews are those that have pre - formulated questions; however, the interviewee has the opportunity to elaborate his answers. An advantage of using this type of interview was that it allowed the interviewees to express their views with their own terms. In order to collect data, four interviews were implemented by the researchers to the participants (teachers and students) in order to ask them some important questions based on the main aspects related to the oral production tasks and the assessment of these ones (see the appendix 12.2.2).
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The questionnaires

Questionnaire is one of the most popular means of collecting data because it can cover a large number of people or organizations. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), “respondents can feel comfortable because of the anonymity of their answers and no prior arrangements are needed to develop the questionnaires”. In the research project, the questionnaires were used in order to gather information from the teachers as participants in aspects as their study degree, their teaching background, and their methods to teach English and the speaking skill with the purpose of collecting data for answering the research questions. With the aim of gathering information, two questionnaires were implemented by the researchers to the participants with the aim of taking the most important believes and opinions they had with reference to the teaching and the assessment processes of the oral production (see appendix 12.2.3).

5.7 Data analysis

The analysis of data of this research project was conducted based on the Grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that “Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed”. Glaser and Strauss (1967) also affirm that the method used in this theory is constant comparison of the event; it is to conceptualize the data collected through an organization of a series of categories in which this data can be placed. Taking into account The Grounded Theory, the researchers took its categories (codifying, grouping, categorizing
and drawing conclusions) to analyze the data collected, and thus obtain the appropriate data to answer the research questions.

This section presents the process of data analysis to give answer to the research questions. The analysis process was developed through the data collected from four instruments: observations, video recordings (as a support for the observations), interviews and questionnaires that were implemented by the three researchers during four weeks in two tenth grades. The observations were made by the researchers during seven different classes for each group (both 10th grade) in which aspects related to the teaching of the oral production and assessment were observed. As soon as the observations finished, the process of analysis of the information gathered started. First, the video recordings and interviews were transcribed. Second, the participants were codified in order to maintain their privacy. For instance, T was used for identifying the teachers and S for the students. The participants were identified with the initial letters of their names NV and JC, so the code TNV refers to one of the teachers, and TJC refers to the other one. The same codification was done with the learners as participants. Regarding the instruments, these were codified with letters; for example, Q was used for the questionnaires, I for the interviews, and O for the observations. So, a code TJCQQ1 refers to the teacher (JC) answering the question number 1 (Q1) of the questionnaire (Q).

Third, using the research questions as guide, the data taken from each instrument was read and the information was colored according to the data that answered each research question. For instance, the orange color was given to the data that referred to teachers’ and learners’ perceptions towards the teaching of speaking skill, which is the information, required to answer the second research question.
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The next step was the design of a format (see appendix 12.2.5) which was divided into four parts in order to group the information. Each part of the format had data from a different instrument and such data had the same color depending of the research question to be answered. After that, some common aspects were found from the different instruments and the data was categorized and put into a word document that was divided into the two research questions. The categorized data was placed under the research question to be answered, and by analyzing and drawing conclusions from the categories (lack of resources, elements assessed, etc.) the findings were identified.
6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To complete the research project appropriately, the people in charge of this project tried to be as moral as possible with the procedures to be done before conducting the research. Since the principal aim was not to cause problems or disturbance at high school, a letter (see appendix 11.1) asking for permission to carry out the project was sent to the principal of the school. Once there it was accepted by the principal, the next step followed by the researchers was to speak to the English teachers in charge of the tenth grade asking them for permission to observe their classes and conduct an interview and a questionnaire for gathering information that could be useful for the study.
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7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

On this chapter, the results of the analyzed data will be presented in aspects related to the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira. In the first finding, the teachers’ use of language in the English classes, the focus on grammar, and the low opportunities that students have to practice the speaking skill will be presented. The second finding presents the aspects assessed in the oral production according to the participants. The third finding presents the relevance that participants give to the use of audio materials in order to improve and develop the oral production. The fourth finding shows the perceptions about the students’ lack of confidence to speak in English, and finally the fifth finding shows unexpected results that emerged from the study.

7.1 The oral interaction in the English classes occurs using translation of isolated sentences focused on grammatical forms, without providing input to learners for developing the speaking skill in the Target Language.

In foreign language learning, input is the language to which the learner is exposed to (Zhang, 2009). When preparing learners for any kind of activity that involves oral production, teachers must spend time providing them the appropriate input (grammar, vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation) in order to make learners cope with the oral production tasks. Then, the teachers’ main role is to ensure that learners receive comprehensible input (Zhang, 2009).
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Throughout the time in which the researchers were observing the classes and collecting data, some factors which affected the exposure learners had to language input were identified. One of those factors was the great percentage of L1 used in the English classes compared to the low percentage of L2 provided by the participants. The use of L1 was evidenced in the answers provided by the participants in the interviews and in each one of the classes that were observed and the relevance that the participants gave to speak in Spanish. A sample taken from data collected in the interview question 13, in which participants were asked about the language used in class (see appendix 12.2.1) shows how the participant considers the use of L1 as relevant as the use of L2 as it can be seen in the following data: 

*TJCIQ13:* yo diría 60-40 teniendo pues el mayor porcentaje en español. The sample evidences the percentage of the use of Spanish in the English classes, being this one the most used in class. At the same time the data presents the awareness that the participant has over the tendency to use L1. Equally, when the other participant *TNV* was asked the same question about the language used in the English classes (see appendix 12.2.2), the answer provided by the participant shows the use of Spanish in the English classes: *TNVIQ15:* pues, trabajo los dos la mitad con L1 y la otra con L2, tratar, pues, yo les hablo en inglés y no trato de traducirles. This sample evidences the teacher’s use of L1 and the way the participant considers relevant the use of Spanish in the English classes, giving it a great amount of use in the classroom.

Similarly, another sample taken from the observations done to the same participant *TNV* evidences the use of Spanish in the English classes. The teacher asks some questions in L1 to the students based on a sentence written in L2 focused on modal verbs, eliciting information in order to check learners’ knowledge.
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TNV: voy a hacer una oración. I’m so sick I have to go to the doctor.

TNV: porque?

E: es una obligación. (responden los estudiantes)

TNV: ejemplo. (pide un ejemplo a los estudiantes)

E: did he have to come?

TNV: exactly

TNV: como quedara negativa. (pregunta la profesora)

E: No, he didn’t

TNV: y positivo.

E: yes he had.

TNV: como seria “no tengo que levantarme temprano”.

E: I don’t have wake up early.

In the sample above, the interaction among the participants and learners presents an isolated use of the L2 based on the study of the grammar structures with the modal verbs. Although learners have certain knowledge to produce sentences in L2 in order to answer the questions done by the teacher, those sentences are isolated or out of context. Also, the participant uses L2, but only for the sentence “I’m so sick I have to go to the doctor”, using L1 for the rest of the interaction based on several questions done in Spanish to the learners. This implies a learners’ limited exposure to the teacher’s L2 input since Spanish is presented in most of the oral production of the teacher. Moreover, the answers provided by the students obey to the use of grammar structures.
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Another sample taken from the observations JCO2 shows the language used by the other participant TJC in the English classes. In the sample the teacher uses L2 in some examples provided for explaining a topic in the class, the participant focuses the lesson on the grammar structure of the present perfect but immediately the teacher uses L1 to translate the sentences into Spanish.

JCO2: el profesor empieza a explicar el tema, para ello el primero lee el concepto en ingles, luego lo traduce a español palabra por palabra.

JCO2: El profesor da ejemplos del uso del tiempo verbal:

Paul is very tired; he has been working very hard.

(El profesor lee la oración en ingles y luego la traduce al español).

TJC: Paul está muy cansado, el ha estado trabajando muy duro.

El profesor da otro ejemplo:

What have you been doing?

Nuevamente lee en ingles y traduce al español.

TJC: ¿Qué has estado haciendo?

El profesor se devuelve a algunas palabras y las traduce de nuevo.

TJC: entonces, tired, cansado, working, trabajando.

TJC: que quiere decir esta oración? (le pregunta a los estudiantes en general para que ellos la traduzcan como él lo hizo).

E: paul esta cansado, el ha estado trabajando muy duro. (un estudiante traduce palabra a palabra lentamente)

TJC: ahora, miren en la pregunta, ¿en donde está el auxiliar have?
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\textit{TJC}: después del pronombre personal.

In this sample, the participant \textbf{TJC} uses English more than the participant \textbf{TNV} focusing on the explanation of grammar rules. However, in the sample above, the participant \textbf{TJC} uses Spanish in order to translate each word he says in English. As a result, the learners have the same limited exposure to the teacher’s L2 input since the participant speaks in English but translates into L1. Moreover, the learners also translate the sentences into Spanish without using L2 in the answers given to the teacher. As a result, the teacher’s and learners’ use of L1 for translation makes learners do not pay attention to the low L2 that the teacher produces since they already know that he is going to translate into Spanish every single word. Also, learners do not make any effort for producing in L2 what implies not to create a communicative need to speak in English.

In the same way, the data \textbf{TJCO4} from the observations shows the relevance that the participant \textbf{TJC} gives to the focus on grammar and translation in the class. The data shows the focus on the grammar use of the modal verbs and the use of Spanish for explaining the topic.

\textit{TJC}: entonces “can” se usa más el infinitivo.

\textit{TJC}: Do something I know how to do it, or it is possible for me to do it.

\textit{TJC}: uso can para hacer algo que se hacer o que es posible para mí hacerlo.(traduce el ingles al español)

\textit{TJC}: for example:

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*TJC*: yo puedo tocar el piano. (traduce el ingles al español)

-Sarah can speak Italian, but she can’t speak Spanish.

*TJC*: Sarah puede hablar italiano pero ella no puede hablar español (traduce el ingles al español)

In the sample, the participant *TJC* pays attention to the use of grammar structures, in this case the way in which the modal verb “can” is used. The sample previously exposed shows how the participant considers the grammar study as a relevant aspect in the English classes without taking into account some kind of oral interactions among the students in which those grammar structures can be used. Moreover, the participant uses L1 to explain those grammar structures, what is evident in the way the participant *TJC* translates into Spanish each one of the sentences. The focus on grammar, plus the use of L1 for explaining that grammar implies for the learners not to be exposed to the English input provided by the teachers, nor to have the opportunities to use the grammar in oral production.

Other factor obtained from the data analysis that affected the exposure learners have to English was the focus on written tasks and grammar, but not the way in which that grammar can be used in oral production. The sample *TNVO3*, taken from the observations, evidences how the study of grammar has a significant amount of time devoted.

*TNVO3*: *TNV*: she + had to + verb infinitive.

*E*: profe el verbo en pasado?
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TNV: no porque el had carga el pasado

TNV: yo puedo hacer preguntas para el presente ¿cual es el auxiliar?

E: do / does

TNV: muy bien y para pasado

E: did

TNV: very good que debo poner primero

E: el auxiliar

TNV: dependiendo de que

E: ....

TNV: del pronombre does he have

TNV: porque have

E: porque ya tengo does

TNV: aja

NV: y si es negativo, no he doesn´t have

E: profe no entiendo

TNV: que no entiendes

E: por que have y no has

TNV: porque ya tengo la conjugación aquí (señala el does en el tablero)

TNV: prestan atención que deben hacerlo solos

TNV: el auxiliar lo tengo para preguntas y respuestas negativas

In the sample above, the participant TNV focuses the English class on grammar, asking questions to the students about structures. Also, the participant uses L1 for the explanations. This
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evidences the participant’s attention to working the grammatical aspects of the language without taking into consideration speaking activities which expose learners to communicative need situations.

Something similar occurs in the sample taken from the observations in which the participant TNV uses as principal resources the board for writing some exercises based on grammar structures and the dictionaries. In the exercises, the learners have to complete sentences, which do not require any oral interaction among the learners, and between the teacher and students, since the activity is individual and it has as focus the writing and use of grammar, which for the learners implies not to be exposed to teachers’ amount of oral input.

**TNVO3:** *(7:30 am) la profesora les explica el uso del have y has to.*

*La profesora usa español para dar la explicación.*

*La profesora escribe en el tablero una tarea la cual los estudiantes deben desarrollar.*

*La profesora escribe en el tablero ejercicios gramaticales para hacer usando el have y has to.*

1. Complete the sentences using have to, has to, these and verbs (do, hit, read, speak, travel and wear).

*My eyes are not very good I _________ glasses.*

*(los estudiantes deben completar seis oraciones).*

2. Write something that you have or had to do: everyday, yesterday and tomorrow.
The samples presented above evidence the lack of activities that involve oral interaction and use of L2 in the English classes. Moreover, they show that the tasks developed in the classroom are basically focused on the use of grammar, but not the way in which that grammar is used in an oral interaction. Teachers do not provide spaces in which learners can use the language in real life contexts, only in isolated sentences. This implies that learners do not have the exposure they need for being prepared to perform an oral production task as the ones that the teachers say students do during and at the end of the school term in order to monitor and assess their speaking skill. The participants affirmed to work in the oral production with the learners through the presentation of projects or five oral presentations during the school term. In that case, in the four weeks in which the observers were in the English classes, at least two of the activities should have been carried out. Nevertheless, those speaking activities were not performed.

Data taken from the interviews and the observations evidence the relevance teachers give to the use of L1 in the English classes, becoming an important part for the participants at the moment to teach English. The translation of L2 into L1 is done by the participants at the moment to teach grammar and interact with the learners in the classroom promoting the use of translation in the class which does not generate any communicative need to produce in L2. At the same time, the focus on grammar exercises and explanations takes up most of the time devoted to English classes being presented in isolated sentences lacking any context that helps the learners to use the language in any real situation. Since interactions among participants and students are in Spanish more than in English, and the activities developed in the classroom are mainly focused on grammatical aspects, there is not enough exposure to
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the L2 input nor any kind of preparation for future or possible oral tasks, and as a consequence there is not a communicative need that fosters learners’ oral production.

Data reveals that learners are not exposed to any kind of L2 input since teachers use more L1 than L2, nor to any kind of oral production task in the English class, instead, the classes are focused on the form or grammar structures of the language. However, students are asked to perform some oral presentations during and at the end of the school term. A sample taken from the interview TJC IQ9 (see appendix 12.2.1) shows the oral activities that according to the teacher students must accomplish during the school term. The participant states that the learners have to perform five oral presentations during the school term; the participant says that those activities are done in order to assess the learners’ oral production, what is reflected in his answer about the frequency in which the learners were assessed.

IQ9: ¿Con que frecuencia evalúa la producción oral de ellos?

TJCIQ9: no pues depende primero que todo del trabajo que se esté realizando en el periodo, se trata de hacer 5 exposiciones en el período o 5 presentaciones divididas, diría cada dos o tres semanas más o menos.

In the same way a sample taken from the interviews, the participant TNV states that learners have to present some stands based on topics chosen by themselves. In this way, the participant considers to work on learners’ oral production based on projects, which require learners’ preparation
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during the school term. In addition, the participant *TNV* sees the development of these projects as a way to monitor and assess students’ oral production progress.

**IQ6**: Bueno, ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para evaluar los desempeños de la producción oral de los estudiantes?

**TNVIQ6**: ellos cada periodo, como ya les había dicho tienen un proyecto (...) el primer periodo fue el periódico, para trabajar en comunicaciones, el segundo año se trabajo, ahhh el segundo periodo perdón, se trabajó unos stands donde ellos debían trabajar ehhh coger cualquier tema y presentarlo, porque ahorita en noviembre tenemos el English day donde ellos presentan sus stands y un spelling bee, entonces ahí es que ellos trabajan.

The samples evidence that the participants *TNV* and *TJC* mention the activities they implement for assessing the students’ oral production. Both teachers affirm that they assess the oral production, in the case of the participant *TNV* through projects at the end of the term, and in the case of the participant *TJC* through five regular oral presentations during the school term. For these presentations, learners need to receive the necessary speaking input from the teachers’ L2, and have the opportunity to be exposed to the language and practice it. However, during the time the researchers were observing the classes, there was no evidence of any kind of input, exposure or practice of English; on the contrary, the activities guided by the participants in the classes did not have the speaking skill as a component for their development, only the grammar aspect.
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During the research, the participants affirmed that the learners had speaking tasks during and at the end of each school term, but as it was previously seen the students did not receive any kind of input in L2 in the activities, nor input in L2 from the teacher, nor activities that involve the learners to use English in oral interaction. Additionally, in the course of the observation time (around 5 weeks) there was not evidenced that teachers invest a specific time in speaking activities with the purpose of preparing learners in English for the oral tasks; on the contrary, the tasks were only focused on written grammar and the teachers’ use of L2 was lower to the use of L1.

Data reveals that learners are not exposed to any kind of language input due to some factors that involves the teachers’ overuse of L1 in the English classes, the focus on written grammar rather than the practice of those grammar structures in oral interaction, and the kind of activities and tasks developed in the classroom, which do not allow learners to practice or to interact in L2, and be prepared for activities that require to speak in English, limiting also the oral input that they can receive from the teachers. Consequently, the lack of exposure to the language input affects the preparation learners need for the required tasks.

The data evidenced that the participants focus the English class on the grammar aspects of the language but there is no evidence of any kind of oral activity in which that grammar is used. This finding confirms what Bahrani & Soltani (2012) portray, when they state that a common characteristic in EFL classrooms is the attention that learners and teachers pay to the language system focusing on aspects as grammar and vocabulary but not on the skills needed to use them. Moreover, the participants affirmed that during the school period, learners had to present some oral activities, and at the end of
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each school period learners had to present a final oral task or project. However, in the time in which the researchers were observing the classes those activities were not performed and data collected from the observations did not reveal any exposure to recorded or live input in English nor an activity focused on speaking strategies is evidenced. On the contrary, data reveals that teachers focus their classes on grammar, using L1 more than L2 for teaching the form of the language presenting an absence of the context where those forms of the language can be used and lacking spaces where learners can practice orally what they study in grammar. Finally, the use of L1 for translation gives as result that learners do not develop the oral skill due to the lack of communicative need to speak in English in the classroom.

7.2 Aspects assessed by the teacher and feedback given on learners’ oral production are mainly focused on elements of accuracy.

The speaking skill assessment allows facilitators to identify the oral competences learners have developed and the things they need to improve. Effective feedback must be provided so that both, learners and teachers know the results and the actions to be taken. According to Ur (2003), feedback is the information given to learners and teachers about their performance with the objective to improve.

According to data collected, the type of corrections that the participants consider relevant in the students’ oral production when giving feedback are based on elements of achievement as pronunciation and grammar structures. The data also shows that participants pay attention to the grammatical aspects of the language in the speaking assessment. Taking into account the interview
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(see appendix 12.2.1) done by the researchers to the participants, when the participant TJC was asked about the aspects that he usually assessed on learners’ oral production, he answered that those corrections were focused on grammatical aspects such as the use of prepositions, articles and the rule of the third person singular.

¿Cuáles son los aspectos en los que se fija cuando evalúa la producción oral?

TJCIQ8: bueno se evalúa la pronunciación, el uso de vocabulario conocido, conectores… (el participante no dijo nada más)

In the same way, when the participant TNV was asked about the aspects that she took into account at the moment of assessing the students, the participant answered that they were focused on grammar, including the use of the auxiliaries in the negative form and pronunciation.

¿Cuáles son los aspectos en los que se fija cuando evalúa la producción oral?

TNVIQ10: la producción oral, pues primero miro que trabajen la gramática, (pues no, les hago caer en el error, porque ellos, supongamos) veo mucho que en las negaciones no utilizan el auxiliar, sino que utilizan “nooo” o algo así o también salen con unas pronunciaciones todas raras.

According to the participants, the focus at the moment to assess the speaking skill involves aspects as the ones previously mentioned which are pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. This implies that in the assessment process participants pay attention only to the linguistic part (focusing on
the expression of well organized grammar structures), but the problem is that participants do not take into account sociolinguistic (the relationship between language and society) and pragmatic (the meaning that involves a coherent message) aspects from the language that is being studied.

Also, in the assessment process the teacher provides feedback after the students’ performances with the purpose of letting them know about the mistakes they have and how to improve their performance based on these mistakes. This is seen in the question number 7 from the interview done by the researchers to the participants (see appendix 12.2.1), where the participant TJC expresses that the grammatical aspects such as prepositions, articles and the third person rules are the main aspects assessed during the oral presentations by him; through this assessment process, the participant identifies the strengths and weaknesses that learners have in their oral production, and through feedback the participant can let learners know about their mistakes.

**TJCIQ7:** bueno no, correcciones más que todo gramaticales, las preposiciones, los artículos (eeee el uso) encuentro mucha dificultad en el uso de la s en la tercera persona del singular, ellos creen que es que una s es un plural y no la utilizan, esas son como las correcciones más importantes que se encuentran ahí...En cada exposición se hace una evaluación al igual pues se hace una retroalimentación para que ellos identifiquen cuáles son sus fallas.

In this way, in the samples NVO1 and NVO2 taken from the observations, the participant TNV mentions the type of correction she makes based on the mistakes that learners usually have in their oral
production. When the participant was developing her class, there were some important moments which learners tried to participate about the topic the participant was teaching; learners participated in an oral way trying to do their best based on the topic taught in class. When learners committed some mistakes, it was clear that the corrections done by the participant to learners’ oral production were focused on grammatical aspects such as the use of prepositions, sentence order and the third person singular.

**NVO1:** Hay un estudiante muy interesado en el tema al que la profesora le pregunta y él responde... ella lo corrige y él vuelve a responder correctamente.

*P:* Can you sing?

*E:* no, can’t

*P:* no, I can’t

*E:* Por eso se dice ¿Can I go to the bathroom please?

*P:* exacto.

**NVO2:** los estudiantes leen los valores

*E:* amusement

*P:* amusement or amiusment (y le corrige la pronunciación)

*E:* a yes teacher...

*P:* ok, continue

*E:* hope, energy

*P:* very good.
The samples reveal that the participant pays attention to the structure of the language especially the grammatical aspects such as the sentence order, and that is why the participant reveals that she is giving more importance to grammar rather than the communicative issues of students’ speaking. Moreover, these corrections are done in the feedback provided by the participant after the assessment of learners’ oral production. According to the data, the assessment is a way to recognize the failures that learners have in their oral production and the manner that feedback lets the learners see the aspects in which they must improve.

The finding reveals that even though teachers gave relevance to the aspects of the language as vocabulary and pronunciation, they gave special attention to the grammatical aspects in the assessment of the oral production. Also, the finding shows that feedback is focused on corrections done in the same elements that teachers consider relevant in the speaking assessment. This finding is aligned with Gutierrez (2005), who states that one of the factors which inhibit the speaking skill development is the exaggerated attention the facilitators pay to the use of grammar, and this was seen along the assessment process because teachers gave more importance to grammar rather than the communicative issues of students’ speaking.
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7.3 Participants consider that learners’ lack of confidence affects the development of the speaking skill.

Affective factors are significant in the learners’ language learning process since these are essential at the moment of learning a foreign language. One of the most important is the confidence which allows students to cope the different adversities they can face during this process.

In agreement with the data collected through the interviews, the analysis shows the perceptions that the participants JCO and TNV had towards the students’ speaking performance and its relation to confidence at the moment to produce orally. The data also shows the perceptions learners have towards the fact of speaking in English and the factors that affect their confidence in an oral activity. In the sample taken from data collected in the interview (see appendix 12.2.2), when the participant TNV was asked about her perceptions towards working on the learners’ oral production, the participant expressed the perception that she had in relation to the learners’ confidence, expressing that it was good since even if learners did not feel confident in a speaking performance because of their fear it is relevant to do it.

**IQ7:** ¿Qué piensa usted como docente de trabajar la producción oral?

**TNVIQ7:** es muy bueno, pues a mí me gusta (...) porque ellos todos, mas que no sepan, como yo les digo a ellos, ellos si saben, sino que el miedo les puede (...) yo intento que lo trabajen
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(...)* uno les habla en inglés y ya entienden y algunos contestan así sea mal pero a mí me gusta.*

In the sample when the participant says “ellos si saben, sino que el miedo les puede”, the participant affirms that learners know how to produce orally; nevertheless, the lack of confidence leads participants not to take the risk to speak.

Another sample taken from the interviews *TJCIQ5* (see appendix 12.2.1), evidences the perceptions of the participant *TJC* towards the learners’ lack of confidence. When the participant answered the same questions about his perceptions towards working on the learners’ oral production, he said that it was relevant to work on the speaking skill even though learners tend to use L1 when they have to produce in L2, due to their lack of confidence.

*IQ5 ¿Qué piensa usted de trabajar la producción oral en sus clases?*

*TJCIQ5: es muy importante aunque por el miedo que les da a veces, ellos son muy reacios a utilizarla en contextos pues de clase, ellos bregan a utilizar primero el español ya si uno los corrige pues si utilizan el inglés; pero se ha encontrado pues con esa dificultad. Aunque lo sepan, ellos por el miedo van a responder en español primero.*

The sample demonstrates the perception that the participant *TJC* has towards the learners’ lack of confidence, indicating that he thinks that even if learners are able to produce in L2, the fear that they
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feels makes students speak first in Spanish, which directly affects the development of the learners’ speaking skill.

In addition, the interviews done to the students support the fact that their lack of confidence is a factor that affects the development of their oral production. A sample taken from the interviews done to the students (see appendix 12.2.3), when the participant S4 was asked about the language, she said that usually used to interact in the English classes. The participant says that the type of interactions that the learners have in the classroom are done using L1 instead of L2 because of the lack of confidence to produce orally in the English language.

**IQ8:** ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con su profesor en la clase de inglés, en español o en inglés?

**S4IQ8:** en español porque casi no nos tenemos esa confianza…

In the previous sample the participant expresses her tendency to use L1 in oral interactions in the classroom since she considers she is not confident enough to use the L2 orally in the classes. Another factor that is linked to the lack of confidence is the inhibition that learners feel at the moment to speak in English, produced by the nervousness. The following sample taken from the interview S1IQ6 (see appendix 12.2.3) presents the nervousness that the participants have at the moment to perform an oral activity or to practice in an interaction in the classroom and in front of others.
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IQ6: ¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de realizar actividades en las que deba hablar en inglés?

S1IQ6: (ummm), pues bien, pero yo soy muy tímida, entonces a veces como que me atacan los nervios entonces no soy capaz.

In the sample previously presented, the participant S1 states that her nervousness is the limiting factor that inhibits her to produce orally in the English classes. The samples previously presented evidence the lack of confidence that learners have to speak using L2 because of the fear, and nervousness to do it. In a sample taken from the interviews, the participant S2 states that nervousness is presented at the moment she has to use L2 in oral activities giving as a reason the fact that she does not have good pronunciation which affects her confidence to speak in English.

IQ6: ¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de realizar actividades en las que deba hablar en Ingles?

S2IQ6: me da pena.

S2IQ6: Interviewer: ¿por qué?

S2IQ6: pues porque lo que no sabemos pronunciar bien y todo entonces noooo me da pena.

The sample above shows the aspects that affect participant’s oral production in L2; in this case, the participant says that not having good pronunciation makes the participant not to take the risk to speak during the activities proposed in the class. Similarly, in a sample taken from the interview (see appendix 12.2.3) done to the participant S3, the student says that she interacts in Spanish rather than in
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English, she states that lack of knowledge about aspects such as pronunciation and vocabulary affects the confidence of the learner to produce in L2.

**IQ8:** ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con su profesor en las clases de inglés?

**S3IQ8:** en español.

¿Porqué?

**S3IQ8:** Por lo mismo, porque no sabemos pronunciar bien en inglés, no sabemos todas las palabras en inglés

Consequently, in the samples previously presented S2IQ6 and S3IQ8 the participants express that their lack of confidence to speak in English during the classes is mainly caused by aspects such as not having good pronunciation or sufficient range of vocabulary.

Data evidences that the participants TJC, TNV, S2, S3 agree with the fact that there is not enough confidence to take the risk to speak in English in the classes. However, the perceptions of the participants TJC and TNV differ from the perceptions of the participants S2 and S3 since for TJC and TNV students have previous knowledge and are capable to speak in English; nonetheless, fear and lack of confidence affect their oral production. In a different way, S2 and S3 perceptions towards the oral production show that such lack of confidence is due to aspects related to the limited vocabulary they have, the gaps in pronunciation, and introversion as an aspect of personality.
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The finding reveals that learners’ oral production is affected by the lack of confidence produced by the low bases that students have in aspects such as pronunciation and vocabulary. The finding is aligned with Gutierrez (2005), where she argues that in Colombia, learners elude oral tasks and interactions because speaking activities involve good pronunciation and fluency which students are not strongly equipped with. The finding also evidences that the learners avoid feeling embarrassed in front of the group when they are asked to speak because of the possible mistakes they make. Kavaliauskienė (2006) states that if speakers are opened to audience scrutiny, they will be concerned about difficulties such as grammar, lexis, and pronunciation mistakes. Similarly, Gutierrez (2005) states that the learners feel scared to speak using L2 in front of other people because of the risk to commit pronunciation and grammar mistakes. Moreover, when learners’ language mistakes are exposed in front of others, it affects their self-image which leads them to experience anxiety (Arnold 2003: 2, cited in Kavaliauskienė 2006).

7.4 The limited access to resources negatively affects the teaching and learning of English, particularly the development of the oral production skill.

For the teaching and learning of English, teachers usually use materials or tools that can reinforce the activities and tasks related to the language; those resources can be visual and audio resources (printed material and projected visual material) or electronic resources (computers).
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Data taken from the interviews and the questionnaires show the gap that the institution has related to the resources for teaching English, and how participants consider the lack of those resources as a factor that affects the teaching and learning English, especially in the implementation of tasks and activities through which learners can have the listening input for the development of the speaking skill. In the process of teaching and learning a sample taken from the interviews (see appendix 12.2.1), the participant TJC says that teaching English has been a challenge since the lack of resources in the high school affects the teaching and practice of English in the available time that the institution provides.

IQ2: ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia enseñando inglés en esta institución?

TJCIQ2: bueno en esta institución ha sido muy difícil porque, pues (...) no nos proporcionan los recursos para que esas 6 horas sean una enseñanza de inglés adecuada.

The data evidences that participant TJC considers that the limited resources the institution has affects the teaching and learning of the English classes. Also, even if the teachers have enough time to teach English effectively per week, they consider that not having sufficient resources implies an obstacle to develop this process satisfactorily. A sample taken from the interviews TJCIQ2 (see appendix 12.2.1) evidences the limitations that the participant TJC considers at the moment to implement activities in the English classes due to the lack of resources in the high school as tape recorders and the limited access to the computers’ room.
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*TJCIQ2*: (...) por ejemplo nosotros no contamos con grabadoras, apenas hace unos siete meses contamos con diccionarios, el uso de la tecnología, de las TICs, es muy, muy limitado, de hecho pues en la jornada que ellos tienen no se nos permite utilizar (...) los equipos de computadores, internet, tiene que ser jornada contraria lo que lo hace más difícil.

The sample evidences the shortcomings that the high school has in relation to the resources; there are not tools as tape recorders, and the use of the computers room is limited. Although the computers room is at the service of teachers and learners, there are complications at the moment to use them since the schedules in which learners can use them are different to the ones that the computers are available.

Also, in a sample taken from the questionnaire (see appendix 12.2.4), the participant *TJC* states that the lack of resources in the institution makes the practice of the language skills, among them the listening ability, a difficult work in the English classes.

*QQ8* ¿Involucra la práctica de la habilidades básicas en sus clases (escucha, lectura, escritura, y producción oral)?

*TJCCQQ8*: se trata aunque la falta de recursos actuales lo hace sumamente difícil.

In the sample previously presented the participant expresses that it is made an effort for involving the practice of the skills in L2; however, this practice is very limited due to the absence of
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resources that the institution has. The lack of resources not only affects the teaching of English, but it also affects the involvement of the English practice of the skills. Among the abilities that the participants consider that are affected by the lack of resources, they give relevance to listening skill as input for the oral production. A sample taken from the questionnaire TNVQQ9 (see appendix 12.2.4) shows the perceptions that the participant TNV has about the listening as the principal factor for learners’ speaking development. The participant was asked about the implementation of the basic skills in English language, the data shows her opinion about the attention to the listening as a base for speaking output.

TNVQQ9: Porque son todas muy importantes, y más en este caso donde la escucha es crucial porque es ahí donde se adquieren las bases para que las personas aprendan a hablar. El idioma se puede aprender a través de la imitación, a los estudiantes se les puede preguntar si tienen buenas bases de gramática, pero lo que si no tienen es escucha, entonces el habla es muy difícil de trabajarla en ellos, no por el susto sino porque no pronuncian bien y entonces ahí es donde se nota la dificultad.

In this sample, the participant expresses the importance of listening for the speaking skill development; the participant considers the relevance of working the listening skill as a principal factor that will enable learners and improve for the oral production in aspects like the pronunciation of the learners’ oral production.
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Even for the participant training in listening is important, samples taken from the collected data shows that the lack of resources affects the practice of this skill as input for the learners’ speaking. In a sample taken from the interview (see appendix 12.2.2), when the participant was asked about the time devoted to teach each skill, participant TNV considers the lack of resources as a factor that affects the teaching of listening and the access to the listening input for the development of the speaking skill. The participant sees the listening as an essential factor for the development of oral production even though she expresses that there are limitations to have access to listening input.

TNVIQ3: Pues lo que es la escucha es muy difícil porque no tenemos el material, nosotros los profesores intentamos trabajar con lo que tenemos y hasta los mismos muchachos nos ayudan trayendo los parlantes y todas esas cosas para trabajar el ingles (...) pues el habla ellos cada periodo tiene un proyecto que deben presentar, habla, lectura y escritura, pero si el escucha es muy difícil.

This sample shows the relevance that the participant gives to the listening skill in the English classes; it is evident that even for the participant, listening is important, there are limitations in the resources to the input that listening offers for the oral production. However, the participants in the classroom attempt to use other resources in order to have access to listening input, what clearly shows the importance that participants give to listening skill. Also, the answer given by the participant shows that the teachers do not see themselves as a resource of listening input for the learners’ development of the speaking skill.
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Data previously presented evidences the perceptions that participants have about the resources of the institution, expressing that the lack of them affects the teaching and learning of the English language. The participants see the tape recorders and the computers as useful resources for implementing activities for the development of the English classes; however, they have limitations to use them in the school. Also, participants consider that the gap that the institution has related to the resources, affects the development of the basic skills specially the listening as input for the oral production.

The finding reveals the difficulties that are presented in the high school and how they affect the teaching, learning, and implementation of tasks in the English classes. Instruments as the tape recorders and the use of online content through the computers are valuable for the participants at the moment to practice L2; however, the lack of these resources implies not to have enough tools for helping learners to develop their language skills. The absence of those resources also implies a limitation at the moment to implement activities and tasks that help the learners to practice in the basic skills, specially in the listening as input for the development of the oral production. The finding is aligned with Gutierrez (2005) who argues that in the public high schools from Colombia, the skills in the foreign language are not developed due to the lack of learning resources. The author, also states that the consequence of these barriers is the problems that learners have in the foreign language development and learning, especially in the oral skill.
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Also, the finding evidences the teachers’ awareness about the significance of working listening for the speaking skill, showing the perceptions that participants have about the listening as the bases for developing oral production. The participants’ perceptions are aligned with Kitao & Kitao (2004), who state that there is an interchange between listening and speaking, and speaking depends on what the listener can understand from the spoken language. Then, even if the participants see the listening input the base for developing the oral production, the gaps that the institution has in relation to the resources for improving in this skill affects the exposure that learners have to the listening for the spoken output.
8. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The research project developed in the 10th grade of the public high school denotes some gaps in the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill. Those gaps are linked to the lack of resources and the limitation of listening input as the principal difficulties for the implementation of oral tasks and the development of the speaking skill in the learners. Consequently, the assessment of the oral production is affected by the lack of speaking practice in activities and tasks, what for teachers implies not to work plenty in the oral production. Problems as the overuse of L1 instead of English and the focus on grammar are aspects that are affecting the teaching and students’ development of English and take off opportunities for speaking. Perceptions of the participants related to aspects as lack of students’ confidence and the need of listening input mean for the participants’ aspects that obstacle the development of the oral production.

While developing the research, several issues emerged in the process. From the several perspectives that the participants have towards the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill the researchers notice that teachers consider relevant the use of resources as a way of giving input for learners, and that even the English classes have enough time for working in the different skills and involve the speaking skill in the classroom; the teachers do not use effectively the time, nor implemented a different kind of strategies that help the learners to improve in their speaking. In this way, we consider relevant to develop more studies in this field, in order to know if this tendency is reflected in several high schools.
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It is important to highlight the fact that even if this study shows findings describing aspects of the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill, it does not show information related to speaking activities and strategies that can be developed in public high schools and the assessment of the oral production since in the institution they were not evidenced. For this reason, we recommend more research in this field in order to have more results that help the public education to improve in the oral skill.

Also, since the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill has not been sufficiently investigated in the area of Pereira, Risaralda, we consider necessary a further research in this field in aspects related to the teachers’ perspectives towards it, the way teachers instruct speaking and implement the assessment of the oral production, the type of tasks, the aspects that are usually assessed, and the way feedback is given; all of them, inside the public educational system, which is considered the most relevant for its weakness in the students’ oral production.

Finally, in order to get more results in the matter, we recommend for future research making a study of the high school and analyze if the context, the possible participants, and the time are accorded to the focus of the study with the purpose of not having problems at the moment to collect evidence.
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9. CONCLUSIONS

Based on what was found in the study of the teaching and assessment of the speaking skill in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira, and whose principal purpose is to describe how the speaking skill is taught and assessed, the questions that were established in the research project were: 1. what does the exposure to English classes in a public high school tell us about the way speaking is taught and assessed? 2. What are teachers’ and learners’ perceptions towards the teaching of the speaking skill? Based on these questions, four findings related to the matter of the research were found, and one unexpected finding emerged from the study.

Related to the exposure that learners have to the English classes, it was found that the English classes are guided mainly in L1, are focused on grammar rather than the way that grammar can be used in a conversation, and there are not opportunities for practicing speaking in the classroom that can help the learners to develop the oral production. Based on this finding in a public high school from Pereira, the speaking skill is not practiced and developed, what implies to have learners with a low level in the foreign language for interacting in L2. In this way, the study serves as point of reference for the improvement of the English classes in a way that they can allow students and teachers to devote time in the practice on the oral production and not only teach grammar, and make teachers conscious about the relevance of using the L2 in the classroom. Another finding that relates to the first question is the aspects evaluated by the teachers in the oral production. In the high school, the teachers consider important the elements of accuracy at the moment to assess the oral production, giving relevance to the grammar and pronunciation rather than other aspects as the meaning and fluency.
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For the second question related to the teachers and learners perceptions towards the teaching of the speaking skill, teachers consider the lack of opportunities of learners to be exposed to audio material as an obstacle for developing the speaking skill. Teachers consider the listening input as a base for the development of the speaking skill, so if learners do not receive listening input, the participants consider that they are not going to improve in their oral skill. Also, teachers and learners have as perception the fact that learners do not have the confidence to produce orally because of the low bases they have in aspects such as vocabulary and pronunciation, what implies for them a factor of inhibition, not only for the lack of knowledge, but also for the fear to commit mistakes. A finding that emerged from the study shows the relevance that participants give to the available resources in the institution for the development of the learners’ skills, the participants consider the use of computers and tape recorders as important support for their classes, but the limited access to those resources because of the numbers of the students and the schedules represent for the participants an obstacle for practicing the skills.

The researchers conclude that taking into account that the idea of leaning a foreign language is to develop the competences that allow the students to use the language in L2, teachers from Risaralda and Colombia in general have as function to use the English classes as an opportunity to help the learners to learn the foreign language and be able of speaking in English. The use of the L2 in the class implies for the learners to have input from the teachers, so if teachers do not use the L1, students are not exposed to the language, and it is difficult for them to have bases for producing orally. Moreover, the focus on grammar is a problem that is presented in public high schools from Pereira and that directly affects the
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learners since they are not being prepared for a world in which speaking in English is becoming a key. Teaching English requires the assessment of the skill in order to measure the improvements that learners have in the process, at the moment to assess, the grammar should not be the only factor of relevance as it is happening in public high schools since speaking involves to interact with coherence and understandable messages, so teachers need to consider this factor in their criteria when they assess.

Related to the participants’ perceptions, the researchers conclude that the listening input is relevant at the moment to produce orally since it provides the bases and exposure that learners need in order to develop the oral production. In Risaralda, and Colombia in general, public institutions should provide the resources and materials that allow the teachers to make better English classes and give the learners opportunities and bases for the development of the L2. The use of TICs is taking place in the high schools; learners use them constantly, so the institutions need to provide those spaces for the development of the classes. If learners have the preparation for speaking in L2 based on the bases already provided by the teachers through the use of several resources that expose them to the use of the language, they will not feel scared and shy to use the L2.
10. Limitations

One of the main limitations that were presented to conduct this research project was the difficulty to find a high school, which would allow us to carry out the investigation due the fact that in the five schools to which we turn up for help, the principals and the English teachers told us that in those institutions they did not have enough time to implement oral tasks and activities because of the big amount of students, and also because they focused their attention to prepare the students for the Saber Pro; hence, the process of gathering data was delayed since it took us more time in order to find the high school to conduct the research.

As the research was conducted in the second semester of the school year, it was harder to give a continuity because in that period of time is when it is customary to receive lectures and consultancies from different state agencies. For example, in the high school the schedule of the classes was modified and many observations had to be postponed due to several interventions of the SENA PEREIRA. The researchers could achieve the amount of observations needed for the research but in a longer period of time causing another considerable delay in the process.

Finally, another limitation which was a significant one was the lack of studies conducted in Pereira about speaking skill assessment. This aspect is relevant and crucial because starting a research without studies is a challenge since they are a support for comparing and contrasting the aspects found during the research.
11. REFERENCE LIST


Teaching speaking and speaking skill assessment in a 10th grade of a public high school from Pereira


Holmes, D. (s.f.). Finchpark. Retrieved November 6th 2012, from Finchpark:
http://www.finchpark.com/courses/tkt/Unit_08/speaking_activities.pdf


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12. APPENDIXES

12.1 APPENDIX CONSENT FORM

Pereira, 17 de julio de 2012

Señor Rector

Cordial saludo:

El programa de licenciatura en lengua inglesa de la universidad tecnológica de Pereira, pretende formar profesionales capaces de estudiar y desarrollar todos los aspectos relacionados con la actividad pedagógica, por tal razón de una manera muy respetuosa le solicitamos su colaboración con el fin de que los estudiantes Sebastián Gómez, código 1087993890, Cristina Giraldo, código 1093218824 y Liliana Marcela Usma código 108800766 puedan realizar en una institución la descripción de cómo se da la enseñanza del ingles como lengua extranjera en los colegios públicos de Pereira, que tipo de metodología y estrategias de enseñanza utilizan los profesores de ingles y como los estudiantes desarrollan las cuatro habilidades: escucha, escritura, lectura y habla enfocándose en el rol del habla en el aprendizaje de una nueva lengua.

Este proceso tiene una duración de un mes y el objetivo es la observación de las clases con el fin de obtener los datos que aporten al proyecto de grado que están desarrollando los estudiantes en la licenciatura para culminar su proceso educativo a través de experiencias y procesos que puedan convertirse en material útil para los futuros profesionales aportando a su crecimiento y desarrollo profesional.

Los estudiantes que realizaran este proceso se identificaran con el carnet que los acredita como miembros de nuestra institución. De antemano reciba nuestros agradecimientos por la colaboración al respecto, con la cual contribuye al logro de nuestros objetivos académicos.

Atentamente,

ENRIQUE ARIAS CASTAÑO
Coordinador
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa
12.2 APPENDIX INSTRUMENTS

12.2.1 APPENDIX INTERVIEW FOR THE TEACHER TJC

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha enseñado Ingles?
2. ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia enseñando ingles en esta institución?
3. ¿Utiliza usted los estándares propuestos por el ministerio de educación nacional para trabajar las cuatro habilidades en sus clases de ingles? ¿Cómo?
4. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza usted evaluar el desempeño de la producción oral de sus estudiantes porque las utiliza?
5. ¿Qué piensa usted acerca de trabajar la habilidad de la producción oral en sus estudiantes?
6. ¿De qué manera hace usted seguimiento al proceso de producción oral de sus estudiantes?
7. ¿Cómo identifica usted que sus estudiantes han desarrollado o han mejorado en su producción oral del inglés?
8. ¿Qué aspectos evalúa usted en la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
9. ¿Con que frecuencia evalúa usted la producción oral de sus?
10. ¿Qué tipo de actividades realiza usted en sus clases de inglés para evaluar la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
11. ¿Por qué evalúa usted la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
12. ¿Qué piensa usted de que se evalúe la producción oral dentro de sus clases?
13. ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con los estudiantes en la clase de inglés? (inglés o español)
12.2.2 APPENDIX INTERVIEW FOR TEACHER TNV

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha enseñado Ingles?
2. ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia enseñando ingles en esta institución?
3. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedica en clase a cada habilidad?
4. ¿Qué piensa usted acerca de ellos o sea cada habilidad?
5. ¿Utiliza usted los estándares propuestos por el ministerio de educación nacional para trabajar las cuatro habilidades en sus clases de inglés? ¿Cómo?
6. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza usted evaluar el desempeño de la producción oral de sus estudiantes porque las utiliza?
7. ¿Qué piensa usted acerca de trabajar la habilidad de la producción oral en sus clases?
8. ¿De qué manera hace usted seguimiento al proceso de producción oral de sus estudiantes?
9. ¿Cómo identifica usted que sus estudiantes han desarrollado o han mejorado en su producción oral del inglés?
10. ¿Qué aspectos evalúa usted en la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
11. ¿Con qué frecuencia evalúa usted la producción oral de sus?
12. ¿Qué tipo de actividades realiza usted en sus clases de inglés para evaluar la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
13. ¿Por qué evalúa usted la producción oral de sus estudiantes?
14. ¿Qué piensa usted de que se evalúe la producción oral dentro de sus clases?
15. ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con los estudiantes en la clase de ingles? (ingles o español)
12.2.3 APPENDIX INTERVIEW FOR STUDENTS

Entrevista para estudiantes

1. ¿Qué opina usted de las clases de inglés?
2. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para realizar los trabajos de la clase?
3. ¿Qué opina usted de la manera como el profesor orienta las clases de inglés?
4. ¿Qué opina usted de los recursos con los que cuenta el colegio para las clases de inglés?
5. ¿Qué tanto tiempo dedica usted por fuera de clase a preparar actividades que tengan que ver con la producción oral inglés?
6. ¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de realizar actividades donde deba hablar en inglés? Porqué?
7. ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con sus compañeros en las clases de inglés? ¿Por qué? (español o inglés)
8. ¿De qué manera interactúa usted con su profesor en las clases de inglés? ¿Por qué? (español o inglés)
12.2.4 APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. ¿Es usted licenciado en inglés o en idiomas? Si ___ No___ Titulo______________________________

2. ¿Cuántos años lleva enseñando Inglés?

3. ¿Por qué decidió enseñar inglés?

4. ¿Tiene usted alguna certificación nacional o internacional en inglés?

5. ¿Qué nivel de inglés tiene?

6. ¿Actualmente se encuentra usted adelantando estudios que tengan relación con el inglés?

7. ¿Ha vivido en un país angloparlante? Si___ no____ ¿Cuánto tiempo?

8. ¿Involucra la práctica de las habilidades básicas en sus clases (escucha, lectura, escritura y producción oral)?.

9. Dedica usted la misma cantidad de tiempo y esfuerzo a la implementación de las habilidades básicas del inglés? Si _____ No____ ¿Por qué?

10. Como lo hace o de qué manera lo hace?
12.2. 5 APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS.

1. Como se desarrollan las clases de inglés en su colegio?

_________________________________________________ ______________________________________

2. Cuál es la principal habilidad que trabaja el profesor durante las clases?

_________________________________________________ ______________________________________

3. Como es la interacción del profesor con los estudiantes? Usa el inglés?

_________________________________________________ ______________________________________

4. De qué manera les evalúa la parte oral?

_________________________________________________ ______________________________________