THE STATE OF THE ART OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM PEREIRA

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1. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teacher’s prevalent methodologies and resources applied in the English classroom of some public schools from Pereira. The participants were three English teachers as well as 8th and 10th grader students from three public schools of the city. Data was collected by means of interviews, questionnaires and the researchers’ observations. The results indicated that there is a prevalent methodology in the English teachers’ lessons which is the Grammar Translation Method; in this project, it was also identified the overuse of the learners’ mother tongue (L1). In the same fashion, it was found the use of the teaching resources for non-communicative practices. Based on the findings, the following implications emerged: pedagogical and research implications.

Key words: English, teaching, methodologies, Grammar-Translation Method, use of materials,
RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio fue investigar las metodologías predominantes de los profesores y los recursos aplicados en el aula de inglés de algunas escuelas públicas de Pereira. Los participantes fueron tres profesores de inglés así como estudiantes de 8° y 10° grado de tres escuelas públicas de la ciudad. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas, cuestionarios y observaciones de los investigadores. Los resultados indicaron que la metodología predominante en las clases de los profesores de inglés, es el método gramática traducción; en este proyecto, también se identificó un uso excesivo de la lengua materna (L1) de los estudiantes, así como el uso de materiales en la enseñanza para actividades no comunicativas. A partir de estos hallazgos, surgen las siguientes implicaciones: pedagógicas y de investigación.

Palabras claves: Ingles, enseñanza, metodologías, Método Gramática-Traducción, uso de materiales, uso de la lengua materna.
2. INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the state of the art of the English language teaching in three public schools from Pereira, Risaralda. Its main focus was to identify the relevant aspects of the English language teaching in terms of the prevalent methodologies and resources implemented by the teachers in their classrooms.

It is relevant to mention that this study was part of a project impulsed by the Secretaria de Educación of Pereira and coordinated by the Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa of the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, as a strategy to improve the learning of English in the official schools of the city.

Four teams of researchers initiated together the development of the project. For this reason, all the research reports produced within the macro project share aspects as the statement of the problem, the research questions, the theoretical framework and parts of the methodological design and the literature review. The data collection and analysis, findings, teaching and research implications and conclusions are however totally original of this particular work.

The first section of this study presents the statement of the problem which includes the research questions and the purpose of this study. Next, in the theoretical framework and literature review, the more relevant definitions which support this study are explained. The section dedicated to the methodology describes the type of study and the context where this research was carried out as well as the instruments used to collect the data for the development of this study and the data analysis process. Finally, the findings, the teaching and research implications drawn from these results and the conclusions of the study are presented.
3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English has become the most spoken language worldwide. This fact is made evident in the Basic standards of competence in foreign languages: English, published by the Ministry of Education, which states that being a bilingual person is essential in the globalized world. Thus, a person who speaks English, is not only able to get better academic and labor opportunities but also contribute to the development of the country by helping the national companies and institutions to be more competitive in the international context.

Consequently, the government and the local institutions have made significant efforts to improve the learning of English as a foreign language in the country.

According to information published by the Ministry of Education in its website Colombia Aprende in relation with the National Program of Bilingualism, teaching English in Colombia has evolved over the past ten years, and many people from all social status have been involved in the process of learning or teaching English or assessing the language competences of the Colombian population in relation with this language. (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, s.f)

In the first place, the Government, through the Ministry of Education, formulated the program “Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras” which was implemented for significant actions as, the definition, the socialization and the implementation of the standards of competence in English language as well as the teachers training strategies designed for improving teachers’ communicative competence in English; the assessment of the language level of mastery in teachers and students; the integration of new technologies as well as other resources for teaching and learning English; furthermore, the development of methodologies for extending the learning of English to diverse populations, and the development of educational contents to support the classroom’s practices.

At the regional level, the Government of the Department of Risaralda, considering the goals and the programs promoted by the “Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras”, has created the educational public policy called “Risaralda Bilingüe” which was formulated in 2011 by the Secretary of Education in Risaralda. It includes the “Proyecto de
“Ordenanza” which specifies a strategic plan, goals, and indicators that will be the parameters to construct a bilingual region.

At the local level, the Pereira Town Hall Educational Office has been developing two projects. To improve the methodological and linguistic competences of the teachers, professional development courses have been offered to in-service-teachers. Those courses have been oriented by educational institutions with wide experience in the teaching of English.

The second project has targeted the students; the program called “Jornada Escolar Extendida” (JEEX) provides students of non-certificated towns the opportunity, among other options, to take part in an English program. According to information published by the Asamblea de Risaralda in 2012, 1000 students benefitted from that particular strategy. (Asamblea de Risaralda, 2012:38)

However, apparently the efforts made by the government and the local entities previously mentioned did not have the expected impact. A study made by the International Private Education Company, known as Education First (2011), revealed that Latin America obtained lower results in the English language exams than expected; the results showed that Colombians had a low proficiency in English as a foreign language.

Also, the Ministry of Education published some statistics related to the English level of the Colombian population in which they affirmed that just 1% of the inhabitants achieved a B1 level and hardly the 0.08% obtained a C1 level of competence.

These results demonstrate that despite the ten years that have passed, and the efforts carried out, teachers and learners still require developing linguistic competences in the English language which are not being achieved in the current educational system.

In addition to this, other statistics provided by the “Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior” (ICFES) and supported in yearly tests taken by students of 11th grade, point out that the population tested during the period 2007-2010 reached barely the A1 level of competence. The statistics showed that approximately 54% of these students achieved an A1 level, 32.4% reached the level A1, only 7% obtained an A2, 5% got a B1, and just a 1.6% actually achieved a B2 level according to the standards proposed by the MEN.
More evidence that points towards the lack of improvement in the educational field of English as a foreign language is the fact that the Ministry of Education, in agreement with the British Council, tested, in 2006, seven public schools in Risaralda in relation with the students’ mastery of English. These schools were selected because their “Proyecto Educativo Institucional” (PEI) had an emphasis in communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language. The results showed that 98.5% of students did not reach further than the A1-A2 level (45.7% belonged to an initial -A1 level, 39.4% A1, 13.4% A2) and only the 1.6% of the students achieved B1 level.

Risaralda teachers of English were also tested to find out their level of competence in English. According to the results of the test, only 12% of them reached a B2 level. The previous results were taken as a base for the Plan de Desarrollo Risaralda (2008-2011), in which the Secretary of Education in Risaralda has carried out different actions with the aim of training both teachers and learners in English as a foreign language.

The previous statistics showed a general view of the proficiency level in English of teachers and students in the Risaralda region. In the capital of the Department, Pereira, the ICFES test of the period 2007-2010 exposed that 7.8% of students reached an A2 level; 32.9% of them were placed in an A1 level; 52% of students obtained an A-; and only 5.5% of students achieved a B1 level; it is important to highlight that only 1.5% of students achieved the level B+.

A possible cause for the low results previously mentioned could be the implementation of traditional teaching methods which are not appropriate for the development of students’ communicative competences in English since according to Walia (2012) traditional methodology focuses and emphasizes mainly the grammatical competence and the acquisition of vocabulary and, as such, do not pay much attention to the improvement of fluency or communicative skills.

For this reason, this study will endeavor to describe the realities of the English teaching in three public institutions in Pereira city with the purpose of establishing a diagnosis that may guide the formulation of new projects and solutions to the current situations in the field of English language teaching. Furthermore, this study will inform readers about the methodologies and materials used in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Pereira city.
4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that will guide this research project are:

What is the prevalent methodology employed in the English classes?

What materials do teachers employ to support students’ learning?
5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conscious of the importance of learning foreign languages, the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) initiated in 2004 the project “Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en Lengua Extranjera” in an effort to raise the level of quality of English teaching in Colombian schools.

**Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés ¡El Reto!**

Through the textbook *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés ¡El Reto!*, MEN establishes standards for the teaching of English in public schools and state the English proficiency levels that Colombian students should be able to reach at the end of each grade or program. These standards are designed to help teachers to form Colombian citizens capable of communicating in English – in other words, citizens who possess communicative competence. “Lograr ciudadanos y ciudadanas capaces de comunicarse en inglés, de tal forma que puedan insertar al país en los procesos de comunicación universal, en la economía global, y en la apertura cultural, con estándares internacionalmente comparables” (Ministry of Education, *Estándares básicos en Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: El Reto!*, 2006)

According to ¡El Reto! (2006) communicative competence includes linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*CEFRL*, 2005) is presented in ¡El Reto! as a guideline for the establishment of English proficiency standards in these different competences. The CEFRL describes in a comprehensive way what learners have to learn in order to use a language, including the knowledge and skills they have to develop with respect to the cultural context of the language. In addition, the CEFRL provides an ascending series of common reference levels for describing learner proficiency. These levels are represented on a vertical scale, while a horizontal scale presents a set of descriptive categories made up of parameters of communicative activity and communicative language competency. Consequently, the CEFRL contributes significantly to an understanding of the problems in the professional language teaching field and
emphasizes the importance of incorporating a method that fosters the language learning competences.

**Method**

It is important for us as investigators that facilitators have clarity about the existing methods to implement in language learning classrooms in order to help students to be proficient learners.

Harmer (2011) argues that a method is the practical realization of an approach which includes type of activities, roles of teachers and learners, the kinds of material which will be helpful and some models of syllabus organization. Once the teachers have examined, explored and analyzed, they are able to identify which methods implement in their classes. The method is important since by means of it, the teacher facilitates his/her knowledge to the students, as well as to achieve the aims proposed in the subject. Furthermore, Adamson (1997), defines method as a single set of practices and procedures, derived from theory or theorization of practice that impinges upon the design of a curriculum plan, resources, and teaching and learning activities. The definitions previously mentioned are helpful in a similar manner to guide English teachers to see from different perspectives why incorporate a method within language learning scenarios.

Although methods have existed for many years, now days they have been consolidated or ameliorated through time. Pennycook (1989) argues that there has been a series of language teaching methods over the years, each being succeeded by a better one until we reach the present. Some methods, or their characteristics still hold sway until present, up to the point that Kelly, L (1969 cited by Cook, 1989) suggests that "nobody really knows what is new or old in present-day language teaching procedures".
Some prominent methods pinpointed by Prator and Murcia (1979) are: Silent way, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Suggestology, Suggestopedia or Accelerated Learning. Prabhu, N(1990) considers that there is no such thing as the best method, it depends on who the method is for, in what circumstances, for what purpose; that is to say, the context.

Besides of recognizing that the implementation of a method depends on factors such as the context, it is also relevant to clarify that the communicative approach represents the theories of language learning that help the teachers to implement methods to promote interaction among learners.

**Communicative Language Teaching**

The communicative approach to language learning pays special attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. As it is expressed by the CEFRL (2005) learners have to develop different skills and knowledge in order to learn to use the language to communicate real messages in genuine, specific situations. It has been our perception, and that of several researchers (Lorduy, Lambrano, Garcés & Bejarano 2009; Velásquez & Holguín 2012) that in many Colombian schools, English teachers focus on abstract grammatical skills and neglect the application of these to real situations. In other words, they tend to focus on the structural aspects of the language to the exclusion of the functional aspects.

Before explaining what the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT) is, the terms “approach” and “method” will be clarified. According to Brown (2001), “an approach is related to theoretically well-informed positions and beliefs about the nature of language and language learning” whereas Anthony 1963; cited in Brown (2001) defines a method as “an overall plan for systematic presentation on language based upon a selected approach”, that is to say, a set of choices made around the particular skills to be taught the content, and the order in which this content will be presented (Anthony 1963; cited in Richards and Rodgers 2001).
CLT is an approach that emphasizes the development of the communicative competence, especially, the productive skills: speaking and writing. (Bachman 1990; cited in Hernandez & Rodriguez, 2002). Similarly, Brown (2001) points out that one characteristic of Communicative Language Teaching is that classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. According to ¡El Reto!, the communicative competence includes the development of the following competences:

- Linguistic (knowledge of grammar, orthography and semantics and their appropriate application in different contexts)
- Pragmatic (functional use of language and discourse)
- Sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of sociocultural factors which are implicit in languages).

Thus, the development of the communicative competence helps learners to increase their knowledge about the world, develop their social skills, and become more familiar with cultural aspects of the target language. (Ministry of Education, *Estándares básicos en Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: El Reto!*, 2006).

It is therefore important for language teachers to realize that in order for students to communicate in a foreign language effectively, it is not enough to focus exclusively on grammatical competence. Widdowson (1974) claims that teachers cannot think of language only in terms of sentences, we must also consider the nature of discourse and how best to teach it. That is why teachers need to bear in mind the necessity of preparing varied activities that help learners to acquire the skills necessary to communicate in real life situations.

**Classroom interaction**

Classroom interaction is a key to achieve the primary aim of learning a language respecting to know to use the language in communication in its written or spoken forms. For this reason, language teachers face the challenge to design activities that promote the interaction between the teacher and the learners, and the interaction among learners themselves. Robinson
(1994:7) describes interaction as follows: “Interaction is the process referring to “face-to-face” action. It can be either verbal channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through proximity, eye-contact, facial expressions, gesturing, etc).” Through interaction learners can increase their language vocabulary store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even output of their classmates in discussions, problem-solving tasks, etc. In interaction students can use all the existing knowledge they have learnt of the language in real life exchanges (Rivers, 1987).

According to Richards (2006) Communicative language teaching proposes the participation of learners in classroom activities based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Harmer (2001) expresses that group work fosters cooperative activity in which the learners involved work together to complete a task allowing teachers to have time to work with one or more groups while other learners continue working. In fact, cooperation in groups helps students to participate more actively, and also contributes to a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the classroom (Ur, 1996)

**Communicative activities**

In English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, communicative activities should be integrated into the lessons as a means of providing learners with the opportunities to develop their language skills, and communicate in situations that they are likely to encounter in real life. As said by Moss & Ross-Feldman (2003):

“Communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the program and community. Communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, break down barriers, talk about self, and learn about the culture. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes”.

Communicative activities foster the rapport between learners as a vehicle for oral practices focused on real purposes. Rojas (2008) defines communicative activities as activities designed specifically to encourage students’ linguistic production; these involve students in comprehension, production, and interaction in a foreign language. In other words, communicative activities’ focus is more on discourse than on the production of isolated words or sentences, translating, and memorizing rules of the foreign language.

**Grammar Translation Method**

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has many features which have been criticized as ineffective in enhancing learners’ communicative ability in language since it has to do mainly with memorizing rules of the foreign language. GTM is a way of studying language through a detailed analysis of grammar rules in order to translate sentences and texts from the native language to a foreign language and vice versa (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 5). According to Prator and Celce-Murcia 1979; cited in Brown (2001), classes using this method are taught in the mother tongue with little use of the target language and often the drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue. Hence, Grammar Translation Method has a focus on the explanation of grammatical rules in L1.

**The use of students’ mother tongue (L1)**

The use of student’s first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom has been controversial for many years. According to Cook (2001), “the use of L1 by both students and teachers increases both comprehension and learning of L2”. On the other hand, Tang (2002), argues that “L2 is best learned through massive amounts of exposure to the language with limited time spent using L1” However, in recent years, focus has been shifting towards inclusion of L1 in the language classroom.

Auerbach (1993), suggests the following possible occasions for using the mother tongue: negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; presentation of rules governing grammar; discussion of cross-cultural issues; explanation of errors and
assessment of comprehension. In the same fashion, Brown (2000, p. 68) claims that “first language can be a facilitating factor and not just an interfering factor”, and Schweers (1999) encourages teachers to incorporate the native language into lessons to influence the classroom dynamic, and suggests that “starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners' lived experiences, allowing them to express and themselves”. Therefore, the use of L1 is for clarifying purposes and should not be the primary mode of communication either by the students or teacher(s) in the L2 classroom. Once an appropriate balance is achieved, the use of L1 will enhance an L2 classroom. It also can be reflected through the kind of materials that teachers use to promote interaction by using their foreign language.

**Language teaching materials**

To help learners developing different skills in foreign language learning, materials are considered as a means for students to practice and to use the target language for real situations. Tomlinson (2003) defines materials as “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language”. Kitao (1997) lists some kind of materials including textbooks, video and audio tapes, computer software, and visual aids; technology such as slides, video and audio tape recorders, video cameras, and computers which can be used in class to support the students’ English learning process.

Currently, language teaching materials need to be focused on communicative competence and knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts of different kinds like defining, classifying, describing, reporting and so on (Hymes, 1971; Campbell & Wales 19 cited in Brumfit & Johnson 1979). For this reason, authentic materials are considered helpful tools to be used in language teaching in order to expose learners to use English for real purposes. García (1994) defines authentic materials as samples of language in written or oral form which are produced for communication among native people. Authentic materials are created to contribute to the real use of the language since these do not only provide information about the linguistic system but also socio-cultural details of its context.

Considering the changes brought by technology in the world, education also has to make use of technology in order to adapt itself to the current context. Teachers should not only have
knowledge of some technological resources, but also being clear about the principles of designing good teaching and learning by knowing what education needs from technology (Laurillard 2012, p. 22). Therefore, technology is also a key tool in the EFL classroom due to the fact that learners are more attentive when it is used. Therefore, teachers can consider students’ needs and interests when planning classes since with the use of technology, students can access an extraordinary wealth of information. Laurillard (2012) highlights that teachers should become, firstly, fluent users of digital technologies for education, and secondly, study effective uses of technology for learning. Brown (2001) suggests that, aside from computers, there are other technological aids which are available for language teacher such as commercially produced audiotapes and videotapes, self-made videotapes, and overhead projections.
6. RELATED STUDIES

Studies related with our research project have similarities with some theories involved in the results found. They have to do with the Grammar Translation Method, the overuse of the L1, and the resources employed in the EFL classroom. To start with, a study made in Saudi Arabia by Assalahi, Hussein M. (2013), about the grammar teaching with four male Saudi EFL teachers in public schools. They all had a major in English language teaching. The data was collected by means of interviews and self-report about teacher's grammar teaching practices. This study found that the participants’ belief system was dominated by a mechanical forms-focused approach to grammar teaching; explicit grammar teaching appeared as the core teaching strategy for grammar instruction among all the participants; the use of L1 was reported to be used in giving instructions to students as well as in transferring the meaning of grammar rules from L2 to L1, and finally, the importance of using grammatical terms in the teachers grammar practices. In conclusion, this study recommends that in-service teacher education programs could address any foreseeable incompatibility between teachers' beliefs and desired practices by providing teachers with the chances to reflect on their beliefs and classroom practices and to foster more training programs for English teachers.

The second study is conducted by Bakhtiari and Morteza (2013), his research is about the use of the L1 during the English classes with 25 students in class A and 28 students were in class B from third grade in Andimeshk, Iran. The data was gathered by using classroom observations and interviews. The main aims of this empirical study were to observe the two classes in terms of the quantity of use of L1 as well as to reflect on the attitudes and perceptions of the students and teachers towards using Persian (L1) in English (L2) classes. The outcomes of this study were in line with other similar studies carried out in different contexts. This study also showed that the over use of L1 in L2 classes might lead to students' dissatisfaction since the major part of class time was given to focus on grammar exercises, translation of texts, sentences and giving Persian equivalents for all the words and expressions in each lesson. That is to say, the class was dominated by Grammar– Translation Method; it also mentioned that, all four students interviewed were in favor of using more L2 in their English classes. Finally, this study recommends that we as teachers should not be waiting for an ideal class to come. Our effectiveness is when we can make a change in our students' perception and attitudes towards English which can be to their benefit.
Furthermore, this study is related with the use of upgrade materials such as the internet; it was made in China by Zhang (2013), about the use of Internet in EFL teaching and learning in Northwest China. In this research, 54 teachers and 350 students were randomly selected from ten universities as research subjects. Quantitative research instrument is employed in this research, which involves a questionnaire with 12 items. The 12 items are categorized into three factors: attitudes towards integration of Internet and English learning and access to computer and Internet; Internet use in language teaching and learning; knowledge of network technology. This study found that the internet will benefit English reading, writing, listening, speaking and translation; teachers and students often use Internet as a source of English materials; teachers and students know how to use Internet in their English teaching/learning. In conclusion, with the facility to access to computers and Internet, teachers and students will have more benefits with the integration of Internet with EFL teaching and learning in Chinese educational settings. However, the traditional EFL classroom still dominates language learning field, and Internet is still a supplement in the classroom.

The following study is related to the integration of songs into the English lessons. It is a research project carried out by Schoeppep Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, 2001 called “Reasons for Using Songs in the ESL/EFL Classroom” was concerned with explaining the effectiveness of songs in an English class as a learning tool, and the affective, cognitive, and linguistic reasons for using songs. To sum up, the Internet, access to music, lyrics, and activities has been simplified which makes it easy for the teacher to effectively integrate the songs into a language lesson.

Finally, other study which contributed to this research was the one made by Emily Cruse(2004), which was made with 8-18 years old doubt generation M (media generation, which is people who is devoted to media); this study demonstrates that the use of videos in the classroom practices reinforces reading and lecture material, enhances student comprehension and discussion, provides greater accommodation of diverse learning styles, increases student motivation and enthusiasm, promotes teacher effectiveness. In this study the author concluded that as with all educational technologies, the value of video relies on how it is implemented in the classroom. Reviews and meta-analysis of the research indicates that positive learning and affective outcomes are greatly enhanced and extended when the video is integrated into the rest
of the lesson; effectively integrating video into classroom instruction involves preparation and activities before, during and after viewing (Reeves, 2001; Rogow, 1997; National Teacher Training Institute, undated).
7. METHODOLOGY

This research project forms part of a macro project which main objective is to collect data in order to diagnose how English language is being taught in the public schools of the city, what are the methodologies use for teachers in their classes, and which are the students’ perceptions towards the learning environment.

This methodology will provide relevant information about the research project in terms of (a) type of study, (b) context and setting, (c) participants, (d) researchers’ role, and (e) data collection.

7.1 Type of study

The current project will be a qualitative research study. With reference to the qualitative approach, Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2), stated that “Qualitative research involves collecting information about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observations, historical, interactions and visual text which are significant moments and meaningful in peoples' lives”.

Additionally, the goal of qualitative research is to provide richness and intensity of detailed information emerging from participant’s reactions and responses, (Nicholls, 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, qualitative research encompasses a range of philosophies, research designs and specific techniques including in-depth qualitative interviews; participant and non-participant observation; focus groups; document analyses; and a number of other methods of data collection. (Pope, 2006).

Consequently, this study intends to follow the qualitative research approach, in order to obtain deeper understandings and perceptions from observable and non-observable issues in a particular setting. Through qualitative method the researchers intend to collect data related to teachers’ performance, the methodologies used, and also teaching materials employed in the classroom.
In this respect, our research will fit in the description provided by Ray (2011), when he expresses that qualitative studies are one of the methods used to observe and record the actions and behaviors of each single person or individuals through the course of their daily lives.

### 7.2 Context and setting

Pereira is the capital city of the Colombian department of Risaralda. It stands in the center of the western region of the country, located in a small valley that descends from a part of the western Andes mountain chain. In 2004 it reported a population of 576,329.

This town has 2,870 teachers that belong to the official sector from whom 139 are English language teachers, who are Licenciados en Lengua Inglesa.

Although the macro project was carried out in selected institutions from the eight educational areas of Pereira, this study was particularly concerned with three of them that will be referred to as Cambodia, Villavicencio and Barcelona Schools.

The focus of this study will be English teachers from secondary education within 8th through 10th grades, and students who belong to those same grades.

### 7.3 Participants

The current study will have two different but equally important participants.

1. Three teachers, from secondary education within 8th through 10th grades.

2. Fifteen students from 8th to 10th grades.

The first participants for this study are the three English teachers from secondary education within 8th through 10th grades who are currently working at a public institution in Pereira; two of them were females and one was a male, who were named as Margaret, Miguel
and Carmenza in order to protect their real identities, their ages ranged from 40 to 60 years old. Most of them had a bachelor degree in the teaching of modern languages. Due to the large amount of schools in this town, the study demanded for a sampling. According to Burgess (1982), sampling in field research involves the selection of a research site, time, people, and events. Therefore, three public schools from Pereira were chose for the development of this research.

The last of the participants are the students; they were eight males and seven females, between 14 and 18 years old, who were selected randomly by the English teachers. The students will share important information about their learning process, their opinions about language learning and teaching, how they describe an English class, the aspects they consider relevant to improve the English classes. Also they will provide information about how important it is for them to know a second language, how they consider their English level knowledge and what they evidence in terms of their teachers’ performance in the classroom. In addition, they will provide relevant information about the resources, tools, and the methodologies most employed by educators.

7.4 Researcher’s Role

This project has three active researchers that will act as non-participant observers; anon participant observer is defined by Diane Larsen-Freeman and Michael H. Long (1991) as the act that implies observing, taking notes and recording activities without taking part of them in order to collect first hand data from the public institutions that will be participating on the study. Therefore, the researcher will not interact with learners nor will them interfere in the class but will simply observe.
7.5 Data collection

In order to gather the data needed to fulfill our research objectives, the instruments used were: observations, interviews and questionnaires. The following section will describe the characteristics and purpose of those methods.

Observation

Merriam (2009) states that the observation method involves the complete analysis of people’s behavior, perceptions and assimilations to acquire data from the field that is under research (p. 94). On the other hand, Burns, A. & Hood, S. (1995) cited in Freeman (1998) argue that the observation is a closely watching of classroom events, either as a participant in the classroom, or as an observer of another teacher’s classroom. (p. 94). Furthermore, the observations in this study were done in the selected public schools of Pereira for approximately one month. Each observation lasted one hour per class. In this particular case the observations were mainly focused on taking field notes using a structured format to collect data about the classroom and the situations that take place in it. (see appendix B)

Questionnaires

Questionnaires will be used to collect data for teachers from the institutions about professional profile, teacher’s academic background, methodology and materials to plan their lessons, among other relevant information. The questionnaires were carried out before the first observation for teachers to have enough time to response the questionnaires without interrupting their classes (see appendix C). Herbert, W. (1989) indicates that “questionnaires are printed forms for data collection which include questions for statement to which the subject is expected to response, of them anonymously.”
Interviews

Finally, Patton (1990), states that the main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. On the other hand Merriam (1998, p. 196), argues that interviews is a common means of collecting qualitative data which allow us to enter into the other person’s perspectives. In this study interviews will be used to gather information from the respondent’s behaviors, feelings, thoughts and how they perceive the teaching/learning process. The interviews will be implemented only for the fifteen language learners involved in this study (see appendix D).

7.6 Data Analysis

For the data analysis process, the researchers transcribed the information gathered in a word document. Then, the data was uploaded to a program which is called “Nvivo10” in order to codify and categorize the data. Finally, by means of this program, the researchers triangulated the information taken from the data collection instruments.

The researchers took as reference the theoretical framework in order to code, organize and triangulate the data gathered. The data was analyzed based on the grounded theory which is defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 2), as the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research.
8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some ethical considerations were taken into account in order to collect the information and protect the participants’ identity. The academic community was informed about the project before it was started by means of a letter provided by the coordinator of the English Language Teaching program. Before the researchers implemented their data collection instruments, the principals of the schools that participated in the study were informed about the purpose and scope of the project and voluntarily accepted its terms and conditions (see Appendix A).

The in-service teachers as well as the students from the public schools were informed in advance about the procedures that the researchers were going to carry out during their lessons and accepted their participation in this study.

To conclude, the data collection took place during school hours with previous permission, and the identity of the participants and the school names were totally protected. For instance, the researchers employed the following pseudonyms to refer to the three public schools as Villavicencio, Barcelona and Cambodia school.
9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

9.1 Grammar Translation Method as the Prevalent Method Employed by Teachers

The data analyzed in this research revealed that the Grammar Translation Method is the prevalent methodology implemented by the teachers involved in this study. During the observations, it could be noticed that the teachers employed strategies and activities typical of this methodology as for instance, explicit explanations of decontextualized grammar rules, translation activities, frequent use of the L1 both for explanations and instructions for class activities, practice of grammatical patterns and non-communicative activities, a prevalence of written activities over the lessons. This information was confirmed by students’ interviews and in one case, even by one of the teachers in the questionnaire format that they completed in relation with their teaching methodologies.

Some evidence that support this finding can be observed in the following image, corresponding to a question related to the methods used by the English teacher to design his classes.

Teachers’ Questionnaire 1, Miguel (Barcelona School)
It can be noticed in the data above that Miguel is conscious of using the Grammar Translation method in his classes since he is marking it on the form.

Other piece of evidence that confirms our interpretation about the methodology employed by this particular teacher is the following excerpt from the questionnaire that they completed about their teaching practices.

Miguel’s Questionnaire (Barcelona School)

As it can be observed in the teacher’s answer, one of the main principles he admits to consider when he plans his classes is the similarity of the grammatical structure to be taught to those of Spanish instead of other possible principles of content selection as students’ previous knowledge, communicative needs, relevance for a task to be performed, etc.

Another piece of evidence that supports the use of the Grammar Translation Method as the main methodology employed by the English teachers comes from researchers’ observations carried out in Villavicencio School.

Observation 2 (Villavicencio School).

“The teacher did not expose students to read in English, she just asked students to translate the song into Spanish. While the teacher was reading in English, learners were following the translation they made in order to understand what the teacher was saying”.
As noticed in the above fragment, the teacher does not elicit learners to use the L2 in order to produce language; she just focuses on the language function. This use of the L1 as the communicative vehicle for the class is also one of the major characteristics of the Grammar Translation method.

Finally, it was evident that the use of the Grammar Translation method was also implemented in the Combodia School by Margaret, one of the participant teachers in this research. In the observations made by the researchers, the implementation of translation strategies was noticed; it can be observed in the following excerpt.

Observation 1, Combodia School
The teacher asks students: How do you say in English: Cuantos, cada cuanto, quando y quien? She says: “I’m reviewing the vocabulary learnt”. And she asks one student to deliver some copies in which there are two columns, in one there are some words in Spanish such as: Cuando, cual, como, quien and in the other one there are the words in English such as: who, what and how; they are in disorder and what they have to do is to match.

As noticed in the above fragment, the exercises implemented are typical from the Grammar Translation method since the students are learning the language itself through isolated items but not using the language for communicative purposes.

Observation 4 (Cambodia School)
“The teacher asks the students to take out the sentence they were supposed to translate; the sentence is: “La niña come frutas”. And she asks one student to go to the board and to write down the sentence, the girl writes: “the girl eats fruits” (GTM) and the teacher asks her in Spanish: ¿Por qué la escribí de esa manera?” and she answers: “porque esta en tercera persona y hay que agregarle la “s” al verbo” the teacher says very good.”
Considering the report mentioned, it is possible to say that the teacher is implementing translation exercises to review the present tense. The main purpose of this activity is only grammatical since it does not have any context; there is not evidence of the communicative function. During this kind of activities, the reality of the students is not being taken into consideration then; learners are not developing their communicative competence. This fact is more evident when the teacher asks students to translate the sentence “La niña come frutas” from L1 into L2 and also she asks students to use the same sentence to practice other grammatical tenses. It can be clearly noticed when the teacher asks “¿Por qué la escribió de esa manera?” and the student answers “porque está en tercera persona y hay que agregarle la “s” al verbo” that this student is aware of the fact that the teacher is asking her about the grammatical structure of the language instead of about the communicative content of the sentence.

Consequently, the evidence from the classes oriented by the three participant teachers observed supports that the Grammar Translation Method is one of the methodologies generally employed by all the teachers involved in the study.

According to the CEFR (2001) “communicative language competence can be considered as comprising several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. Each of these components is postulated as comprising, in particular, knowledge and skills and know-how”. It should be considered that, in order to develop the communicative competence, attention should be paid not only the grammatical competence and accuracy but also to the ability of the student to understand and transmit significant content, i.e. to the pragmatic and functional use of the language as well as the sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects.

This is of great importance since the methodologies employed by the teachers clearly affect the results obtained by the students. It is notorious that although the CLT approach has been used during forty years, teachers still continue using methods such as the grammar translation method to plan their lessons.

Our finding clearly aligns with the findings of Assalahi (2013), who reveals that explicit grammar teaching appeared as the core teaching strategy for grammar instruction among all the participants in a study about English teaching methodologies done in schools of Saudi Arabia.
Besides, Assalahi (2013) also showed that the participants' belief system was dominated by a mechanical forms-focused approach to grammar teaching.

This coincidence in the type of methodology employed in contexts as different as Saudi Arabia and Colombia could be due to the role traditionally assigned to teachers in both societies. Both countries give a great importance to the role of teachers’ authority in the classroom and the employment of traditional methodologies. In this kind of classroom environment the teacher centered approach is employed to reinforce teacher’s authority and knowledge where they feel safe and their performance is not questioned.

9.2 L1 as the predominant language of interaction in the EFL classroom

Data from observations and interviews revealed that Spanish is the principal language used in the classroom to communicate. The students’ mother tongue was used in order to give instructions and feedback, develop tasks, provide explanations and interaction between teacher and students. Although Nation (2001) argues that “second language use in the foreign language classroom needs to be maximized wherever possible, by encouraging its use and by using it for classroom management”, in this study the L1 is the predominant language used by teachers and students as we can see in the following data.

Students’ interview (audio), Villavicencio School

Researchers: “¿Cuál es la lengua usada en clase?
Student 1: “Desde que yo estoy con ella en sexto siempre había sido español, solamente ahora en 11 está utilizando inglés, entonces uno queda muchas veces en las mismas de lo que ella está hablando porque nunca se había usado ósea nunca se había implementado esa técnica en la clase”.

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Student 2, Villavicencio School

S2: Eh pues el idioma que más se ha utilizado ha sido el español, eh por lo regular siempre que se ha comenzado año se ha empezado con el español y ahora últimamente se ha utilizado más el inglés y pues si se nos hace un poquito más difícil saber qué es lo que está diciendo por lo que no es costumbre de tenerlo de años anteriores si no ahora último.

Student 3, Villavicencio School

S3: Pues el español más que todo, pero de veces en cuando por allá muy lejos el inglés.

As noticed, the students are aware of their lack of exposure to the foreign language in the classroom as well as of their weak listening comprehension because of the limited input provided by class activities and the major use of L1 done by the teacher and their classmates.

Another piece of evidence that confirms the use of the L1 in the classroom as an instrument for giving instructions can be observed in the next fragment.

Observation 2, Combodia School.

The teacher says to the students in Spanish: “Ustedes tienen que hacer una composición acerca de un lugar específico al que ustedes quieran ir en vacaciones. Ustedes van a hacer dos modelos uno para el pasado y otro para el futuro. Lo van a hacer en una presentación power point en ambos idiomas Español e Inglés.” Then, the teacher says: “es importante tener buena voz para que todos escuchemos lo que se dice, que la presentación tenga los elementos del pasado y futuro y que sea entendible”.

It is evident that the teacher uses L1 as the main tool of communication in the class even if the instructions for the task are not particularly complex. During the observations, it could also be noticed that the L1 was used in most teaching situations: for giving instructions but also for grammar explanations, for providing feedback, and maintaining discipline. The use of English in
the classroom was reduced to initial greetings and the actual language of the exercises to be done by the students.

The following data, taken from the researchers’ observations of the Villavicencio School, supports the use of the L1 as the predominant language use in the classroom.

Observation 3, Villavicencio School

“Learners only used the foreign language spontaneously in simple words and isolated fixed expressions for greetings, calling the teacher’s attention (“teacher, teacher”) and asking for a favor (“please, please”). But they used their mother tongue to ask for repetition and explanation and to communicate to each other”.

As evident in the above piece of data, learners do not have the necessity of using the L2 since they get the teacher’s explanation and repetitions in their mother tongue. As a result, they are not immersed in a communicative English environment since the teacher is not making the English language useful or necessary during her lessons and students can get what they want in Spanish without making any effort to understand the message in English.

This finding aligns with those of a study made in Andimeshk, Iran (2013) by Bakhtiarvand, which confirmed that there was an overuse of the L1 (Farsi) in the L2 (English) class.

In regard to this fact Turnbull (2001), argues “students do not benefit when teachers over-rely on using their students’ mother tongue, particularly when the EFL teacher is the sole linguistic model and main source of L2 input”. The overuse of the student’s mother tongue could be noticed in this study up to such a point that students’ ability to communicate in the foreign language was limited while the use of the L2 was evident just for teaching explicit grammar, vocabulary and simple commands.

It is generally accepted in communicative approaches that the overuse of the L2 might be unfavorable for the student’s learning process. Although there are some arguments in favor of the teacher’s use of L1 in the L2 classroom as suggested by Auerbach (1993), “the following are
possible occasions for using the mother tongue: negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; scene setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing grammar; phonology, morphology, spelling, and assessment of comprehension”.

McDonald (1993) confirms that “teachers who overuse their students’ mother tongue deprive these learners of an important language process in which students try to make sense of what is being said in class”. On the other hand, Auerbach (1993:19) mentions that “starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English”. Although some authors are in agreement with the use of the L1 at the beginning of the first lessons in ELT, the overuse of it may deprive students of opportunities for hearing and using the language in real interactions, as a consequence, learners could see English as a language to be studied but not as a means of communication among them.

9.3 Updated resources for not communicative purposes

In order to facilitate the learning of a language, the resources used play a very significant role since they are not only sources of input for students but also the catalyzes of interactions among the learners. Particular uses of the teaching resources are usually typical of specific methodologies. An example that illustrates that idea is the characteristic use of the whiteboard by the teacher in order to present grammatical structures in the grammar translation method.

In that respect, Tomlinson (2001) affirms that “the use of some materials can facilitate the learning of a language; they can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette CD room, DVD or the internet”.

The data gathered in this study clearly demonstrates the use of different resources such as dictionaries, internet, lyrics of the songs, videos, books, photocopies, and the audiovisual room. The aforementioned tools are the materials employed by the teachers to carry out their English
language lessons. As it will be shown in the following sections, even if some of the resources used seem to be updated, the kind of activities done with them where typical of the grammar translation method and did not promote real communication in the classroom.

9.3.1 The use of the internet as a knowledge repository

Although Internet allows teachers and students to contact people and resources that enhance real communication, as for example live chats, social networks, forums, newspapers and magazines, direct communication applications like Skype, Google hangouts and other, the uses observed in this research tend to line up on the side of using Internet as a repository of linguistic knowledge, as it could be done with a paper encyclopedia or a traditional dictionary. The teachers only asked students to go to internet to find simple grammatical information, thus missing the more communicative possibilities of the resource.

The not communicative usage of Internet can be observed in the teaching activities done by the teacher from the Cambodia School. The following data illustrates this finding:

Observation 1, Cambodia School

“The teacher is explaining to the students that there are two kinds of verbs: the regulars and irregulars verbs (she writes down in the board) Now she is drawing a chart in which the present tense, the past and the past participle tense are presented. The teacher suggests to the students to look for the verbs on the internet, and she is explaining the rules for the regular verbs (adding -ed to the verbs at the end)”.

As it can be noticed in the fragment from the data, the teacher is asking the students to look for information that could be found in the text book, reinforcing the grammar translation methodology that she normally uses and that is more focused on form than on communicative skills.
This finding is also confirmed by the testimonies of the students, who in their interviews explained which were the resources that were employed in the classroom. The following excerpt confirms the scarce use of the internet during the English classes.

Students’ Interview (audio), Cambodia School

Researchers: ¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en la clase de Inglés?

Student E: “Cuando nosotros podemos tener la posibilidad de entrar a la sala de sistemas eh… nos ayudamos con recursos de la internet como W-lingua o otros programas de la internet para ayudar a la pronunciación y contextualizar”.

As noticed in the above fragments, the little use of resources as internet are being rarely implemented in English classes by the teachers in order to use it just for searching information and not for communicative purposes.

This finding contrasts with a study made by Zhang (2013) which states that the implementation of some resources such as the internet benefits English reading, writing, listening, speaking and translation. In contrast, this finding reveals that the use of this resource is limited and focuses on the translation aspect and not on the development of the different language skills. In conclusion, Zhang (2013) says that with the facility to access to computers and Internet, teachers and students will have more benefits with the integration of Internet with EFL teaching and learning in Chinese educational settings. However, the traditional EFL classroom still dominates language learning field, and Internet is still a supplement in the classroom.

9.3.2 The use of songs as an instrument for grammatical practice

Songs are very popular and useful resources in the EFL classroom. Among the benefits associated with their employment we could mention the engagement they generate in students but also an important impact on specific linguistic competences as pronunciation or vocabulary
or the acquisition or discussion of sociolinguistic and socio cultural issues in communicative activities. This idea is supported by Holli Wood, E. (2011), who states that “the function of using songs while teaching English classes is to engage students in speaking and understanding of the English language, while reinforcing the fundamentals of language and communication”.

The analysis of the data from our research showed, however, that the teachers observed used songs just to practice different grammatical tenses without taking advantage of the possibilities of the resource for designing and implementing more communicative activities which provided learners with opportunities to produce speech.

The following piece of evidence taken from the researchers’ observations shows how the teacher from Villavicencio School introduces songs during her lessons just for grammatical usage but not for promoting interaction between learners.

Observation 2, Villavicencio School

“The teacher introduced the topics (present perfect, past simple and past perfect) and then she used a song called “beautiful day” in order to illustrate that grammatical difference. She also used the corresponding video and some news about the singers of the song. Then, the teacher passed the lyrics of the song around and then, she read the song in order for students to listen to the pronunciation.”

“After that, the teacher said “ahora van a leer la canción ustedes mismos y vamos a encerrar con otro color los tiempos gramaticales, luego van a escribir cinco oraciones para practicar los tiempos utilizando las oraciones de la canción como guía”

As we can see, the main purpose of teacher in using the song was to teach the differences between three grammatical tenses. Although she also read the lyrics to expose learners to the pronunciation, the communicative function was not evident during the lesson since she did not take advantage of it to engage the students into expressing their ideas or opinions about the song, to discuss its message or content nor the feelings it evoked.

This fact was particularly evident as the teacher said “ahora van a leer la canción ustedes mismos y vamos a encerrar con otro color los tiempos gramaticales”. As it can be observed, her
attention was complete and absolutely focused on the grammatical forms, regardless of the meaning.

And the teacher’s intent was proven again when she told the students “van a escribir cinco oraciones para practicar los tiempos utilizando las oraciones de la canción como guía”.

All the possibilities offered by the song in terms of talking about what makes for students a beautiful day, or what is the message of the song (a man who has lost everything but still can find happiness in little things) reduces the activities to simply asking learners to focus in the grammatical content of the song, something typical of the grammar translation method, instead of discussing its communicative content.

Another piece of evidence that supports the use of the songs for non-communicative purposes are evidenced in the learners’ interview from the same school named Villavicencio, who confirms the aforementioned teacher’s practices through songs.

Students’ Interview (audio), Villavicencio school

Researchers: ¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en la clase de inglés?

Student B: “eh...Pues, la profesora algunas veces nos pone a trabajar con diccionarios y letras de canciones en Inglés para sacar los verbos que estamos trabajando o para practicar un tema anteriormente visto”.

It is evident in the student’s answer that the teacher uses the lyrics of the songs in her lessons in order to review grammatical topics previously taught by just using songs as a mean to provide knowledge instead of developing communicative activities throughout them.

This finding contrasts with a study made by Schoepp (2001), which reveals that using songs in an EFL classroom is an effective tool during students’ learning process. Lo and Li (1998) support this view when they state that “songs provide a break from classroom routine, and that learning English through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the four language skills can be enhanced”. In this study the use of songs is just for implementing non-communicative activities since their main focus is the grammatical content of the songs and message, feelings and melody are ignored.
On the other hand, Schoepp (2001), mentions that, “because of the Internet, access to music, lyrics, and activities has been simplified which makes it easy for the teacher to effectively use songs in the classroom”. The English teachers involved in this research project just used songs as an instrument in order to reinforce grammar without taking advantage of the resource for designing communicative lessons in which a mixture of activities might enhance learning.

9.3.3 Use of videos for drilling pronunciation

Nowadays, technology is an important resource for teaching any academic subject and particularly English as a foreign language since this resource allows learners maximum opportunities to authentic social interaction, not only to provide comprehensible input but also to give students practice in the kind of communication they will be engaged outside the classroom. Thus, it emphasizes the social and cultural aspect of the language. Technology also allows students to be immersed in other cultures by using web pages as authentic materials for conducting research on culture and current events so that they can experience the target culture.

Although there are a number of uses for the videos presented in the classroom such as designing real communication assignments, reviewing lessons, for communicative purposes as analyzing and discussing cultural contexts, role plays, predicting, imagining, and getting the student’s attention in order to improve the communicative skills, the use of videos observed in this research tended to be just for practicing pronunciation drills.

The following excerpt from the observations shows the activity previously described:

Observation 2, Cambodia School

“The teacher shows a video in which a person is explaining how to pronounce the “q”, and the teacher asks students to repeat the sound, and she explains them the position of the mouth; and she says to the students: ”take a piece of paper out” (modeling them how to do it) and put it in front of students’ mouth, if the paper moves it is because you are doing it in the correct way”.
The above fragment demonstrates how the teacher reinforces learners’ pronunciation of the “q” letter by developing drilling activities supported by videos. Instead of having the teacher modeling the articulation of the sound, the teacher employs a video but that is the only type of video that was presented during the observations and the only use observed by the researchers. There is no evidence of the employment of other types of videos as fragments of sitcoms, interviews or documentaries that could be exploited for more communicative purposes, engage students and trigger interaction or be used for noticing and discussing cultural issues.

The following data from the students’ interviews shows the use of videos during the English lessons and supports our interpretation of the data in relation with the limited use of video done by the teachers.

Students’ Interview (audio) Cambodia School

Student A: “Bueno pues tenemos un salón donde se encuentra ubicada la profesora a veces vamos a la sala de audio, la sala de video donde practicamos y repetimos los sonidos y todo eso pero que se pueda contar con ella todos los días no puede porque no hay espacio para los otros estudiantes porque se necesitan varias aulas”

As evident in the above pieces of data, the only use mentioned by the student is the work in pronunciation issues. Since we would expect the student to mention other types of activities if they were done in the class, the student’s failure at mentioning them might be interpreted as a non-occurrence of them. So it could be said, that only use of the video done during the classes observed was as a resource for drilling students in pronunciation pattern activities, an activity characteristic of the audio-lingual methodology that lacks a communicative purpose.

With relation to the use of audiovisual materials in the classroom, Cruse (2004) carried out a study in which she found that educational television and video reinforce reading and lecture material, enhance student comprehension and discussion, and promote teacher effectiveness. Our finding differs from what Cruse (2004) argued since the implementation of videos by English teachers in this research is limited for drilling pronunciation but not for promoting interaction among learners so that learners oral production and comprehension could not increase during their lessons.
10. TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

This study revealed interesting aspects about the realities of how English is taught in the schools observed that bring out implications to be considered both for teaching and for research.

Although the development of communicative language teaching rose to prominence in the 1970s and early 1980s in response to students’ needs for communicative skills, our research showed that the current methodology for teaching English in some public schools from Pereira is still characterized by the traditional teaching method known as the Grammar Translation Method. This methodological decision has led to the exclusion of the student’s oral production in English and has emphasized written work in translation and thus, there is an unbalanced development of English communicative competence that favors written skills over oral ones.

Consequently, we would suggest that teachers from these schools should generate more opportunities for students to speak and listen to English so oral skills are developed. Furthermore, it is essential that teachers of English be trained in courses which foster different methodologies for English language teaching and learning.

Our study also portrays an overuse of the learner’s mother tongue and a lack of students’ production and understanding of even simple language in English that could to be derived from it. For this reason, it seems advisable to suggest that the use of the students’ L1 be reduced and reserved for very specific purposes such as control of discipline or clarification of difficult points.

Finally, this study showed that some teachers continue using traditional EFL materials such as dictionaries, textbooks and photocopies for activities that do not help to enhance the different skills of the students. Consequently, it seems important to mention that the implementation of modern resources such as internet, songs and videos motivate students towards language learning; since they get engaged in activities that are focused on their interest and needs that promote the interaction between them. We suggest that English teachers should take advantage of modern instruments in order to incorporate them into a lesson as a learning tool for developing communicative skills instead of using them for teaching traditional methods such as the Grammar Translation Method.
11. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Our study revealed that English teachers still continue using traditional methodologies when teaching the language. Therefore, we suggest continuous research about the way in which the teaching of English is being done, both in the primary and the secondary schools, in order to change the current methodologies employed by the English teachers; then, to monitor what is going on during the process as well as their possible relationship with improvements in the EFL classroom and students’ learning results. After that, checking and analyzing the outcomes in order to think on strategies to raise learners’ language level through classroom activities.

It is also essential to have a better coordination with the “Secretaría de Educación” in order to have accessibility to the public institutions to carry out this type of research studies and collecting the data without any difficulty.
12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the following section, will be mentioned some specific aspects that impeded the collection of data during the implementation of the study. The most relevant limitations to carry out this study were that due to external factors, this research project was executed without the government support. For this reason, some public schools from Pereira did not belong anymore to this project, and the rest of the institutions included in the project were unwilling to participate, as a consequence, their collaboration was a little limited during the data collection process. One of the in-service teachers, who are one of the participants involves in this research, was reluctant to be observed by the researchers since they affirmed that the observations was a mean to evaluate their language performances while conducting their lessons.

To sum up, being observed by others is a strategy that helps us to reflect upon our teaching and to improve our planning skills but not a means to be criticized as many teachers believed, so being aware of our mistakes will contribute to improve our teaching performances as the way expected.
13. CONCLUSIONS

This research project informs about the actual methodologies and materials employed by English language teachers in some public schools from Pereira, Risaralda.

The instruments used in this study allowed researchers to gather relevant information which contributed to answer the research questions posed about the state of the art of the English language teaching in three public schools from the city.

The findings illustrate that the methods and resources utilized by teachers do not contribute to enhance the interaction in the English classes. What is more, the use of the Grammar Translation method is the core of the English classes, thus limiting students’ use of the foreign language.

As a consequence, students only see the language in its grammatical form, and the use of the language skills appear in an isolated way. Additionally, the use of the L1 seems to be ever present in the English classroom.

On the other hand, the absence of meaningful materials which promote the interaction among students is not being considered by teachers when they are planning their lessons.

Once the data was analyzed and the findings discussed, it can be concluded that the implementation of traditional methods is still used by the English teachers involved in this study, and the updated material is only utilized as supplement to those traditional lessons. For this reason, it is necessary to implement programs and courses which change the actual methodologies that are being employed by English teachers nowadays. Thus, it will increase the students’ communicative competence; it will help teachers to design meaningful lessons in order to enhance learning. As a result, the learning and teaching of English language will progress significantly.
14. REFERENCES


from


Robinson, H. A. (1994). The Ethnography of Empowerment-The Transformative Power of


Secretaría de educación (2012). Información acerca de licenciados en el sector público en Pereira Risaralda.


15. APPENDICES

15.1 Appendix A (Consent Letter)

[Image of a consent letter]

01-2144-03

Pereira, 4 de febrero de 2013

Señor Rector

Pereira (2144-00000-0)

Cordial saludo:

Dentro de las exigencias de la modernidad está el manejo de un idioma común que les permita a los ciudadanos acceder a la información de un mundo globalizado. En Colombia según información del ICFES en el año 2004, el 99% de los estudiantes eligieron el inglés en las pruebas Pre-SABER 11, razón por la cual las instituciones educativas han optado por la enseñanza de este idioma.

Es por ello la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira a través de la Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, han emprendido acciones para el fortalecimiento del inglés como segunda lengua.

Por tal razón se requiere su colaboración y disposición, de acuerdo al compromiso asumido en la visita a cada uno de los núcleos donde se presentó la naturaleza del proyecto, para dar inicio a las entrevistas y observaciones que se realizarán a los coordinadores académicos, profesores del área de inglés, las cuales estarán a cargo del grupo de estudiantes seleccionadas de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, de la licenciatura referida, quienes harán presencia en las Instituciones durante los primeros meses del año 2013.

Le agrdezco su colaboración con la cual contribuye al logro de nuestros objetivos académicos.

ENRIQUE ARIAS CASTAÑO
Coordinador
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa

Anexo: Un folio
# Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira- Alcaldía de Pereira
## Proyecto Estado del Arte de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Pereira
### Formato de Observación

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colegio________________________________________</th>
<th>Fecha: _<strong>/</strong>_____<em><strong>/</strong></em></th>
<th>Observador__________________________________</th>
<th>Grado a observar: ___</th>
<th>Observación N°___</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factores observados</td>
<td></td>
<td>Descripción</td>
<td>Comentarios</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and classroom layout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan (sequence, coherence of activities,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>appropriate to students’ level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving clear instructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ reaction and attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s attitude towards the class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies to maintain discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of L1 Teacher and Students</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of L2 Teacher and Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterns of interaction</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
15.3 Appendix C (Teachers’ Questionnaires)

Cuestionario Profesor de Inglés

El presente proyecto "El estado del arte de la enseñanza del Inglés en colegios Públicos de Pereira", está conformado por 12 estudiantes de la Licenciatura de la Lengua Inglesa (LLI) de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. Este proyecto busca específicamente conocer y describir las tendencias metodológicas implementadas en las instituciones educativas en cuanto a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Además se desea conocer la percepción tanto por docentes como por estudiantes.

Su participación y colaboración en esta investigación, contribuirá significativamente a los estudiantes de LLI a desarrollar dicho proyecto con el fin de cumplir con el requisito de proyecto de grado, por consiguiente, agradecemos su colaboración durante el desarrollo de este proyecto.

OBJETIVO

Caracterizar el estado del arte de la enseñanza del inglés en la ciudad de Pereira en instituciones públicas.

INFORMACIÓN ACADÉMICA

1. Estudios realizados

NIVEL LUGAR FECHA TITULO

Bachillerato


Pregrado


Postgrado


EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL

2. Colegio donde Labora
Público _____ Dedicación: Medio Tiempo ____ Tiempo Completo ____ Por horas ____

3. Años de experiencia de trabajo:
Entre 1 y 4 años ____ Entre 5 y 10 años ____ Más de 10 años ____

4. Tiempo de experiencia enseñando inglés
Entre 1 y 4 años ____ Entre 5 y 10 años ____ Más de 10 años ____

CAPACITACIÓN Y ACTUALIZACION

5. Cursos de capacitación recibida (Favor indicar los cursos tomados en los últimos cinco años)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOMBRE CURSO</th>
<th>DURACIÓN</th>
<th>FECHA</th>
<th>ENTIDAD QUE LO REALIZÓ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. ¿Ha mantenido usted contacto con la Universidad después de haber egresado?
SI ____ NO ____ ¿En qué forma?
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. ¿Ha adquirido usted últimamente bibliografía sobre la metodología de la enseñanza del inglés? SI ____ NO ____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTOR</th>
<th>TITULO</th>
<th>AÑO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. ¿Ha adquirido bibliografía en inglés?
SI ____ NO ____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTOR TITULO AÑO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. ¿En los últimos cinco (5) años ha participado en seminarios o congresos del Área? Sí _____ NO _____ ¿Cuáles?
Asistente _________ Ponente ____________

TÍTULO DEL EVENTO ENTIDAD ORGANIZADORA FECHA

10. ¿Pertenece Usted y/o es socio activo (socio actual) de alguna Asociación Académica?
Sí _____ NO _____ ¿CUÁL(ES)?

11. ¿Qué tipo de capacitación considera usted que debe recibir como docente en ejercicio? Especifique

12. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el nivel académico en el Área de Inglés de su colegio?
Pésimo _____ Malo _____ Regular _____ Bueno _____ Excelente _____
¿Por qué? (prueba)

13. ¿En qué nivel promedio se ubicaron los estudiantes del grado once en las pruebas de inglés del ICFES del año pasado?

14. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el examen de inglés del ICFES?
15. Mencione los problemas más frecuentes y críticos que usted actualmente enfrenta en la enseñanza y en el aprendizaje del inglés en Bachillerato. Enumérelos en orden de importancia según el grado de seriedad o gravedad.

Planeación de clase

14. ¿Los estudiantes tienen texto guía? SI __ NO __

Si la respuesta es SI indique el texto que usan los estudiantes.

TITULO DEL TEXTO      EDITORIAL      AÑO

__________________________________________________________________________

¿Si la respuesta es NO, que tipo de materiales utiliza?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

15. ¿Qué tipo de libros consulta usted para la preparación de sus clases? ¿Señale en orden de importancia para usted?

AUTOR      AÑO      TITULO

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

16. Habilidades en que hace mayor énfasis en sus clases, enumere en orden de importancia.

Listening _______ Reading _______

Speaking _______ Writing _______

17. ¿Qué aspectos tiene en cuenta para diseñar sus clases?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

18. ¿Qué estrategias usa para preparar su clase?
19. Cuál de los siguientes métodos utiliza usted en sus clases?
Método de Gramática y Traducción ______ Suggestopedia ______
Método de Series ______ Enfoque Comunitario ______
Método Directo ______ Enfoque Natural ______
Método de Lectura ______ Método Ecléctico ______
Método Audiovisual ______ “Silent Way” ______
Método Audio lingual ______ Enfoque Cognitivo ______
Método de Aprendizaje de Lenguas en comunidad ______ Enfoque Comunicativo ______
Método de Respuesta Física Total (TPR) ______ Otros? ¿Cuáles?

No sabe ______

20. Para elaborar su programa de inglés, ¿se basa usted en los Estándares de enseñanza del inglés del Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN)? SI NO ______
¿Cómo?

__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________

21. Si no se basa en los estándares del MEN, ¿elabora usted el programa de inglés? SI No ______ ¿cómo lo hace?
¿Con base en un texto? ______
¿Cuál? _______________________
¿Según sus propios criterios? ______ ¿Cuáles? _______________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________

¿Otros? ______ Especifique _______________________

22. De los siguientes objetivos señale en orden de importancia (1-2-3-4-5, etc. Siendo el 1 el menor y el 5 el mayor) los planteados por usted en su programa.
Comprender correctamente la lengua hablada. ________
Entender un texto escuchado, sobre un tema con el cual este familiarizado.
Hablar el idioma con corrección y seguridad.
Participar en conversaciones sencillas sobre los temas estudiados
Escribir el idioma con corrección y seguridad
Leer el idioma con corrección y seguridad
Leer y traducir con precisión el material escrito en inglés, de manera comprensiva analítica y crítica.
Leer comprensivamente con el fin de captar el sentido general de un texto y extraer la información específica.

Otros ¿Cuáles?

MEJORAMIENTO ACADEMICO

23. ¿Practica usted la lengua extranjera? Sí _____ NO _____ ¿En qué forma?

24. ¿Ha presentado usted alguna vez algún examen de inglés, para medir su nivel de competencia en lengua extranjera?
Sí _____ NO _____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

NOMBRE AÑO PUNTAJE

12. Cómo considera su nivel de Inglés en este momento?
Bajo _____ Bueno _____
Regular _____ Excelente _____
¿Por qué?

Agradecemos de antemano su colaboración y su autorización para ser participante en el proyecto.
Universidad Tecnológica Pereira-Alcaldía Pereira
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa
GrupodeInvestigaciónen Lingüística Aplicada
Entrevista para los estudiantes

1. Nos gustaría que nos contara acerca de la clase de inglés correspondiente a su grado.
   - ¿Describa una clase de inglés de su grado?
   - ¿Cuál sería el orden?
   - ¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en clase?

2. Recordando el trabajo realizado por los docentes en las clases de inglés, describamos algunos aspectos de las prácticas (no es evaluarlos, es que me describa sus cualidades y aspectos por mejorar).
   - ¿Cuáles crees que son las mayores cualidades de la clase?
   - ¿Qué aspectos mejoraría de la clase?
   - ¿Qué sugerencias le haría a la clase?

3. Hablemos de su aprendizaje del inglés.
   - ¿Cuál es la lengua usada en clase?
   - ¿Cómo piensa que es su conocimiento del inglés?
   - ¿Cómo referencia su conocimiento, dónde la usa?
   - ¿Cómo práctica el inglés? ¿usa lo visto en clase?