

THE INFLUENCE OF THE STANDARDS OF ENGLISH

The Influence of the Standards of English in the Development of the Oral Competence

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“Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en el trabajo de grado son responsabilidad exclusiva de sus autores”

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Resumen

Con el propósito de mejorar los resultados en cuanto al proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje del inglés en nuestro país el gobierno establece el Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo, y con él una serie de estándares que los estudiantes deben alcanzar de modo que paulatinamente su capacidad para comunicarse en este idioma logre ubicarse en niveles de mayor competitividad.

Si bien es cierto que dichos estándares abarcan todas las habilidades involucradas en el aprendizaje de cualquier idioma, el estudio que se presenta a continuación está enfocado en el desarrollo de la parte oral, no porque el resto de habilidades sean consideradas como intrascendentes sino porque el desarrollo de las competencias de producción, en este caso la competencia oral es tal vez la que menor tiempo ocupa en el desarrollo normal de una clase de inglés en nuestro contexto. Además, si se tiene en cuenta que el Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo toma como base el Marco Común Europeo para el establecimiento de los estándares del inglés, el objetivo de este estudio es analizar hasta qué punto los estándares que tienen que ver con el desarrollo de la parte oral pueden trabajarse en un contexto cuyas condiciones son completamente distintas.

Abstract

In order to improve the results of the English teaching and learning process in our country, the government establishes the National Bilingual Program, and along with it a series of standards that students must gradually achieve so that their ability to communicate in this language accomplishes greater levels of competitiveness.

While it is true that these standards cover all the skills involved in learning any language, the present study is focused on the development of the oral competence, not because the other skills are considered as unimportant but because the development of productive skills, in this case the oral one, is perhaps the skill that less time occupies in the normal development of an English class in our context. Moreover, taking into consideration that the National Bilingual Program builds on the Common European Framework for establishing the standards of English, the aim of this study is to analyze to what extent standards that have to do with the development of the oral skill can be worked in a context where the conditions are completely different.

CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

The first chapter deals with the description of the problem and its evaluation. Thus, the problem statement, its evaluation, objectives and the reason why this problem was chosen are discussed in this first part of the study.

Problem Description

Teaching English is a complex process which deals with many types of learners, teaching/learning conditions, and aims, among others. Yet in another sense the language learning/ teaching process (LL/LT) is concerned with a single individual teacher, and with a particular set of surrounding circumstances.

Educators often feel challenged, if not irritated, by differences, irregularities, or change. Dealing with individual differences in the classroom might seem a daunting problem for many teachers, who face multiple classes (with multiple preparations) every day with twenty or thirty students in each class. And even more challenging is the fact that students must be treated as individual persons who have different needs, styles, and preferences. (Galloway and Labarca, 1990, p.76).

In a context like Nariño reality shows that the amount of students per class and the time they dedicate to practice English in the school is not adequate when thinking about the achievement of the requirements in the National Program of Bilingualism. What is worse the little time invested in the English learning- teaching process is still focused mainly on the receptive skills but not so much on the productive ones, which are finally the abilities that the Government wants to achieve with the National Program of Bilingualism.

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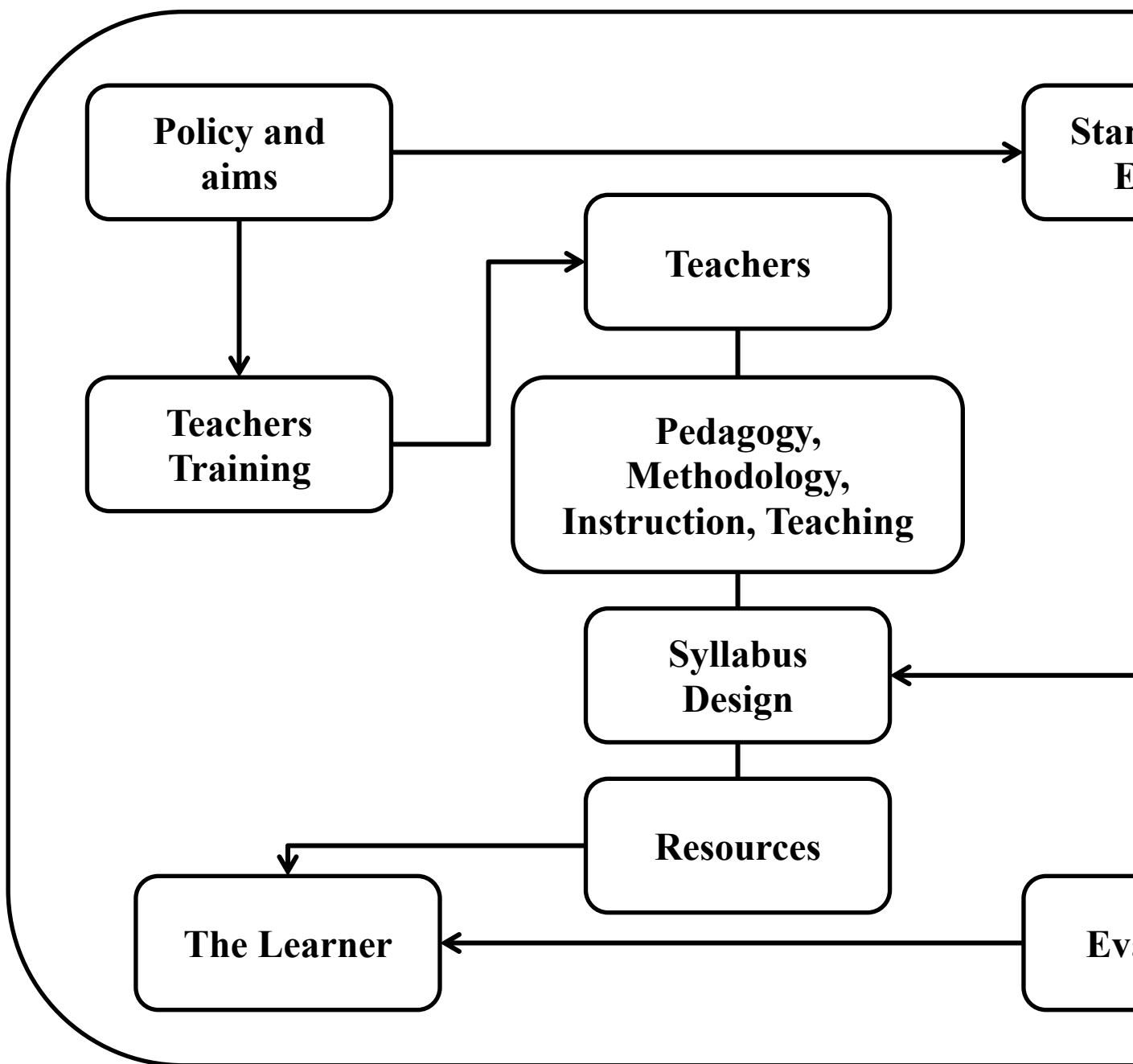
According to Watson (2012) it is important to create an environment with the need of English language use, however in Colombia unfortunately it does not exist. Taking into account this situation it is possible to say that this can be one of the major causes which explain the low level of English. This can be seen in a recent report that was carried out by the English Proficiency Index (EPI) in the year 2011 and which shows that among 44 countries around the world Colombia is in the 42nd place. Watson explains that one reason for this situation is that in Colombia the English language is taught as a foreign language instead of as a second language. Under these circumstances it can be said that the students' English level is clearly affected, and therefore, they may not be able to achieve the standards that the government has established within the National Program of Bilingualism. Furthermore, taking into account that oral production is an essential part of English learning, the lack of this competence will be an impediment for students to satisfy their occupational and social needs that have increased due to global development.

To contribute to the solution of the problem, our research focuses on determining the influence of the standards of English in the development of the oral competence of students so that some recommendations may be suggested at the end of the research that might improve the current English learning/teaching process.

Problem Analysis

Taking into account the different factors that affect the English teaching/learning process, it is possible to say that the independent variables of the problem have to do with the implementation of the standards of English and the policies and aims that the government

establishes and seven dependent variables which are: teachers, teachers training, pedagogy- methodology- instruction- teaching, syllabus design, resources, learner, and evaluation, which according to Strevens(1977) have a strong relationship, as it can be seen in the next diagram:



According to the diagram, it can be said that the policies and aims that the government establishes have made it possible to adopt the scale of values of the European model. Then,

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these variables directly affect the role of the teacher, by improving the teacher training and consequently the pedagogy, methodology, instruction, and teaching carried out during the process. In the same way the standards, policies, and aims influence the organization of the courses which is reflected in the syllabus design and implementation of different kinds of materials. Furthermore, it can be seen that depending on these variables, the learner and the evaluation are also affected as any other part of the English learning/teaching process.

Problem Statement

What is the influence of the standards of English in the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high School in Pasto?

Delimitation

Chronological Delimitation: The research project was developed from September to October, 2010

Geographic Delimitation: The institution where this study was carried out is located in the urban area of Nariño.

Population Delimitation: This research was carried out with high school students whose ages ranged from 14 to 16 and whose gender was 46% female teenagers and 54% male teenagers. Also, the social status which students belonged to was from 1 to 3.

Conceptual Delimitation

Second Language Learning (SLL)

Brown (1994) establishes that second language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick do –it yourself kit. In contrast, the learning of a second language is a complex process, involving a seemingly infinite number of variables. He also says that learning is acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction.

Similarly, Bastidas (2003) claims that learning a second language is a complex process including a set of complicated variables which deal with the learner, the teacher, the subject matter, the aims of learning and instruction, the methodology and the community.

Another definition that can be mentioned is by Atkinson (1993) who claims that learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior that results from practice.

Teaching

Bennion (2008) claims that “teaching is the process of training an individual through the formation of habits, the acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of ideals, and the fixing of a permanent interest so that he shall become a clean, intelligent, self-supporting member of society, who has the power to govern himself, can participate in noble enjoyments, and has the desire and the courage to revere God and serve his fellows”. (p20, 21).

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On the other hand, Brown (1994) establishes that teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand.

Bilingualism

Franson (2008) states that bilingualism is the ability to use two languages; However, defining bilingualism is problematic since individuals with varying bilingual characteristics may be classified as bilingual. Definitions of bilingualism range from a minimal proficiency in two languages, to an advanced level of proficiency which allows the speaker to function and appear as a native-like speaker of two languages. Some people may describe themselves as bilingual but may mean only the ability to converse and communicate orally. Others may be proficient in reading in two or more languages (or bi-literate).

According to Franson a person may be bilingual by virtue of having grown up learning and using two languages simultaneously (simultaneous bilingualism), another person may become bilingual by learning a second language sometime after their first language (sequential bilingualism).

Standard

The National Ministry of Education (MEN) (2006) defines standards as clear and public criteria that allow establishing the basic levels of quality that children from all the regions of Colombia are supposed to achieve.

For Pulido (2004) a standard of quality has to do with the minimum requisite for achieving the excellence within an institutional organization.

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Policy

In Bastidas' words (2003) "National educational policies in each country establish the need of particular foreign languages in each level of the educational system" (pp. 148).

The word "policy" can be used to cover matters ranging from high order strategy to administrative detail. In fact, 'policy' can encompass a position, intention or plan on any issue where the government or the department needs to take action.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) "policy" can mean the art, study, or practice of government or administration; the conduct of public affairs; political science, or a plan of action, usually based on certain principles, decided on by a body or individual, or a principle or set of principles on which to base decisions.

Problem Evaluation

This research is related to the current situation of the learning/teaching process taking into account the influence that the standards of English established by the Colombian Government through the National Program of Bilingualism have in the development of the oral competence of students in a public high school in Pasto.

Thus, this investigative process has arisen as an inquiry about how effective the standards of English are when thinking about the development of the oral competence in the Colombian context.

This study was carried out with enough time and economical resources and also and students' collaboration taking into account the ethical issues to achieve the pursued goals.

Objectives

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General Objective

To determine the influence of the standards of English in the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high school in Pasto.

Specific Objectives

To identify if the standards of English related to the oral competence are being implemented in ninth grade in a high school in Pasto.

To describe the current level of oral competence that students have with the implementation of the standards of English.

Significance

This research is important because it helped to determine how the English standards implemented by the National Ministry of Education through the National Program of Bilingualism affect the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high school in Pasto, aspect which is very important when thinking about learning English as a foreign or second language.

Furthermore, it is important because the results of the study are useful to determine whether or not the English standards established by the Colombian government are suitable

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for students who are learning English in the Colombian context. In addition, taking into account the results of the study it will be possible to develop further research to suggest some recommendations for improving the current learning/ teaching process in settings like Nariño.

Limitations

Since the information of the study was collected mainly through surveys, students might have felt uncomfortable when answering some questions. Therefore, a pilot study was carried out along with clarification about the confidentiality of the collected information. Another limitation was that some teachers showed they were not completely comfortable to help with the data gathering, mainly the part that was going to be collected through class observations. To solve this situation it was necessary to explain that the intention of the research was not to judge their work as teachers but to show how the standards of English are being implemented in the classroom, and consequently what standards are the ones which students work with more frequency during the lessons.

Other limitations were the extra-curricular activities that the institutions usually have that affected not only the normal development of English classes but also the schedule of the study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the present study, which includes all the information that supports and is related with the problem statement of this project.

A theoretical model of the language learning/ teaching process

This model takes as its focus all of the circumstances in which a learner learns and a professional teacher teaches. Strevens (1977) said that the language teaching profession deals with many types of learners, teaching/learning conditions, aims, etc. Yet, in another sense, the language learning/ teaching process (LL/LT) is concerned with a single individual teacher, and with a particular set of surrounding circumstances. In this way, Strevens proposes that a theoretical study must attempt to provide a comprehensive way of understanding both the complete range of features which at once address and distinguish all learners and teachers and the particular features possessed by any specific learner and teacher. According to Strevens, the twelve essential elements of the LL/LT process which are discussed are:

Policy and Aims

It is a label which refers to the public will that the sociolinguistic circumstances of the community shall be recognized by the provision of teaching facilities for learning languages.

Administration and Organization

Stevens (1977) states that it has to do with the financial and administrative provision for teaching languages in the schools and colleges; it means the budget for training and paying teachers, for building or enlarging schools, for providing books and equipment, for running public examinations and so forth.

Relevant Professional Disciplines

For Stevens (1977) the profession of language teaching can seek assistance from many intellectual sources, such as education, linguistics, psychology, social theory, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics, each one with its own contribution to the learning and teaching of languages.

Choice of language learning/teaching types

According to Stevens (1977) the process of learning and the process of teaching are altered in important ways by six different factors:

- ***Pupil age:*** According to this factor, there are three types of learning/teaching situations: Young child, adolescent, and adult.
- ***Stage of proficiency:*** In this factor, the learning/ teaching process varies depending on beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners.

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- ***Educational aims:*** This type of language learning/teaching process reflects the main kinds of language teaching courses that are offered. General educational, practical command, special and vocational purposes.
- ***Learner involvement:*** The teacher expects of the volunteer learner an attitude towards learning and towards being taught which cannot expect of the non-volunteer learner.
- ***Language of instruction status:*** The learning task is different depending on whether the instruction will be carried out for learning the mother tongue, the target language or another foreign language.
- ***Target language status:*** This type of language learning/teaching process distinguishes between the instruction of a foreign language and the instruction of a second language.

To continue with the Theoretical Model of the Language Learning and Teaching Process the next elements to discuss are:

Teacher training

The better quality of training teachers undergoes before entering their profession, the greater results and effectiveness of language learning and teaching in any given country.

Approach

It is a commitment to particular, specified points of view to an ideology about language teaching. It evolves as a consequence of the need to turn ideas for reform into a comprehensive drive for action.

Pedagogy, methodology, instruction, and teaching

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It is concerned with the presentation to the learner of the material he is learning, with different techniques, tips, hints, gimmicks, systems, instructions, etc. for doing, organizing and describing the process.

Syllabus design: The syllabus embodies that part of the language to be taught, broken down into items for teaching purposes. The design of syllabuses has to do with the selection of topics that will be graded in the instructional language process.

Materials construction

It should be taken into account five important characteristics when designing instructional materials: they should be realistic, relevant, interesting, encouraging, and compatible. These characteristics allow students and teachers to carry out the teaching and learning process in a more effective way.

Constraints on Language Learning/Teaching Achievement

There are some factors which act as constraints upon the effectiveness of the teaching/learning effort:

- ***Total Quantity of Instruction:*** There must be a minimum time for learning at a given rate to bring about a given level of attainment.
- ***Intensity of Instruction:*** Like quantity, intensity has a potential effect in raising or reducing the effectiveness of the learning/teaching process. A well balanced rate of intensity allows students and teachers to have a better quality of the process.

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- ***Various impediments to teaching:*** These are all of the physical and psychological factors that may interfere quite drastically with the learning and teaching process. Some of the most relevant are: overcrowding, noise, distraction, fatigue, and anxiety.
- ***The quality of the teacher:*** The characteristics that make a teacher good or bad, and that have to do with his/her personality, an adequate command of the language he/she is teaching, a good skill as a teacher which obviously depends on the teacher training. According to the model the two final elements are:

The learner

Stevens (1977) holds that the learner is the focus of the complex language/learning teaching process. So, the teacher has to be aware that all learners have the potentiality to learn a language, but that there will be variations between one learner and another. It is an essential part of the task of the teacher to recognize those variations as part of the learner as an individual human being.

Evaluation

It takes many forms. Some of them serving the needs of the teachers for feedback information, some of them serving social and administrative needs, and some of them have injurious effects upon teaching and learning.

EFL in the Colombian high School

According to Bastidas (2003) learning a second language is a complex process which includes a wide set of variables that have an incidence on the different actors of the learning/teaching process. This incidence can be seen as follows.

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The learner

Bastidas (2003) claims that as every learner is an individual with different characteristics, his/her way of seeing the target language can be considered from different perspectives and is affected by different aspects such as motivation, the communicative need of a foreign language, the socio-economic level, and transfer.

Since the present study focuses on the oral competence, it is clear that in a context like Nariño the aspect which might represent a problem for this competence to develop, is that there is no need to use the target language for real purposes.

The teacher

He/she is the one that translates educational philosophy and objectives into knowledge and skill and transfers them to students in the classroom; for doing so, he/she should have some kind of training and preparation which determines the way he/she helps the students learn the foreign language. Lado (1964) states that there are great variations among language teachers with regard to their qualifications and the time they may devote to the teaching of language. The teacher may speak the language natively, or he may have studied it as a second language himself.

When talking about oral competence, it is not only important but necessary that teachers use the target language in the classroom as much as possible, as a way to introduce students in the path of production.

Methodology

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It includes the methods that have been proposed for teaching second or foreign languages during the last decades, such as the GTM , the direct method, TPR, among others and within them a number of techniques and procedures.

Materials

Bastidas (2003) suggests that there is a positive relation between effectiveness of teaching and the quantity and quality of the materials a teacher has. The materials should be selected taking into account the objectives, the syllabus, the learner activities, the learner and the teacher roles so that they can fit the teacher and learners necessities. Also, something that can be added in this part is that variety has to be taken into account to motivate students learning along the process.

The Community

This element includes national policies which in Colombia have established the implementation of the National Bilingual Colombia Programme, the administration and organization, the internal policies of an institution, and the classroom. All these elements are important in the learning teaching process.

The Common European Framework of Reference

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) for the languages: learning, education and evaluation, is the result of ten years of investigation carried out by specialists of the applied scope of linguistics and pedagogy, coming from forty states members of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe worries about improving the quality of the communication of the European people that use different languages and have different

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cultural origins. This is because the improvement of the communication produces a greater mobility and a more direct contact, which causes a greater understanding and one more intense collaboration at a time. The Council, also, supports the methods of learning and education that help the young students as the adults to develop the attitudes, the knowledge, and the necessary skills to be more independent at the time of thinking and acting simultaneously more responsibly and participative in relation to other people.

It is a document which aim is to provide a common base for the elaboration of programs of languages, curricular directions, examinations, manual and training materials. It describes in an integrative form what learners of languages must learn with the purpose of using a language to communicate, as well as the knowledge and skills that they have to develop for being able to act in an effective way.

The description also includes the understanding of the cultural context where the language is located. The CEF defines also the levels of dominion of the language that allow verifying the progress of the students in each phase of the learning process.

Why is the *Common European Framework of Reference* necessary?

- To cause and to facilitate the cooperation between the educative institutions of different countries.
- To provide a solid base for the mutual certified recognition of languages.
- To help students, teachers, designers of courses, examining institutions and educative administrators to locate and to coordinate their efforts.

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When offering a common base for the explicit description of the objectives, the contents and the methodology, *The Common European Framework of Reference* favors the transparency of the courses, the programs and the degrees fomenting in this way the international cooperation in the field of modern languages. The presentation of objective criteria that describes the dominion of the language will facilitate the mutual recognition of the degrees obtained in different contexts of learning and consequently, it will contribute to mobility in Europe.

With regard to Colombia, taking into account the Common European Framework of Reference, the National Ministry of Education has implemented the National Program of Bilingualism in order to improve English education through standards that students from primary to secondary level are supposed to achieve, and along with this, to improve the competitiveness of the Colombian people in a world that is more influenced by the constant trend of globalization.

Quality of educational policy in Colombia

The Colombian education policy seeks to articulate goals of coverage and quality at the same time. Other components of the policy are the definition of standards in a growing number of academic areas, assessment of basic skills in the basic levels of primary and basic secondary education, the aim of improving ICFES indicators and improvement plans for institutions that have low achievement in basic skill tests.

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Zambrano (2006) establishes that for many people schools are only a few teachers and some children gathered around a board. The situation takes on a higher level of complexity when the strategic nature of the education system does not keep a balance with the level of professionals working in its interior. Zambrano also states that the simplification and low situation explains the low conceptual, technical and operational quality of the educational model developed by the Colombian government.

Zambrano (2006) claims that the manifestation of the problem is what is currently happening with the standards, ICFES tests, SABER tests and improvement plans, their low relevance, utilization and ignorance on the part of the educational community, which creates an overall ineffectiveness of quality of educational policy in Colombia. The standards have not enriched the teaching practices, and the ICFES and SABER tests say very little about the cognitive, affective, and educational processes of children in schools, while improvement plans have finally become a formality without fostering a responsible understanding of the possibilities of changing schools.

Finally, Zambrano (2006) argues that the primary purpose of education in the quality of educational policy in Colombia, depends on the results of some tests that only measure about forty percent of the school year and do not say anything about children's intelligence, their capacity, their real potential in the Colombian society which is marked by their difficulty in building a civilized and inclusive social model. The model does not allow registering the thousands of children suffering from hunger, abuse and serious physical cognitive and emotional limitations to access to environments where they can develop their intelligence. The model removes the social classes and the deep fault of Colombian society in which private interests determine collective decisions.

The national “Bilingual Colombia Programme”

According to the National Ministry of Education (MEN) (2007) the recognition of the importance of second language learning made it possible to implement the National Program of Bilingualism as a strategy for the improvement of the English education in Colombia and as a way for the promotion of the competitiveness of our citizens.

The project is based on the European Framework of Reference for the learning of any foreign language, which does not mean that Colombia is adopting British English. Instead, it considers the bases of oral and written communication to get better results in the learning and teaching process. The initial reflection of the Ministry took the questions that the Educational Secretaries and institutions consider important: at what age should the learning process begin? How many hours are required per week? How many years?

According to the Alert Network of European Education (2005) in the 25 countries of the European Union, in the educative system, the dedication to the study of a foreign language is on average eight years, with an intensity between five and nine hours weekly, when the student is eight years old. In Colombia, the dedication to the study of foreign languages is on average six years, when students are in high school with three hours weekly. It means 720 hours for the study of the English language in Colombia.

The challenge that the Ministry of National Education (MEN) proposes is that in the year 2019 young people will be able to communicate in English under international standards, with the purpose of inserting Colombia in universal processes of communication; the global economy and the cultural opening require a competitive country with a better quality of life.

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In order to achieve those standards, Colombia adopted the scale of values of the European model: two levels A1 with scores from 0 to 29 and 30 to 39, each one; A2 (40 to 49); B1 (50 to 59); B2 (60 to 69); C1 (70 to 79) and C2 (80 to 100). With this scale the criteria of this competition will be unified in all of the country, including institutions with no formal education.

Taking into account this table, the Ministry has proposed the B2 as the parameter for teachers at the end of the year 2019. It is a high goal considering that in some cities such as Bogotá, the single score reaches 7.5% at the present time.

C.E.F	DESCRIPTION
A1	Beginners
A2	Elementary
B1	Intermediate
B2	High Intermediate
C1	Advanced
C2	Proficient

Although with this category they will not have a perfect English, they will be in better capacity to teach it, because they will be able to communicate with native speakers of English and will be able to understand texts in that language.

In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry of Education is working on three concrete proposals: definition and diffusion of standards in English, definition of national evaluations (ICFES and ECAES) and development of strategies to improve the formation of the teachers not only in language but also in methodology. At the moment, the component of English in ICFES test is aligned with the standards and the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference. This test was applied in September of 2007 to 11th course students.

Furthermore, the English component of the **ECAES** tests that were applied in June and November of 2007 was aligned with the levels of the Common European Framework to know

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the levels of competition at which not only the future English teachers of the country are graduating, but also the professionals of other careers.

Within the National Program of Bilingualism, the country receives the Standards of communicative competence in foreign language. They are clear and public criteria for the establishment of the basic levels of quality that students have to achieve at the end of high school in all the regions of Colombia.

The first challenge for teachers is to understand what the actual competence in English that students should develop is. The standards offer directions to know what and how to develop those competences, according to the age and the course that children are attending to. The proposal of standards contains the elements to reach general and communicative competence of language; the students will learn that English serves to extend their knowledge, to be related to the world, knowledge to express their identity and to acquire linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. In other words, they will be able to communicate in English, without losing their identity and essence as Spanish-speaking citizens.

The English Curriculum Guidelines

The Ministry of Education (2006) states that the guidelines for the foreign language curriculum process are teaching guidelines for teachers:

- To appropriate the basic conceptual elements of Education and develop effective autonomy to guide the teaching processes.
- To meet the needs of curriculum design within the Institutional Educational Project (PEI).
- To seek opportunities for innovative management of the area and take and appropriate the scientific and technological advances.

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It also seeks that from the guidelines, teachers can establish achievements in developing communicative competence in foreign language. In this regard, the General Law of Education (Law 115 of 1994) emphasizes a curriculum design centered on processes and skills for encouraging the integral development of people.

Elements and Approaches for Foreign Language Curriculum

According to the MEN (2006) the development of curriculum guidelines for a foreign language establishes for the educational community the development of processes of reframing and rethinking of their teaching in terms of the way that approaches, methods and current curricular trends have been applied, and finally, the reason for a special curriculum within the PEI. Likewise, it is urgent to reflect on the components and elements that combine the PEI as part of its dynamics to be worked systematically on their teaching practices. In this sense, the MEN (2006) suggests that the spirit of reform promoted by the educational legislation is framed in terms of curriculum design with a participatory, open and flexible process that promotes the development of the individual and the construction of cultural identity.

Standard

For the Ministry of Education (2006) one standard specifies the minimum level of knowledge that students should have and be able to apply for the exercise of citizenship, work and personal fulfillment. The standard is a goal and a measure; it is a description of what students should achieve in a particular area, grade or level; it expresses what must be done

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and how well it should be done. So, regarding oral competence, it means what must be done by students with the target language, and how well they are supposed to use it in a communicative way.

On the BSI Education website (2008) a standard is defined as a published specification that establishes a common language, and contains a technical specification or other precise criteria and it is designed to be used consistently, as a rule, a guideline, or a definition.

The MEN (2006) establishes that “standards are clear, precise and brief formulations which are expressed in a common structure for all disciplines or areas, so that all members of the school community may understand them”.

In the English area these formulations describe knowledge and skills that students should develop about the English language. The MEN (2006) also states that standards should be observable, measurable, and go hand in hand with the evaluation processes.

Omaggio (2001) says that the standards for foreign language learning present a set of interconnected goals that emphasize using language for communication with other peoples, gaining understanding of other cultures, and accessing information in a wide range of disciplines. The standards for foreign language learning outline descriptions of content envisioned for the study in foreign language classrooms. Even so, they do not provide ways to assess “how well” students are mastering that content.

Why standards?

According to the MEN (2006) it is necessary to take into account the following principles:

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- Improving the quality of education must start from the assumption that all children can learn with very high levels of outputs. Simply raising the expectations of learning can improve students' performance.
- Standards are the framework upon which schools, local education authorities and regional and central level, represented by the Ministry or Secretaries of Education in every Department organize and define their plans, programs and activities based on ensuring that all students learn what they have to learn, with high quality.
- Another principle is the democratization of education because knowing that standards are clear, precise, transparent and well known by teachers, managers, policy makers, parents and students allows them to know where to direct their efforts and it also facilitates the process of accountability on the achieved results.

Communicative Approach

The language is primarily a means of communication. From Chomsky (1957) it is taken into consideration the creative aspect of the language. It is not about the repetition of sentences; instead, it means to be able to form all possible sentences of a language (linguistic competence).

With Hymes (1972), language studies are taken as a social phenomenon and the concept of competence is expanded: learning a language is not only to produce all possible sentences and phrases of the language, but to put them into a communicative situation (communicative competence). The emphasis of this approach is on building a creative cognitive process that relies on the learner innate ability to learn the language, and in the exposition of the particular language to interact in communicative situations.

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Regarding the purpose of this approach it is related to the development of the communicative competence or the abilities to interact linguistically in different communicative situations. Therefore, it is necessary on the part of the teachers to select a variety of authentic language resources. "The meaning is negotiated". Learners need to interact with their peers and gradually they discover the use and function of the language.

Second Language Classes within the Communicative approach

Within the communicative approach the following recommendations are given for the development of the second language classes:

Respond to student's communicative needs (what does the learner learn the language for? what does he need? What is he interested in?), promote the learners need to communicate in foreign language in specific situations related to their own interests, provide authentic and contextualized materials related to real situations, facilitate interaction, first in a controlled way, and then free communication in the classrooms, emphasis has to be placed on meaning instead of form; in the process rather than in the contents, errors are necessary in learning.

The correction should never inhibit the communicative process. As for the activities it is also necessary that they share new information and encourage interaction, propose real language use, focus on the meaning (on what is being communicated), they should be done with authentic language, they need to respect the mechanisms of interaction (cooperation, negotiation, consistency etc.), and furthermore the activities have to accomplish a communicative purpose (what is done with the read, heard, and written material?).

Communicative Competence

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According to Littlewood (1981) the communicative ability in language teaching focuses on functional and structural aspects of the language. In addition, he remarks the relationship between the language and the social context. So, to determine the influence of the standards of English in the development of the oral competence in Pasto, it is important to take into consideration this relationship to describe adequately all of the contextual circumstances for the learning/teaching process to take place. Furthermore, Littlewood claims that students should be in constant interaction with other people and with the environment where they can practice the language. It is important that in the classroom, teachers and students be able to exchange their English knowledge for real communicative purposes.

Canale & Swain (1980) defined Communicative Competence in terms of Grammatical Competence, which refers to the words and rules, and also includes ones' knowledge of lexical terms, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology in language; The Sociolinguistic Competence has to do with the knowledge of rules governing the production and interpretation of language in different sociolinguistic contexts; the Discourse Competence is related to the cohesion and coherence in the discourse, and finally, Strategic competence, that means the capability to sustain communication using various verbal or nonverbal strategies when communicative breakdowns occur.

For Brown (2001) Communicative Competence is the combination of the Organizational Competence (grammatical and discourse), Pragmatic Competence (functional and sociolinguistic), Strategic Competence, and Psychomotor Skill (pronunciation). Thus, instruction in the classroom needs to give attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual needs to apply classroom learning in the real world. That is to say that language has to be seen

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as a means for a variety of communicative purposes, and to do that, the development of oral competence plays a very important role within the language learning/teaching process.

In Byrne`s words (1986) “at any level of attainment, from elementary to advanced, the students need to be given regular and frequent opportunities to use language freely, even if they sometimes make mistakes as a result” (p. 2). Therefore, even knowing a number of factors that have been mentioned before, such as learners differences, large groups, need for foreign language use, among others that teachers have to deal with, it is necessary that foreign language lessons have a space for oral production, which is one of the competences that the National Ministry of Education requires through the National Program of Bilingualism.

According to Byrne (1986) the role of the teacher is very important when thinking about the development of the students’ oral competence since he/she is in charge of motivating students and involving them in what they are doing. In this regard, Calvache (2003) defines language teachers as facilitators of learning. It means that teachers should be a guide, a person who helps the learners to discover knowledge. Towards a communicative orientation, the teacher is supposed to allow learners to realize about their errors, which are considered as natural products of communication. Therefore, teachers should find ways of assessing the learners using communicative tasks, such as interviews, oral and written reports, portfolios, jigsaw activities, among others.

Personality, mastering of teaching skills, selection and presentation of topics and activities, are also factors that a teacher has to take into account to undertake his/her daily job. During the lesson, students should have not only the opportunity to practice grammatical patterns or a lot of vocabulary without any sense but the opportunity to produce meaningful utterances that can be useful in real-life situations.

“Oral communication is a two-way process between speaker and listener, and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding” (Byrne, 1986, p.8). That is why students are supposed not only to be exposed to the spoken language produced by the teacher (which most of the times is modified for students to understand) and classmates, but also to models of real and natural speech. It means that in the same way that students need to be taught to speak using the target language, they need to be taught to listen and comprehend what has just been spoken in the process of interaction. In the classroom, it should be done through discussion activities and games where listening forms a natural part of the activity.

For that reason, it is easy to realize that activities within the classroom are the key for students to develop not only a mastery of the language system (accuracy), but also the ability to use it in a natural way (fluency). With respect to this, Byrne (1986) suggests that whole class and pair work activities are useful to develop accuracy, while pair and group activities to develop fluency. Furthermore, according to Byrne (1986) for students to be able to communicate effectively it is necessary an adequate mastery of grammar and vocabulary but at the same time they need to concentrate on essential features such as the differences between key sounds, weak forms, basic stress and intonation patterns.

To sum up, it is not only important but completely necessary that syllabus combines grammatical items and suitable vocabulary according to students' English level, and a list of functions or things that students would want to do through the language. In addition, the syllabus should contain situations where students feel they are able to use the target language.

Learner

Taking into account the purpose of the present study we mention two definitions of learner regarding his role in a communicative way. So, in the audio lingual method for instance, “learners are viewed as organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses” (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p.62).

In the same way Richards & Rogers (2001) state that in the communicative language teaching approach “the role of the learner is seen as negotiator between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning. This role emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains”. (p.28). Thus, it is possible to mention in this part of the study that it is through interaction that students can increase their language as they exchange thoughts, feelings, or ideas. “In interaction, students can use all they possess of language, all they have learned or casually absorbed in real life exchanges...” (Brown, 2001, p. 165).

CHAPTER III

Research Method

In this chapter, the characteristics of qualitative research are explained briefly. The qualities and features of population, setting and sample are also described. Moreover, the procedure, characteristics of the instrument used for criteria validation, and the ethical issues will be also addressed.

Research Paradigm

Qualitative research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behavior. It is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. It investigates the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, and *when*. Fischer (2005) states that qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: (1) participation in the setting, (2) direct observation, (3) in depth interviews, and (4) analysis of documents and materials.

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Maykut and Morehouse (1994) claim that the aim of qualitative research is to offer descriptions, interpretations and clarifications of naturalistic social contexts; Thus, in contrast to formulating, testing, and confirming or disconfirming hypothesis, qualitative research draws on the data collected by the researcher to make sense of the human behavior within the research context.

For the purpose of this study it was selected the qualitative paradigm by using the direct observation technique. However, surveys were also used a technique that belongs to the quantitative paradigm, because through this technique it could be elicited important information from teachers and students to determine the influence of the standards of English in the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high school in Pasto.

Research Type

Evaluative research

According to Correa, Puerta, and Restrepo (2002) the evaluative research is a special type of applied research that does not search for the discovery of knowledge. Making emphasis in the usefulness of the study evaluative research must provide information for the planning of the program, its accomplishment and its development. Evaluative research assumes also the individual characteristics of the applied research that allows the predictions to become a result of the investigation.

The researchers use all kinds of research techniques to successfully obtain information, such as interviews, questionnaires, tests of knowledge and skills, observation, analysis of the

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document content, registries and files and examinations of the physical evidences, among others.

To carry out the present study this kind of research was selected because through observations and surveys useful information about the influence that the standards of English have in the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high school in Pasto will be provided.

Data Collection Techniques

Observation

According to Hancock (2009) observation is a technique that can be used when data collected through other means can be of limited value or is difficult to validate. For example, in interviews participants may be asked about how they behave in certain situations but there is no guarantee that they actually do what they say they do. Observing them in those situations is more reliable because it is possible to see how they actually behave. Observation can also serve as a technique for verifying or nullifying information provided in face to face encounters. These are the reasons why this technique was selected to collect relevant information for the purpose of this study.

Survey

For Trochim (2006) survey research is one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement

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procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. A “survey” can be any format, a short paper-and-pencil feedback or an intensive one-on-one in-depth interview.

Surveys can be divided into two broad categories: the questionnaires and the interviews.

Questionnaires are usually paper-and-pencil instruments that the respondent completes. Interviews are completed by the interviewer based on what the respondent says. Taking into account the needs of this study, questionnaires were chosen as one of the instruments for collecting data because it was the most appropriate technique found to elicit relevant information from teachers and also from ninth grade students who are the participants of this study.

Population, Setting, and Sample

In this part of the chapter, some characteristics of the population, setting, and sample are described.

Population

This study was carried out with the participation of 122 male students, and 105 female students of 14 ninth grade; Six teachers that were in charge of the ninth grade also participated. Students’ age ranged from fourteen to sixteen years old. Most of them belonged to the middle class and studied in a public high school of Pasto.

Setting

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The institution where this study was carried out is located in the western part of Pasto. It has large green zones and space to walk and be relaxed. The classrooms have enough space taking into account the number of the students. These classrooms also have big windows and enough lights, which allow teacher and students to count on a very illuminated space. Regarding students organization in the classroom, it is thought for students to work individually. In addition, every classroom has its white board which is most of times used by the teacher along with a textbook, as the most important resources.

Sample

The part of the population which we worked with was selected taking into account the quantitative data collection techniques. Thus, knowing that the total quantity of students coursing ninth grade in the institution was 560, it was necessary to use the formula for determining the sample when the number of population is known. As a result of this procedure the number of students to work with was 227, a number that was representative to provide relevant information for determining the influence of the standards of English in the development of students' oral competence. It is important to say that students were selected randomly.

Pilot Study

To examine the reliability and validity of the instruments it was first conducted a pilot study. It took place in order to avoid having problems during the application of the surveys. In this way it was possible to determine the time students would take to answer the questions and some possible doubts which could emerge during the survey. To do that, 30 students with

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almost the same characteristics of the sample, were surveyed; these participants were chosen randomly, so that the results would be more reliable. The surveys were administered during the class. The participants of the study were required to choose a statement from: Never, Sometimes, Most of the times and Always. In addition, students' names were not required to be given: only the date, grade, age, and their gender were asked to be reported. As a result of this pilot study, it was necessary to make some adjustments to improve the survey format.

Procedure

To carry out this study it was imperative to go to the Institution to ask for permission to the administrators. Then, teachers were informed about the purpose of the study and it was possible to define a schedule to start the observations and the surveys. After that, the pilot study previously described, was applied, and the necessary adjustments were made. Following and respecting the schedule accorded with the teachers, the 227 students and 6 teachers of four courses in the morning and two in the afternoon responded the surveys. Next, the classroom observations were carried out and having got the necessary information thanks were given to teachers and students for their valuable collaboration. Finally, all the information gathered was analysed to present the results of the study, and furthermore, to make some recommendations.

Criteria Validation

To validate the study, two techniques to collect data were used; these were direct observation using a format with 29 statements and 3 options to mark (not observed, hardly accomplished, accomplished very well), students' surveys with 18 statements and teachers'

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surveys with 25 statements, all of them with four options to be chosen (Never, Sometimes, Most of the Times, and Always) and all of them related to the general and specific objectives.

It means that teachers and students were asked about aspects of oral competence, interaction, activities, and materials which provided information about how standards influence the development of the oral competence. And with the classroom observation it was possible to confront the information collected through the surveys.

Ethical Issues

In order to carry out this study, the next ethical issues were considered: first of all, respect towards concepts, ideas, thoughts and opinions of the different authors that somehow contributed to the development of this study. Secondly, permission was asked not only to the administrators but also to teachers, and students to explain them what was going to be done and why. Also, it was taken into account the respect to both the willingness and unwillingness to participate in this research. Neither the surveys nor the observations interfered with the academic life of the students and with the teachers' performance. The results of the surveys were treated as strictly confidential. Finally, gratitude was expressed to teachers and students for taking part in the development of this project.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis

The results obtained in this study were analyzed taking into account the categories and subcategories of the matrix of categorization, which organize the information gathered through the questionnaires and observations applied to teachers of English and students in ninth grade.

The first category taken into consideration in this analysis is Standards of English, which is divided into three subcategories: planning, activities, and materials. The second category is Communicative Competence which is divided into two subcategories: the national “Bilingual Colombia Programme”, and Oral Interaction.

Planning

Let's start with the category of standards of English, specifically in terms of planning in order to analyze how the oral standards are applied in the development of the classes. The following information collected through the teachers' answers to the question regarding planning shows their reactions: ¿Tiene en cuenta los estándares establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional para planificar sus clases durante el año escolar? Four of the six teachers surveyed said that sometimes they took into account the standards for lesson

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planning, and two of them responded that most of the times took into consideration the standards to plan their classes. Through observation it was detected that the classes are conducted primarily with the use of the book in order to work its contents or topics of study.

All the teachers take as a reference the textbook in order to teach the English lessons. Therefore, the activities are planned based on some of the standards since the textbook is based on the Common European Framework.

The activities carried out during the English lessons depend on the contents of the textbook. Thus, the achievement of the standards in terms of planning depends on the way teachers focus their attention on the activities they consider are adequate to reinforce what has just been studied.

Another question related to planning was: ¿se basa en métodos actuales con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar? To this question four teachers argued that they always followed current methods and the other two teachers answered that only sometimes. On the other hand, during the observation it was noted that despite using the textbook not all the activities included in it are considered.

The book has been the main source to carry out the English classes because teachers and students are used to developing and working the contents and activities in the way the textbook presents them. Harmer (1991) claims that even though a lesson may have already been planned (by the textbook writer), a teacher will still need to make decisions that relate to the needs of his or her specific class, adapting the lesson from the book in different ways to make it better suit the class.

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In addition, the number of students in the classroom has also affected the process because some of the activities included in the textbook are skipped to avoid discipline problems. The lack of interest on the part of the students to participate when doing some other activities encourages teachers to continue with the same usual procedures. In this regard, Byrne (1986) points out in terms of students' motivation, "the role of the teacher is very important since he/she is in charge of motivating students and involving them in what they are doing". Thus, no matter what kind of activity the teacher develops during the lessons, it is almost sure students will get involved if the topics and activities are presented in an interesting way. But one essential factor in the process according to Strevens (1977) is learner involvement, whereby the teacher expects of the volunteer learner an attitude towards learning and towards being taught which cannot expect of the non-volunteer learner. The last one is the main characteristic that could be seen in the participant students of the present study.

In the school where this study was carried out the textbook is the material preferred by students and teachers to carry out the English learning and teaching process. So, the lesson planning on the part of the teachers revolves around the activities of the textbook. The textbook includes activities to work all the skills related to English learning. Nonetheless, the listening and speaking activities are somehow neglected to focus on reading and learning vocabulary. The National Ministry of Education (2006) holds that standards are the framework upon which schools should organize and define their plans, programs and activities to help students learn what they have to learn, with high quality. In this case, maybe the purposes of the BCP are only partially accomplished since not all the standards are taken into consideration.

Materials

Regarding materials students answered to the question: ¿En las clases de inglés cuento con materiales como grabadora, videos, revistas, etc. que me permiten practicar el idioma oralmente? With regard to this question 108 students of the 227 who participated in this study claimed that sometimes were required to use these kinds of materials. Likewise, 90 students pointed out that they had never had the opportunity to use different materials apart from the textbook. As for the teachers the question was: ¿selecciona una variedad de materiales para estimular la realización de actividades de expresión oral (ayuda audio-visual, textos, revistas, periódicos, etc.)? Five teachers stated that sometimes they drew upon these resources, and only one teacher affirmed that most of the times he drew on these materials to encourage the development of the oral competence. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that there is not variety when presenting the topics because it was observed that the textbook was the most used resource to carry out the activities.

Both teachers and students agreed about the absence of different materials apart from the textbook to practice the oral skills. Students are used to developing a series of exercises to learn the grammatical patterns related to the contents of the textbook.

The use of the textbook in almost every English lesson depends on the way teachers work the contents despite the textbook itself gives some more optional activities. Moreover, it also depends on the fact that students are not accustomed to work activities such as listening or speaking. In addition, some of the materials that teachers have on hand such as the tape

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recorder are not used in a more regular way due to the inadequacy of this resource taking into account the large groups that teachers have to deal with.

With relation to the resources, students also answered to the question: ¿durante las clases de inglés tengo la oportunidad de asistir al laboratorio para escuchar conversaciones en contextos reales del idioma extranjero? The results showed that all the students were agreed on the fact that they do not count on a lab to carry out activities different from the ones carried out within the classroom. One of the teachers explained that some years before they did count on a lab, but unfortunately nothing was done when the equipment stopped working and therefore lab sessions were no longer available.

Teachers follow the textbook to carry out the lessons because it includes not only all the contents which are thought to be worked throughout the scholar year but also because teachers and students find in it useful exercises to practice the topics. This can be supported by all the teachers and 80% of students who claimed that they always drew upon the textbook to accomplish the objectives of every lesson. However, some dialogues or the audio material to encourage the development of oral skills are not worked because of discipline problems, maybe because of time, and it also seems to be because neither teachers nor students are used to working other kinds of activities by using some other resources. Nevertheless, according to the communicative approach to motivate learners to respond to communicative situations, it is necessary that teachers select a variety of authentic language resources. Furthermore, Savignon (1983) claims that when intending to promote skills in oral as well as written language a textbook is often accompanied by both sound recordings and visual aids. In fact, the coursebook that teachers and students work with includes a CD to work listening activities along the units. These activities are intended to rehearse and reinforce the contents but hardly ever they are worked during the lessons.

So far, in terms of lesson planning and materials, the school where this study was carried out shows a great tendency to use and limit the English learning and teaching process to the conventional or traditional way; it means that the textbook and the board play the most important role in terms of materials to carry out the lessons, and consequently to achieve the standards of English. It may be an impediment in the development of students' communicative skills and it will also promote lessons fall into routine, reinforcing the little motivation students have when trying to learn the target language. Bastidas (2003) points out that the materials should be selected taking into account the objectives, the syllabus, the learner activities, the learner and the teacher roles so that they can fit the teacher and learners necessities.

Activities

The activities that the textbook includes encompass the listening, reading, speaking, writing, and pronunciation skills, all of them related to a specific grammar topic. In this regard, some important information was collected from students' answers to the question: ¿para practicar oralmente el inglés tengo la oportunidad de participar en actividades como dramatizaciones, exposiciones, juegos, etc.? Of all the surveyed students 102 responded that sometimes they were involved in these activities. Alternatively, 83 students pointed out that these activities were never carried out, and only 18 of the surveyed students said that the activities to practice the target language orally occurred most of the times during the English lessons. Additionally, regarding the question for the teachers: ¿usted orienta durante sus clases distintas actividades para concientizar a los estudiantes de los diferentes tipos de textos orales (conversaciones por teléfono, transacciones, discursos, etc.)? 4 teachers affirmed that

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most of the times they conducted these activities and 2 of them answered that sometimes. On the contrary, none of the observations showed that oral activities take place in the English lessons.

Oral activities do not take place during the lessons. The limitation of the activities is concordant with the already mentioned limitation to the textbook. Students do not have opportunities to get involved in activities that facilitate the practice of English in spoken forms despite teachers said that sometimes they encourage students to present activities such as dramatizations, expositions, or even some games.

The lack of opportunities to practice the target language orally depends on the refusal on the part of the teacher to work the activities suggested by the textbook regarding oral production. For some reason the activities are limited to readings and answering questions in the notebooks rather than interaction or role playing activities as in real life situations. Perhaps, as some teachers stated the discipline issues make them hesitate about carrying out oral activities during the classes.

The evidence to support this fact was one of the classes observed where there was a pair work suggested by the textbook for students to discuss about a series of questions related to the topic of study. The textbook presented the activity as follows:

Pairwork. Discuss these questions.

1. *What is the most interesting country you've visited?*
2. *What is the most exciting adventure you've had?*
3. *What is the best film you've seen?*
4. *What is the most boring film you've seen?*

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5. *What's the most beautiful place you've ever visited?*

6. *What's the best book you've ever read?*

Instead, the teacher decided to make students work individually and write the answers in their notebooks. Then, students read the answers so that the teacher could correct pronunciation and grammar mistakes. Next, making emphasis on the more difficult words the teacher repeated them out loud so the students did the same after him:

Teacher: interesting!

Students: interesting!

Teacher: adventure!

Students: adventure!

Teacher: exciting!

Students: exciting! And so on.

Students do not have opportunities to practice English orally because the activities suggested by the textbook in terms of oral production are skipped to work only the ones intended to practice the grammatical patterns and vocabulary. For Littlewood (1981), it is important that in the classroom teachers and students are able to exchange their English knowledge towards real communicative purposes. But as could be analyzed, the conditions under which the process of teaching and learning English takes place do not allow accomplishing satisfactorily those purposes.

Regarding activities, the school where this study took place advocates the implementation of the textbook but neglects those activities that might help students to achieve the oral standards. Reading dialogues and activities to rehearse the grammatical patterns are worked most of the time during the lessons. Answering questions in the

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notebooks that were thought to be discussed are also part of the classes. However, according to the communicative approach the most important thing is to know what to do with the read, heard and written material, in other words, how students are able to apply knowledge they have about the language in real communicative situations.

The National Bilingual Colombia Programme

When the teachers were asked: ¿Se basa en los requerimientos del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo para llevar a cabo su labor como docente? Four teachers replied that sometimes and two teachers responded that always. The observation allowed noticing that teachers focus their work on the development of writing and grammar skills taking into account the requirements of the ICFES test, although neglecting the requirements of the National Bilingual Colombia Programme.

The requirements established in the National Bilingual Colombia Programme are hardly accomplished. Even when the specifications in the textbook follow the parameters of the programme, the standards are not taken into consideration in an important measure. The textbook is taken as a guide to work and develop the activities without paying too much attention to all of the aspects involved in the learning process that students are supposed to acquire at the end of every unit or at the end of the whole scholar year.

The non-fulfillment of the standards required by the government through the NBCP depends on the lack of work on a variety of activities to allow the practice of all the skills related to learning a new language. As a matter of fact, it is also influenced by the little information that teachers have received about the program affecting the way they have been

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orienting the classes; it means, by working the activities related to some of the skills that students should develop but neglecting the ones which are also part of the requirements.

Another question that teachers answered related to oral competence was: ¿Propicia el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los estudiantes teniendo en cuenta los estándares establecidos para este fin? To this question four teachers replied that most of the times and two of them answered that always bore in mind the requirements. Similarly, students responded to the question: ¿En las clases de inglés tengo oportunidades para participar utilizando oralmente la lengua extranjera? The following information shows their reactions: 127 students replied that sometimes, 49 students that most of the times, 31 students that always, and 15 students answered that never.

The standards established in the NBCP specifically those ones related to the development of the oral competence do not take place or they have been somewhat neglected first of all because teachers consider a demanding task the achievement of the standards; and secondly because despite students and teachers work mostly with the textbook, the activities to practice listening or speaking skills are modified to continue working in the traditional style. In a recent study carried out with English teachers about their attitudes towards the implementation of the standards, Cano & Ortega (2008) found that the majority of them agreed with this implementation. Likewise, the whole group of teachers who agreed with the implementation of NBCP emphasized that this project would only reach the results intended by the Ministry of Education whether the conditions of public schools were different.

In the public school where this study was carried out it is difficult to establish the existence of a real commitment to achieve the goals that the government has implemented in the NBCP. There is a tendency to avoid activities such as pair or group work, listening and

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speaking and even the writing activities are those ones where students are supposed to complete dialogues, sentences and answering discussion questions in their notebooks. It can be the result of the lack of motivation because even some important tests such as the ICFES test do not evaluate oral skills as a way to encourage the learning and practice of this aspect. Consequently, teachers try to focus their attention on improving the areas that this test does evaluate. For Zambrano (2006), the standards have not enriched the teaching practices, and the ICFES and SABER tests say very little about the cognitive, affective, and educational processes of children in schools, while improvement plans have finally become a formality without actually fostering a responsible understanding of the possibilities of changing schools.

Oral Interaction

One important question that teachers responded regarding the development of students' oral competence was: ¿Propicia un ambiente de confianza durante sus clases que invita a que los estudiantes participen en actividades de expresión oral? Four teachers replied that they always did it, and two of them affirmed that most of the times. Equally, students gave relevant information through the question: ¿en las clases de inglés tengo oportunidades para participar utilizando oralmente la lengua extranjera? Only 17 students responded that always, 118 students answered that sometimes, and 49 students said that they had never participated in oral interaction activities. Equally important, during the observations it was possible to realize that neither teachers nor students use the foreign language in a regular way. The evidence to support this fact was given by the students when replying to the question: ¿Durante las clases de inglés el profesor utiliza oralmente el idioma extranjero? 193 students responded that sometimes, 22 students said that never, and only 12 students pointed out that always.

The use of the target language hardly ever takes place in the classroom. Despite teachers affirmed they give opportunities for students to speak and interact in the foreign language, the observation showed that during the class teachers and students generally speak in the mother tongue.

The lack of opportunities students have to get involved in oral interaction activities depends on the little attention that teachers pay to try to accomplish the standards related to the development of the communicative competence. In the same way, the use of the mother tongue most of the time during the lessons depends on the inadequate practice that students have for familiarizing with the target language.

The reactions of the students collected through the question: ¿Las actividades llevadas a cabo durante el desarrollo de las clases me permiten interactuar en inglés con mis compañeros? showed the following information: 138 students recognized that only sometimes the activities encouraged the oral interaction; In the same way, 88 students claimed that the activities never required the use of English language orally. In addition, the observation also allowed perceiving that students felt more comfortable when the teacher spoke in Spanish rather than English. Moreover, it was noticed that students really liked to read or say words in isolation, but when they were supposed to follow some instructions given in English they preferred to remain quiet without even daring to say “I don’t understand”.

The absence of oral interaction in the development of the classes can be explained for the remarkable preference towards the use of the mother tongue. It is also the result of students little comprehension when the teacher speaks in English. In that sense, it is possible

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to say that the more the use of the mother tongue, the better the performance when working in the classroom. The lack of interest on the part of students to get involved in oral interaction activities can be explained by the fact that they are not sure about how to express in English what they have in mind, so students do not even try to speak for fear of making mistakes. In that sense, for Calvache (2003) “language teachers are facilitators of learning. It means that teachers should be a guide, a person who helps the learners to discover the knowledge. Towards a communicative orientation, the teacher is supposed to allow learners to realize about their errors, which are considered as natural products of communication”.

Nonetheless, in the school where this study took place the constant tendency is to avoid activities which encourage the development of the oral competence, which is one of the requirements that the National Ministry of Education attempts through the National Bilingual Colombia Programme. According to Bastidas (2003) the teacher is the one who translates educational philosophy and objectives into knowledge and skill and transfers them to students in the classroom; in other words, teachers determine the way to help students to learn the foreign language.

Conclusions

The National Bilingual Colombia Programme is perhaps one of the most ambitious projects that the National Government has planned to improve the quality of results obtained so far regarding English language. The present study was carried out with the purpose of analyzing to what extent it is possible to achieve the standards established in the Programme in terms of oral competence. Of course all the aspects of the language have to do with communication but this research was focused on the part that is maybe the one that has been neglected by teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning English.

After collecting and analyzing all the information some important aspects can be exposed in order to determine the influence of the standards of English on the development of the oral competence of ninth grade students in a high school in Pasto. To start with, despite the Government has implemented the Programme as an essential requirement for students to learn English not only looking for academic purposes but also looking for the improvement of their quality of life in a world increasingly globalized, curriculum pay little attention to improve English teaching and learning conditions in terms of time. This is maybe the greatest challenge that teachers have to face to achieve the goals established because the less the time students are immersed in English lessons the lower the results in all aspects of the language, and even lower in the oral competence which is somehow the part least worked in the classrooms according to the results of the present study. In other words, even though the standards are thought to encourage the improvement of the English learning and teaching process, the conditions under which this process takes place do not help to attain all of the goals.

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Furthermore, another disadvantage when trying to get good results in the development of the oral skills of students is the fact that the amount of them per classroom is bigger than it should be. Some teachers explained that the main reason to avoid oral activities within the classroom is the fact that there are too many students and little time to have students speaking even in short dialogues. Moreover, the few opportunities students have to interact with their pairs are taken to spawn indiscipline. In consequence, the standards that were implemented within the National Bilingual Colombia Program to have students using the language in everyday situations are simply neglected.

As a conclusion, while the English teaching and learning conditions do not change, and it means in all the aspects that so far have been hindering the achievement of better results when trying to get students communicating their ideas, thoughts, opinions, personal information, etc in English, the task carried out in the classrooms might continue producing the same results. That is, students unable to use the language for real purposes, and accordingly, students with few chances to succeed in communicative situations that require certain domain of English due to the ceaseless growth of globalized societies.

Recommendations

After having analyzed and confronted the collected data and the ideas proposed by different specialized authors in teaching and learning process, we could give the next recommendations in order to improve the results of the English learning and teaching process when talking about standards.

The first one is related to the level of knowledge that teachers have about the requirements that the National Bilingual Colombia Program has established to improve the process of teaching and learning a foreign language. Thanks to the observations made during this investigation it was determined that some teachers are still kind of confused about the implementation of the standards to develop the student's oral competence. Teachers are basing their lessons on the standards contained in the textbooks but the problem is that not all the competences are taken into consideration. Most of them are focused on grammatical patterns of the language, and not on the development of the oral competence which is the focus of this research. Therefore, one recommendation for the teachers is to try to be creative and innovative so that they stop limiting their teaching work to the use of the textbook. Moreover, even if they have to use the textbook to follow the order of the contents the idea is to complement with interesting materials and activities so that little by little students get motivated and the production skills will be finally possible to develop.

Another recommendation has to do with the weekly hours dedicated to learning a foreign language. It is common knowledge that it takes a minimum of 6 hours per week for success in learning a language; thereupon, it is recommended that the National Ministry of

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Education seeks for the possibility of increasing the number of hours per week dedicated to teaching and learning English. On the other hand, even though it is true that the reduced number of hours per week affects negatively the teaching and learning process, it is also true that even in that little time teachers should implement the use of English in their classes; it means, not only in reading or writing tasks but also in oral communicative activities. As Richards & Lockhart (1994) suggest, for the sake of accomplishing the objectives of the language teaching and learning process, it is necessary to develop a set of activities to increase the learner's skills using the foreign language.

Finally, considering that the National Ministry of Education has implemented the National Bilingual Colombia Program and along with it all the standards, it should be also necessary that the Government attempts to find a way to evaluate English language learning in a different way than simply through the ICFES test. According to the results of this investigation it was determined that the students' oral production is very low, and one of the possible reasons is that the ICFES test does evaluate neither the listening nor the speaking skills. In consequence, teachers focus merely their teaching work on grammar, vocabulary, and on reading comprehension activities because those aspects are evaluated every year in the test. In short, the National Ministry of Education had better analyze or implement the assessment of these skills in the application of the test.

There are many factors that should be taken into consideration at the time of implementing an ambitious program such as the National Bilingual Colombia Program. From our point of view, and also from our very short experience as teachers we consider that perhaps we were not ready to undertake this enterprise yet; not because we do not have the capacities to achieve high standards of quality but because the conditions are not adequately

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provided or available. Even in private schools where students are supposed to take advantage of a variety of resources, the lack of a real need to use the foreign language in everyday situations becomes a big impediment when trying to motivate students to use English language in spoken forms. Consequently, motivation starts playing an essential role, and as proved by lot of research on this topic it does not only depend on the teacher but also on the personal expectations that every single student has for his/her own life. To sum up, if we want to find the weaknesses of the National Bilingual Colombia Program in terms of the development of the oral competence, we have to take it for sure that we are going to find them neither in the teachers nor in the students, but in the fact that as it was based on the Common European Framework it was thought for a context completely different from the one we live in.

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Appendix N° 1

Encuesta a Estudiantes

Fecha: _____ **Grado:** _____ **Edad:** _____ **Sexo:** M _____ F _____

OBSERVACIONES:

- ✓ Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas con la mayor sinceridad posible.
- ✓ Ninguna de las respuestas será correcta o incorrecta tan sólo nos interesa su opinión personal.
- ✓ Sus respuestas sólo serán conocidas por los investigadores.
- ✓ Favor contestar todas y cada una de las preguntas.

Instrucciones

- Lea cuidadosamente cada una de las siguientes preguntas y subraye la opción que usted considere apropiada.

1. Considero que el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera es:

- a. Poco importante b. Importante c. Muy importante

2. En las clases de inglés tengo oportunidades para participar utilizando oralmente la lengua extranjera:

- a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces
b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

3. Durante las clases de inglés , el profesor utiliza oralmente el idioma extranjero:

- a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces
b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

4. Cuando el profesor utiliza oralmente el idioma extranjero yo entiendo lo que dice:

- a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces
b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

5. Utilizo un libro de texto que me permite guiar mi aprendizaje del inglés

- a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces
b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

6. En las clases de inglés cuento con materiales como grabadora, videos, revistas, etc. que me permiten practicar el idioma oralmente:

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

7. Las actividades llevadas a cabo durante el desarrollo de las clases me permiten interactuar en inglés con mis compañeros:

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

8. Para practicar oralmente el inglés tengo la oportunidad de participar en actividades como dramatizaciones, exposiciones, juegos, etc.

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

9. Participo en actividades grupales como mesas redondas, debates, etc. las cuales me permiten practicar el inglés oralmente:

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

10. Cuando interactúo en inglés con mis compañeros soy capaz de comprender lo que ellos me dicen :

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

11. Cuando utilizo el inglés para dirigirme a mi profesor o mis compañeros, mi lenguaje es fácilmente comprendido:

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

12. Cuando el profesor hace preguntas en inglés sobre la temática desarrollada en clase, soy capaz de contestar utilizando oralmente el idioma extranjero :

a. Nunca c. La mayoría de las veces

b. Algunas veces d. Siempre

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13. En clases de inglés tengo oportunidades para practicar una correcta pronunciación del idioma extranjero:

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

14. Expreso mis opiniones, gustos y preferencias con una buena pronunciación del Inglés:

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

15. Soy capaz de mantener una conversación en inglés utilizando un lenguaje sencillo y claro

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

16. Participo en conversaciones en inglés en las que expreso opiniones e intercambio información sobre temas personales o de mi vida diaria:

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

17. Soy capaz de utilizar el inglés oralmente para expresar mi opinión sobre asuntos de interés general para mi y mis compañeros:

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

18. Encuentro oportunidades para practicar oralmente el idioma extranjero fuera del aula de clase

- a. Nunca
- b. Algunas veces
- c. La mayoría de las veces
- d. Siempre

¡Gracias por su colaboración!!

Appendix N° 2

Encuesta a Profesores de Inglés

OBJETIVO: Determinar la influencia de los estándares de inglés en el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los estudiantes.

OBSERVACIONES:

- ✓ Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas con la mayor sinceridad posible.
- ✓ Ninguna de las respuestas será correcta o incorrecta tan sólo nos interesa su opinión personal.
- ✓ Sus respuestas sólo serán conocidas por los investigadores.
- ✓ Favor contestar todas y cada una de las preguntas.

Lea cuidadosamente cada una de las afirmaciones y según su opinión personal califique de **1** a **4** marcando con una **X** la opción que usted considere apropiada de acuerdo a la siguiente tabla:

1	Nunca
2	Algunas veces
3	La mayoría de las veces
4	Siempre

	1	2	3	4
Fomenta el valor y los beneficios del aprendizaje del inglés en los estudiantes				
Se basa en los requerimientos del programa nacional de bilingüismo para llevar a cabo su labor como docente				
Tiene en cuenta los estándares establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional para planificar sus clases durante el año escolar				
Se basa en teorías actualizadas sobre la lengua con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar.				
Se basa en teorías actualizadas sobre el aprendizaje con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar				
Se basa en métodos actuales con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar				
Utiliza un libro de texto como guía para desarrollar la temática de sus clases				

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Tiene en cuenta el conocimiento previo que los alumnos poseen de su lengua materna para ayudarles a construir sobre ese conocimiento estrategias que les permitan desarrollar la competencia oral de la lengua extranjera.				
Propicia el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los estudiantes teniendo en cuenta los estándares establecidos para este fin				
Orienta sus clases utilizando métodos que facilitan el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los estudiantes				
Usted Investiga temas específicamente didácticos/pedagógicos que le ayudan a desarrollar la competencia oral de los estudiantes.				
Propicia un ambiente de confianza durante sus clases que invita a que los alumnos participen en actividades de expresión oral.				
Evalúa y selecciona actividades comunicativas de interacción y expresión oral con el fin de motivar a los alumnos para que expresen sus opiniones, identidad cultural, etc.				
Usted orienta durante su clase distintas actividades para concientizar a los alumnos de los diferentes tipos de textos orales (conversaciones por teléfono, transacciones, discursos, etc.).				
Selecciona una variedad de materiales para estimular la realización de actividades de expresión oral (ayuda audio-visual, textos, revistas, periódicos, etc.)				
Utiliza actividades que ayudan a los alumnos a participar en intercambios orales relacionados con temas de actualidad.				
Promueve durante la clase una variedad de actividades para ayudar a que los alumnos identifiquen y usen las características típicas de la lengua oral (lenguaje informal, modo de empezar una frase, muletillas, etc.)				
Ayuda a los alumnos para que usen estrategias de comunicación (pedir que se aclare algo, comprobación de la comprensión, etc.) en la interacción oral.				
Usted ayuda a los alumnos para que usen estrategias compensatorias necesarias para una buena comunicación (parafrasear, simplificar, etc.) en la interacción oral.				
Utiliza una variedad de técnicas que ayudan a los alumnos a reconocer los sonidos que existen en el Inglés				
Utiliza una variedad de técnicas que ayudan a los alumnos a pronunciar los sonidos que existen en el Inglés				

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Usted utiliza una variedad de técnicas para sensibilizar a los alumnos de la acentuación propia del inglés.				
Usted utiliza una variedad de técnicas para sensibilizar a los alumnos de la entonación propia del inglés.				
Recorre a una variedad de actividades orales para que los alumnos desarrollen la precisión gramatical				
Recorre a una variedad de actividades orales para que los alumnos desarrollen la precisión léxica.				

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PREGUNTAS ENCUESTA	PROPOSICIONES ESTUDIANTES	TENDENCIAS
1. Considero que el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera es	Most of the surveyed students consider Very important to study a foreign language.	Importance
2. Considero que el número de horas semanales dedicadas al aprendizaje del inglés en mi colegio es	Students say that they have enough hours per week dedicated to learn the foreign language.	Sufficient
3. En las clases de inglés tengo oportunidades para participar utilizando oralmente la lengua extranjera:	Students sometimes have the opportunities to use orally the English language in the classroom	Lack of practice
4. Durante las clases de inglés el profesor utiliza oralmente el idioma extranjero:	Most of the students agree that teachers use the foreign language during English classes	Input
5. Cuando el profesor utiliza oralmente el idioma extranjero yo entiendo lo que dice:	Most of times students do not understand the teacher when he/she speaks in English	Incomprehensible Input
6. Utilizo un libro de texto que me permite guiar mi aprendizaje del inglés	Students use a textbook during the English classes	Textbook is available
7. En las clases de inglés cuento con materiales como grabadora, videos, revistas, etc. que me permiten practicar el idioma oralmente:	Students state that there are not extra materials to practice the English language	Lack of Materials
8. Las actividades llevadas a cabo durante el desarrollo de las clases me permiten interactuar en inglés con mis compañeros	Activities sometimes let students to interact in English	No interacting activities
9. Para practicar oralmente el inglés tengo la oportunidad de participar en actividades como dramatizaciones,	Hardly ever students engage in activities such as dramatizations, presentations, games and the like to practice the oral competence.	No variety

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exposiciones, juegos, etc.		
10. Participo en actividades grupales como mesas redondas, debates, etc. las cuales me permiten practicar el inglés oralmente:	Students say that there is not group work in their English lessons	Individual work
11. Cuando interactúo en inglés con mis compañeros soy capaz de comprender lo que ellos me dicen :	Sometimes students understand each other when interacting in English	Misunderstanding
12. Cuando utilizo el inglés para dirigirme a mi profesor o mis compañeros, mi lenguaje es fácilmente comprendido:	Students seldom make their classmates and teacher understand what they say	Incomprehensible output
13. Cuando el profesor hace preguntas en inglés sobre la temática desarrollada en clase, soy capaz de contestar utilizando oralmente el idioma extranjero	Most of times students are not able to answer what their teacher ask by using the English language	Absence of speaking skill
15. Expreso mis opiniones, gustos y preferencias con una buena pronunciación del Inglés:	Students state that only sometimes they are able to express opinions, likes etc. with a good pronunciation	Lack of oral practice
16. Soy capaz de mantener una conversación en inglés utilizando un lenguaje sencillo y claro	Hardly ever students can use clear and simple vocabulary to engage in a conversation	Lack of lexical patterns
17. Participo en conversaciones en inglés en las que expreso opiniones e intercambio información sobre temas personales o de mi vida diaria:	Students never participate in conversations where they can share personal information	No interaction
18. Encuentro	There are not opportunities to practice	Practice is

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oportunidades para practicar oralmente el idioma extranjero fuera del aula de clase	the English language outside the classroom	unavailable
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PREGUNTAS ENCUESTA	PROPOSICIONES PROFESORES	TENDENCIAS
1. Fomenta el valor y los beneficios del aprendizaje del inglés en los estudiantes	Most of teachers promote the benefits to learn English	Encouragement for students to learn English
2. Se basa en los requerimientos del programa nacional de bilingüismo para llevar a cabo su labor como docente	Sometimes, teachers have based their classes on these requirements	Do not use at all
3. Tiene en cuenta los estándares establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional para planificar sus clases durante el año escolar	In some classes, teachers have used the standards but not always	Low use of standards
4. Se basa en teorías actualizadas sobre la lengua con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar.	Teachers do use language theories in their teaching practice	Use of theories
6. Se basa en métodos actuales con el fin de dirigir y guiar su modo de enseñar	Most of times teachers have based their English classes on actual methods	Use of actual methods
7. Utiliza un libro de texto como guía para desarrollar la temática de sus clases	Teachers state that they use a textbook during their classes	Textbook
9. Propicia el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los estudiantes teniendo en cuenta los estándares establecidos para este fin	Most of times teachers promote the students oral competence using the standards	Use of standards
10. Orienta sus clases utilizando métodos que facilitan el desarrollo de la competencia oral de los	There is a low use of methods in order to improve oral competence	No improvement of oral competence

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estudiantes		
12. Propicia un ambiente de confianza durante sus clases que invita a que los alumnos participen en actividades de expresión oral.	Teachers create an adequate classroom environment to promote oral production	Environment
13. Evalúa y selecciona actividades comunicativas de interacción y expresión oral con el fin de motivar a los alumnos para que expresen sus opiniones, identidad cultural, etc.	Teachers states that they do make an evaluation and selection of communicative activities	Communicative activities
15. Selecciona una variedad de materiales para estimular la realización de actividades de expresión oral (ayuda audio-visual, textos, revistas, periódicos, etc.)	Occasionally, teachers make a good selection of materials to support their classes	Lack of materials
16. Utiliza actividades que ayudan a los alumnos a participar en intercambios orales relacionados con temas de actualidad.	Hardly ever teachers use interaction activities	No interaction
18. Ayuda a los alumnos para que usen estrategias de comunicación (pedir que se aclare algo, comprobación de la comprensión, etc.) en la interacción oral.	Constantly teachers help students in the clarification of meaning	Strategic competence
21. Utiliza una variedad de técnicas que ayudan a los alumnos a pronunciar los sonidos que existen en el Inglés	Teachers sometimes use techniques to improve students pronunciation	Low pronunciation

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OBSERVATION	PROPOSITION CLASSROOM OBSERVATION	TENDENCY
Clear presentation of the lesson purpose	Teacher works with the textbook and he continues with the previous topic	The textbook presents the lesson
Activity makes students participate orally	Activities do not facilitate oral participation of students	No oral activities
Students participate spontaneously	Teachers uses the list to make students participate	Students remain passive
Materials facilitate the students oral production	Lack of materials	There is not oral production
The teacher speaks by using the foreign language	Most of times teacher speaks using the mother tongue	Lack of input
Students understand the teacher when using the foreign language	Only some basic commands	Spanish language is primarily used
Students make English questions when they do not understand	Students make Spanish questions	Spanish language is primarily used
There is encouragement for students to seek corrective feedback from others	There is only corrective feedback from the teacher	Individual work
Role playing activities during the class	There is not this kind of activities	Textbook activities
Students participate using the foreign language	students only read short phrases from the textbook or notebook	Absence of students output

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Activities are focused on speaking skills	Activities are focused on grammar and vocabulary	No oral production
Activities are focused on listening skills	Not use of listening activities	No interaction
Students work individually	Most of times	Lack of group activities
Students work in pairs	No observed	Individual work
Students work in groups	No observed	Individual work
The textbook is used during the lesson	Most of times	The textbook guides the lesson
the textbook is appropriate to students' English level	The topics are pertinent	Appropriateness
The majority of students have the textbook	Most of the students	The textbook is present all the time
There is encouragement to students interaction	No observed	No English interaction
Students understand each other when interacting in English	There is no interaction between students	No English interaction
Students engagement in English discussions and conversations	Students do not have the opportunity to do that	No English interaction
There is interaction between students and teacher using the foreign language	There is interaction but using the mother tongue	Lack of English oral production
Presentation of helpful audio-visual material to support oral production	Absence of this kind of materials	No materials

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QUESTION	TEACHERS , PROPOSITI ON	STUDENTS' PROPOSITION	CLASSROOM OBSERVATION	TENDENCY
Relevance of learning a foreign language	Most of teachers promote the benefits to learn English	Most of the surveyed students consider very important to study a foreign language.	Students show a great deal of interest during English classes	In general, it is clearly seen that students are interested in learning the English language
Opportunities to use foreign language during the class	Teachers create an adequate classroom environment to promote oral production	Students sometimes have the opportunities to use orally the English language in the classroom	Students participate using the mother tongue	Teacher tries to encourage students to speak in English, but almost always they hesitate and rather to use the mother tongue
The teacher uses the foreign language		Most of the students agree that teachers use the foreign language during English classes	Most of times teacher speaks using the mother tongue	Teacher uses English language to give some commands, but most of the class is carried out in Spanish
Students understanding of the teacher's English speaking	Constantly teachers help students in the clarification of meaning	Most of times students do not understand the teacher when he/she speaks in English	Teacher has to translate in order to make students understand	Due to students do not listen to the teacher speaking English all the time, it seems it

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				is really hard to them understand when he/she decides to use it.
Use of English textbook	Teachers state that they use a textbook during their classes	Students use a textbook during the English classes	The lesson is carried out with the textbook as a guide	Teachers and students have the textbook as the primarily source of learning
Presentation of helpful audio-visual material to support oral production	Occasionally, teachers make a good selection of materials to support their classes	Students state that there are not extra materials to practice the English language	Lack of materials	Teachers do not rely on a variety of materials to support their English teaching
There is encouragement to students interaction	Hardly ever teachers use interaction activities	Activities sometimes let students to interact in English	There is interaction but in Spanish	Since the class is carried out in Spanish interaction takes place without using the English language
Opportunities to participate in presentations, games, dramatizations etc.	Teachers states that they do make an evaluation and selection of communicati	Hardly ever students engage in activities such as dramatizations, presentations, games and the like to practice	The activities are guided by the textbook	Students are most of times engaged in reading activities and translation

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	ve activities	the oral competence.		
Students understanding each other	Hardly ever teachers use interaction activities	Sometimes students understand each other when interacting in English	Interaction is not present	It is not possible to observe if students understand each other when using the English language, because there are not opportunities to do it
Pronunciation activities	Teachers sometimes use techniques to improve students pronunciation	Students state that only sometimes they are able to express opinions, likes etc. with a good pronunciation	One way teachers encourage pronunciation during English lessons is through reading activities and repetition of vocabulary.	Pronunciation takes place in the classroom although without interacting as in real communication

¡Gracias por su colaboración!