THE EFFECTS OF APPLYING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN AN EFL SETTING AT ITISM HIGH SCHOOL

By

Elizabeth Bravo Benavides

Diana Marcela Ibarra Ortega

Submitted to the School of Human Sciences in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of B.A.

Linguistics and Languages Department

English and French Program

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Ana Clara Sánchez

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NOTA DE RESPONSABILIDAD

"Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en este trabajo de grado modalidad Pasantía Empresarial son responsabilidad exclusiva de los autores"

Artículo 1 del Acuerdo N° 324 de Octubre 11 de 1966 emanado del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

Nota de aceptación

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Directora

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Jurado Delegado

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Jurado

San Juan de Pasto, 21 de Noviembre de 2013

DEDICATED TO

Firstable, I am thankful and I dedicate this project to my beloved mother,

for her love and continuous support, also to my best friends

Elizabeth and David for being an important part of this process

of my life. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to

my advisor Ana C. Sanchez for all her recommendations and for

being patience along the research project.

Diana Ibarra.

DEDICATED TO

I dedicate this research project to God, my beloved parents

for being my daily support and my son who was

my constant inspiration. I would like to thank to my dear

friend Diana for being part of this important process of my

life. Also, I thank to my partner David for his advices

and valuable collaboration.

Special acknowledgments to my advisor Ana C. Sanchez

for collaborating us to accomplish our purpose.

Elizabeth Bravo

RESUMEN

La evaluación formativa se refiere principalmente a una amplia variedad de procedimientos de evaluación formales tanto como informales que se utilizan ampliamente por los profesores durante el proceso de aprendizaje con el fin de modificar y adaptar la enseñanza y las actividades de aprendizaje para mejorar el cumplimiento de las metas de los alumnos.

Los datos obtenidos de este proyecto de investigación llevado a cabo en el Colegio ITSIM indican principalmente que la evaluación formativa es una parte integral del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, por lo tanto, existe una fuerte necesidad de estar teóricamente bien informado sobre los enfoques de investigación con el fin estudiar cómo este tipo de evaluación se está realizando a través de las clases. Teniendo en cuenta las condiciones de enseñanza y aprendizaje de nuestro contexto educativo, una variedad de actividades basadas en los principios esenciales de la evaluación formativa se han sugerido. Además, se han propuesto también una serie de recomendaciones hacia un proceso de aprendizaje efectivo y significativo.

Ser competente comunicativamente se ha convertido en la actualidad una necesidad para los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras, por lo tanto nuevos enfoques, métodos y técnicas son llamados a ser considerados en nuestras escuelas para que los estudiantes tengan una oportunidad real para ser buenos usuarios

THE EFFECTS OF APPLYING FORMATIVE

de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: evaluación formativa , el aprendizaje

significativo.

ABSTRACT

Formative assessment mainly refers to a wide variety of formal as well as informal assessment procedures which are broadly used by teachers throughout the learning process with the purpose of modifying and adapting teaching and learning tasks to enhance the accomplishment of the learners' goals.

The data gathered from this research project carried out in ITSIM High School principally indicate that formative assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, therefore there is a strong need to be theoretically well-informed about research approaches in order to study how this sort of assessment is being accomplished through the lessons.

Keeping in mind the teaching and learning conditions of our educative context, a variety of activities based on essential principles of formative assessment have been suggested. Additionally, some recommendations towards an effective and meaningful learning process have been proposed as well.

Being communicatively competent has currently become a must for our foreign language students, consequently new approaches, methods and techniques are said to be considered within our high schools so the learners have a real-life chance to be successful foreign language users.

Key Words: Formative assessment, Meaningful Learning.

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CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

In this chapter relevant information about problem description, problem statement, the significance, the research questions, the objectives, delimitations and the situations that can be possible limitation to this research is presented.

Problem Description

In Colombia, one of the main problems to deal with teaching and learning might be that some teachers do not assess their students or if they assess them, they do it in a summative way. That means students' knowledge is measured with grades and some of the teachers are interested only in the right answers, not in the process that led to the right answer. In fact, when the word test is pronounced, then feelings of anxiety, nervousness and self-doubt appear; as a result tests are usually considered a torment by students. After that, they have to wait weeks before knowing the results they obtained. This situation is similar to the one described by Schohamy (1985) who conducted a survey and found a variety of misuses of tests: a) Tests were used as punishment—e.g., because no one did the homework. b) Tests are administered instead of teachers 'giving instruction. c) The tests were the only measure for grading. d) Tests did not reflect what was taught. e) The tests were returned with a lack of corrections or explanations. f) The tests reflected only one

testing method. g) There was a lack of teacher confidence in their tests. h) Students were not adequately trained to take the tests. i) There was a substantial delay in returning tests" (p.515). These results can be supported by identical situations observed in our schools and that has not changed. In the observations made in the institution chosen for this research, it was easily seen that some teachers do not even know how to create an appropriate test; consequently it can generate confusion and as consequence, students obtain low grades. Thus, learning and teaching processes are becoming simply a requirement, because teachers have to report and provide information about students' alleged academic achievement to educational authorities. Also, due to the "Ministerio de Educacion Nacional" (MEN) standards learners are required to get high grades in order to be promoted to the next level; in this way, tests are diminished into numbers instead of being a learning tool which motivates learners to study.

Problem Statement

What are the effects of applying formative assessment in an EFL class at ITSIM high school?

Significance

This research project is meaningful because it deals with an alternative to traditional assessment, which might be useful for all teachers, principally those who are working in EFL settings.

Taking into account that teaching and learning English is a whole process that requires the development and correct handling of all communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) thus, this study can provide teachers with contemporary information where those skills can be successfully assessed. Additionally, the relevance of this project lies on the fact that it proposes formative assessment as an option to assess students avoiding the misconception that there is only one way to assess, and teachers can learn that tests need not to be degrading, artificial and anxiety-provoking experiences.

Finally, it is significant that teachers and students are involved in the assessment process where the educational development of each student so as to enhance learning can be evaluated appropriately according to their knowledge. In some public institutions of our educational setting, it might seem that there is not sufficient information and documents concerning the assessment of a foreign language, so the relevance of this research project is evident because it deals with how students are being evaluated and then researchers can give some recommendation as well as suggestions where teachers can assess students according to different perspectives determining their strengths and weaknesses, and after that they might enhance assessment learning conditions for them and for their learners.

Research Questions

Taking into account the importance of the project, the researchers have come up with questions which can be necessary throughout the research process.

General Research Question

How does Formative Assessment affect the Learning process of EFL learners and the way teachers assess at ITSIM high school?

Sub Questions

1. Does the assessment process applied in EFL classes comply with the theoretical principles of assessment?

2. Do teachers and students know about formative assessment?

3. How do teachers include formative assessment in their English classes?

4. What is the attitude of teachers and students after applying formative assessment?

Objectives

After describing the research questions, it is relevant to expose the main and the specific objectives which guide this paper.

General Objective

To analyze what are the effects of applying formative assessment in English classes.

Specific Objectives

To explore the kind of assessment currently applied by teachers into the classroom.

To propose formative assessment as an alternative to help teachers enhance teaching and learning.

To describe students and teachers' perceptions after having contact with formative assessment.

Delimitations

Conceptual Delimitation

Assessment refers to a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement, (Brindley, G 2001, p.137). It is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student respond to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance, Brown H.D (2008).

Penny Ur (2006) claims that" the main purpose of formative assessment is to form: to enhance, not conclude a process". Indeed, Brown (2008) argues and completes that concept and says: Evaluating the students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process. The key to such formation is the delivery (by the teacher) and internalization (by the student) of appropriate feedback on performance, with an eye toward the future continuation (on formation) of learning. All kind of

informal assessment is formative. They have as their primary focus the ongoing development of the learner's language. The feedback is offered in order to improve learner's language ability.

Geographical Delimitation

The research was developed in a Public high school of Pasto city called "Instituto Técnico Superior Industrial Municipal" (ITSIM).

Chronological Delimitation

The research was developed in the second semester of 2012.

Population Delimitation

The age of the participants ranged between 11 and 17 years old from both genders, they were chosen at random. All of them currently belong to ITSIM high school.

Limitations

Since our topic has not been profusely studied in our setting, there is little information about it. In the resource center of the Linguistics and languages Department of the University of Nariño there is only one project related to assessment. One probable solution for this obstacle is to collect as much information as we can find in articles of professional journals such as FORUM, Modern Language Journal (MLJ), TESOL Journal and TESOL Quarterly. Also, there are some recognized books about assessment (Brown, 2008; Brindley, 2001 and among

others) which might contribute to this research. In addition, some information can also be found on internet resources such as websites and online publications.

It is possible that problems related to the collaboration from some authorities, administrators and teachers arise. To deal with this possible obstacle it is necessary to use ethical issues to demonstrate the relevance of this research project.

Another aspect is that the attitude of teachers and students could change when they feel that they are being observed or supervised, as result, the validity of the answers given by them in the surveys could be affected due to different factors such as: fear, lack of seriousness and objectivity. For that aspect, it is significant to show the importance of the study and explaining that our research is useful for enhancing teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Evaluation, Testing, Assessment theories and Formative Assessment

Theoretical framework

This section refers to and clarifies some important aspects such as evaluation, testing and assessment for giving support to this project. Equally important, this literature review provides better understanding of all previous concepts which are related to formative assessment for enhancing teaching and learning in EFL setting at ITSIM high school.

Evaluation, Test and Assessment

Taking into account the fact that evaluation, testing and assessment can be misunderstood concepts, we clarify the difference between them.
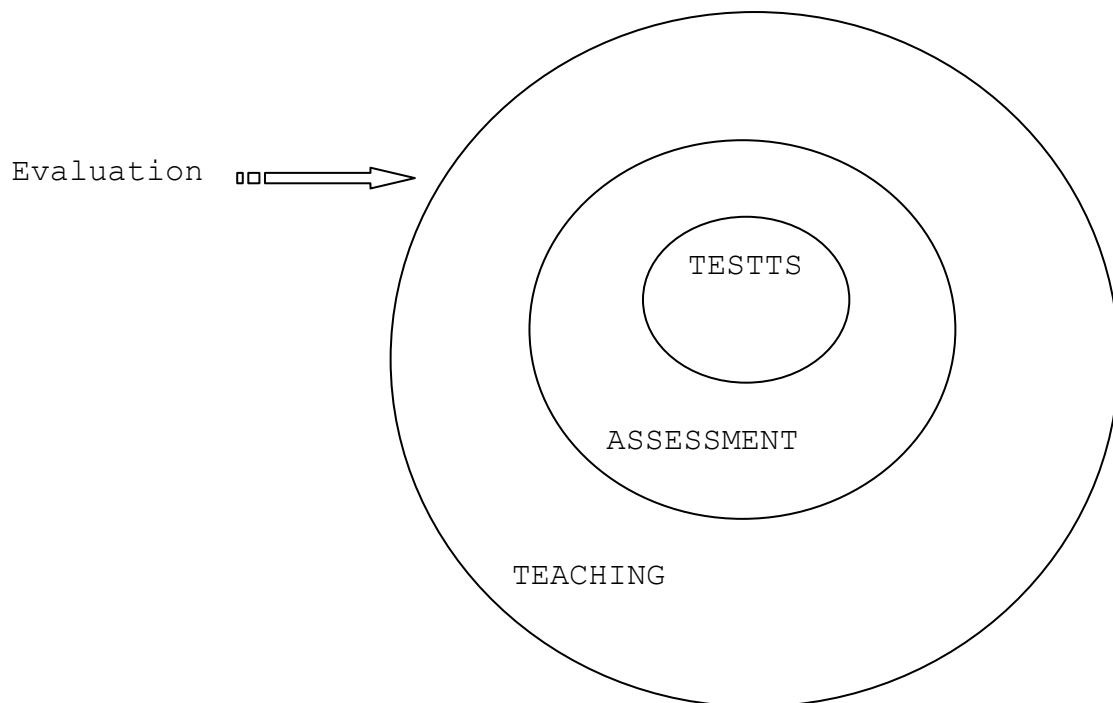
Evaluation ☐☐⟶

TESTTS

ASSESSMENT

TEACHING

Figure 1.1 Test, assessment and teaching.

Testing and assessment are often used interchangeably; the latter is an umbrella term encompassing measurement instruments administered on an "on-off" basis such as tests, as well as qualitative methods of monitoring and recording student learning such as observation, simulations or project work. Assessment is also distinguished from evaluation which is concerned with the overall language program and not just with what individual students have learnt.

Evaluation

Nunan, (1999) defined evaluation as the collecting information about aspects of the curriculum, which include teachers, learners and materials and the interpretation of the results to make decisions.

Test

It refers to the instrument or procedure designed to elicit performance from learners with the purpose of measuring their attainment of specified criteria. Tests are almost identifiable time periods in a curriculum when learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated. Tests can be useful devises among other procedures and tasks designed to assess students, (Brown, H.D 2001, p.401-402). In conclusion, it is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain (Brown, H.D 2008, p.3).

Assessment

Assessment Theories

Furthermore, it is remarkable to distinguish between formative assessment and summative assessment.

Formative assessment refers to the process followed by teachers during the learning development with the aim of using results to improve instruction (Brindley, G 2001, p.137).

Formative Assessment occurs when teachers feed information back to students in ways that enable the student to learn better, or when students can engage in a similar, self-reflective process. If the primary purpose of assessment is to support high-quality learning then formative assessment ought to be understood as the most important assessment practice.

Summative assessment is carried out at the end of a course, term or school year, often for purposes of providing aggregated information on program outcomes to educational authorities (Brindley, G, 2001 p.137).

Summative assessment aims to measure or summarize what a student has grasped. A summation of what a student has learned implies locking back and taking stock of how well that student has accomplished objectives, but does not necessarily point the way to future progress. As an illustration, final exams in a course and general proficiency exams are example of summative assessment (Brown, H.D 2008, p.6).

As has been said, formative assessment is different from summative assessment because the information obtained from a formative process is used to adapt the improvements instead of summarizing scholar grades. The principles of formative Assessment can be applied in the educative field and the politics of the education, determining the areas which have to be improved and supporting the constructive culture of assessment in the teaching systems. There are some studies which showed that formative assessment is one of the most effective strategies to increase the scholar performance. Also, it is significant to achieve a higher regularity of scholar results, in this manner, students can learn to learn.

In addition, it is very important to be familiar with terms such as:

Informal assessment, as Brown (2008) says: this kind of assessment starts with incidental, unplanned and comments and responses. Some examples include saying "Nice job!" "Good Work!" "Did you say *can* or *can't?*" "I think you meant to say you *broke* the glass, not you *break* the glass," or putting a ☺ on some work. The tasks for informal assessment should be the tasks designed to obtain performance without recording results and making judgments about a student's competence. Examples at this are marginal comments on papers, responding to a draft of an essay, advice about how to better pronounce a word, a suggestion

in all the aspects that the teacher contributes to improve learning.

Formal assessment is an exercise or experiences specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge, usually within a real constructed to give teacher and student and appraisal of student achievement" (Brown, H.D 2001, p. 402).

Proficiency assessment

This term refers to the assessment of general language abilities acquired by the learner independent of a course of study. This kind of assessment is often done through the administration of standardized commercial language-proficiency test. On the other hand, assessment of achievement aims to establish what student has learnt in relation to a particular course or curriculum", Brindley, G. (2001). "Achievement assessment may be either on the specific content of the course or on the course objectives", Hughes 1989, cited by Brindley, G. (2001).

Principles of language assessment

It is significant to know about assessment ruled by principles which are very vital in the process of applying formative assessment, after all, it may not have many complications to analyze what kind of assessment is applied by teachers and to only then try to identify if formative assessment is being applied at some extent.

Brown (2004) presents some principles for applying to any assessment task designed to assess any skill:

The Principle of practicality is visible in tests if they are not extremely expensive nor for the teacher neither for the students or institutions, it stays with time limits, it is easy to administer to a number of people and it has a scoring/evaluation procedure that is specific and time efficient for the teacher. Time is a crucial factor of practicality for busy teachers with too few hours a day.

Reliability is a reliable test or task which is consistent and dependable, that means that if you administer the test or task to the same students in different occasions, scores should be similar. Nevertheless, there exist several factors which may affect the reliability of a task, they are as follows:

Rater reliability refers to human error; subjectivity bias may enter into the scoring process.

Student-related reliability is noticeable when students' performance can be affected by fatigue, anxiety, illness or ineffective test-taking strategies.

Test administration reliability may also result from the conditions in which the test is administered. Some factors like noise, light, desks and chairs, the quality of the copies affect learners' performance as well.

Another assessment principle is validity which proposes the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment. A test or task measures what it is intended to measure, a valid test of reading ability actually measures reading ability and it is comprehensible, it has organized ideas. There are two types of validity:

Content validity occurs when a learner is asked to perform the behavior that is being measured (write in a writing test).Direct testing: the test-taker performing the target task. Indirect testing: Learners are not performing the task itself but rather a task that is related in some way.

Face validity is showed when learners perceive assessment as fair, relevant and useful for improving learning since it is organized, contains familiar tasks, is feasible with time limit, directions clear and tasks relate to course work, (Gronlund,1998). Students perceive the test to be valid.

The next principle is defined by Bachman and Palmer (1996, p.23) as Authenticity. They describe it as the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task. The test or task is related to the characteristics of a real-life task. It can be achieved if the language is natural, items are contextualized, and topics are meaningful for learners and likely to happen

outside the classroom. Authentic assessment also means giving clear directions and parameters.

Finally, Washback is the effect of assessment on teaching and learning process (Hughes, 2003). Washback enhances principles of language acquisition like: intrinsic motivation, autonomy, self-confidence, language-ego, 27 inter-language and strategic investment.

Formative Assessment: What Do Teachers Need to Know and Do?

Elements of Formative Assessment

There are four important elements of formative assessment: 1) identifying the "gap", 2) feedback, 3) Student involvement, and 4) learning progressions. Teachers need to have a clear understanding of each of these elements.

Identifying the Gap

In a seminal paper in 1989, Sadler established the essential purpose of formative assessment as the means to identify the gap between a student's current status in learning and some desired educational goal. He stressed that this gap may vary from student to student and spelled out the consequence for pedagogy: "If the gap is perceived as too large by a student, the goal may be unachievable, resulting in a sense of failure and discouragement on the part of the student. Similarly, if the gap is perceived as too 'small,' closing it might not be worth any individual effort.

Educational psychologists call this "just right gap" the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Originating with Lev Vygotsky's still-influential formulation, the ZPD is defined as the distance between what the child can accomplish during independent problem solving and the level of problem solving that can be accomplished under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with a more expert peer. The teacher's task is to identify and build on immature but maturing structures and, through collaboration and guidance, to facilitate cognitive growth. In the process, the child internalizes the resources required for solving a particular problem, and these resources become part of the child's independent developmental achievement.

Feedback

Formative assessment is designed to provide feedback at multiple levels. First, it provides feedback to the teacher about current levels of student understanding. This feedback process also informs what the next steps in learning should be.

Additionally, feedback is central to guiding students through their own next steps. Effective feedback from teachers provides clear, descriptive, criterion-based information that indicates to the students where they are in a learning progression, how their understanding differs from the desired learning goal, and how they can move forward. The teacher takes steps to close the gap between the students' current learning and

the goal by modifying instruction, assessing again to give further information about learning, modifying instruction again, and so on. In formative assessment, learners must be able to use feedback to improve their learning. Another important aspect of the relationship between feedback and learning is that feedback has a strong effect on students' motivation and their sense of self-efficacy and progress.

Student Involvement

Improving learning through formative assessment also depends on the active involvement of students in their own assessment. In formative assessment, students learn the skills of self and peer assessment so that, as Sadler suggests, they collaborate with their teachers in developing a shared understanding of their current learning status and what they need to do to move forward in their learning. In doing so, they are using meta-cognitive processes. They also develop self-regulation strategies and are able to adapt their learning plans to meet their own learning needs. Students must also collaborate with their teachers to determine the criteria for success for each step along the learning progression.

Learning Progressions

If formative assessment is to provide guidance to teachers and students, it must be attached to a learning progression. The learning progression should clearly articulate the sub-goals that

constitute progress on the way to the ultimate goal. Most state standards, by themselves, do not provide a clear progression for understanding where students are relative to desired goals. In fact, many state standards do not even provide a clear picture of what learning is expected. Developing learning progressions toward standards is a critical element of formative assessment. Learning progressions provide the big picture of what is to be learned, and they help teachers locate students' current learning status on the continuum along which students are expected to progress.

Students also need to have short-term goals, which are derived from the learning progression and described in terms of success criteria. Success criteria are the guide to learning while the student is engaged in the learning tasks. The success criteria provide the framework within which formative assessment takes place and make possible the interpretation of evidence.

Assessing in a Formative Way

During the learning process, the term "Formative Assessment" refers to all the processes used by teachers allocating and adapting their didactic process to the progresses and needs of learning which are observed in their students. Also, this term, respond to the conception of teaching which considers learning as a long process where students reorganize their ideas to learn according the activities which have been carried on from their

school. Then, if a student does not learn, is not only he/she does not study or he/she does not have the minimal abilities to acquire knowledge, but also they can be motivated with the activities proposed by teachers. So, this kind of assessment has a regulatory function in Teaching and Learning process to make feasible the means of education and responds to the characteristics of each student. In this way, "Formative Assessment", pretends to identify which are the weaknesses of learning and not too much the results (grades) gotten by the knowledge acquired.

On the other hand, according to the cognitive part, formative assessment focuses on the strategies used to find determined results according to mental representations of the students, so that the mistakes made by them will be studied to diagnose difficulties and after that, to create new strategies for helping to reinforce student's knowledge. Also, it is important to be aware of some aspects where students have been successful in learning, in this way they will be motivated enough to continue education.

Formative assessment for enhancing learning in secondary classrooms.

Assessment is an integral part of Educative process. The common evaluations are designed in a summative way, on that account, teachers assess with exams what students have learnt in

a manner of attributing to the schools, the responsibility of students' performance. But, it is relevant teachers can measure student's knowledge with formative assessment which consists to evaluate students' understanding and progress in a frequent and interactive method. In this way, teachers can regulate their programs in a better way to gratify their educative needs. In formative assessment, students are active participants with their teachers, sharing learning goals and understanding how their learning is progressing, what next steps they need to take, and how to take them.

Benefits of Formative Assessments for Teachers

Boston (2002) says, in simple terms, there are benefits for both teachers and students:

Teachers are able to determine what standards students already know and to what degree. Teachers can decide what minor modifications or major changes in instruction they need to make so that all students can succeed in upcoming instruction and on subsequent assessments.

Teachers can create appropriate lessons and activities for groups of learners or individual students.

Teachers can inform students about their current progress in order to help them, set goals for improvement.

In 2008, Katy Bainbridge began to work on Align Assess Achieve, a method of teaching formative assessment to administrators and teachers.

Benefits of Formative Assessments for Students

Not only do teacher benefit from adopting formative assessment but also and more importantly students, who are said to be the center and core of the teaching and learning process. Those mentioned benefits are:

Students are more motivated to learn.

Students take responsibility for their own learning.

Students become users of assessment.

Students learn valuable lifelong skills such as self-evaluation, self-assessment, and goal setting.

CHAPTER III   THE RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, readers are provided with all the information related to the research method such as the instruments applied to collect the data, participants, sample, procedure, validation criteria and the instruments applied to collect the data.

Research Paradigms

This study is associated with the qualitative research which can be defined as the study of the social and human phenomena with the purpose of getting their comprehension, interpretation or transformation. This way, the qualitative research uses a methodology which facilitates the systematic collection of data, and also a rigorous, detailed and contextual description of the facts by guarantying the maximum inter-subjectivity in its analysis and interpretation.

Research techniques

Observation

The observation is a helpful technique that involves the direct observation of teacher's assessment process. Also, it helps to the researchers to collect data which is analyzed inside the English classes.

Questionnaire

It is a technique that has a series of specific questions, open or closed about a determined aspect of the teaching and

learning process, with the aim of getting wide and rich information that can be analyzed and quantified with major subjectivity (Bastidas,2002).

Participants, Setting and Sample

Participants

As this study is focused on Formative Assessment for enhancing teaching and learning, the population was basically consist of English teachers of one high schools of Pasto, regarding students and teachers of any English class.

Sample

Taking into account the topic is a whole, the part of the population chosen as a sample will be: students and teachers, chosen randomly of sixth and eleventh course of English classes from ITSIM public high school.

Pilot Study

It has the purpose of reviewing and complementing the data collection techniques such as:

Procedure

First of all, before starting developing the data collection process, the ethical issues must have the priority such as sending some letters to the high school principal, coordinators and teachers for getting permission to carry out this process of research in their facilities. Then, the design and elaboration of the data collection instruments such as questionnaires and

observations will be the focus of attention. Once they are completed, the next step will be to go to the high school in order to apply them to the population for their respective analysis. After that, the analysis of the data collection instruments will be the main concern. Once the analysis is finished and the results are the expected, the ethical issues will appear again by means of a letter in which it will be expressed the thankfulness for having permitted to carry out the research process in the high schools and for having been part of the study as teachers, principal, coordinators and other members of the educative setting.

Validation Criteria

Validity consists of measuring and gathering information related to the purpose of the research. Besides, the instruments of data collection must be connected to the information that we want to obtain from the participants. It is important to ask the participants for the data needed by offering and applying them the correct instruments for those data.

Generalization with this criterion, the researcher attempts to generalize the results taken from the sample to the population. It is a key point at the moment of relating the sample findings to the participants.

Qualitative criteria

Taking into account observations and questionnaires are going to be compared, we use triangulation as a criterion of validation for our research project, so it is relevant to clarify the idea of this concept.

Triangulation consists of using two or more elements such as techniques, paradigms, data, informants or theories to obtain credibility of the results. They are different points of views from which the results are judged. This criterion is relevant because the data will be obtained from different observing positions.

Ethical Issues

Getting permission is necessary to get the approval to carry out the research process in the high school chosen. For this aim, the best way to ask for the permission is to send some letters to the people involved in the study, namely, the high school principal, the coordinators, the teachers and the family parents by informing them about the study.

Participation on behalf of those involved in this research process must be voluntary and consequently there must not be any pressure on the participants to be part of it, that is, their involvement must be result of their own willingness to collaborate with the study. Before starting the research process, it is indispensable to ask the participants orally or

through a letter if they are not forced to be implicated in the

study and whether they want to be part of it or not.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter aims to depict all the information collected about six observations based on Flanders' FIAC system whose acronym means: "Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories". This system was intended to be used while the teaching was actually in progress. Flanders' system consist of ten categories, seven are used to categorize aspects of teacher talk and two are used to categorize pupil talk, leading the observers capture and record classroom observation that generate clear understanding about the research process. Furthermore, questionnaires were designed for five teachers and five students; there had open-ended and closed-ended questions. In order to analyze and confront the answers given by teachers and students, it was necessary to interpret each question, using triangulation for validation criteria.

Classroom Observation analysis

Classroom observation helps to clarify how teachers are assessing their pupils, and if they feed information back to them for a better learning, taking into account this is an important aspect of formative assessment which is designed to provide feedback at multiple levels, resulting beneficial for both, teachers and students, because the information gathered , provides clear, descriptive, criterion-based data that indicates to the students where they are in a learning process, how their understanding differs from the desired learning goal, and how

they can move forward. Therefore, the teacher can achieve the
goal by modifying instruction, assessing again to give further
information about learning, and so on. Another important issue of
the relationship between feedback and learning is that the first
one has a strong effect on students' motivation and their sense
of self-efficacy.

   Besides, the information collected with the observations
was used to make comparisons with the results of the surveys.

   The observation guide was applied to some English teachers
chosen randomly who were in charge of seventh and tenth grades at
ITSIM high school. Both groups were observed by the researchers
conducting this study. The observers carried out six observations
considering the aspects included in the observation guide. It is
significant to allow for that the observations have two
processes. In the first observations, the teachers chosen seemed
not to have a clear concept about what formative assessment
really was. Then, later observations allowed observers draw
conclusions about the study. Observation guides were gathered to
do the respective analysis.

   Thus, the analysis of the observations is presented below,
where the students and teachers' attitudes will be discussed
next.

Observation 1
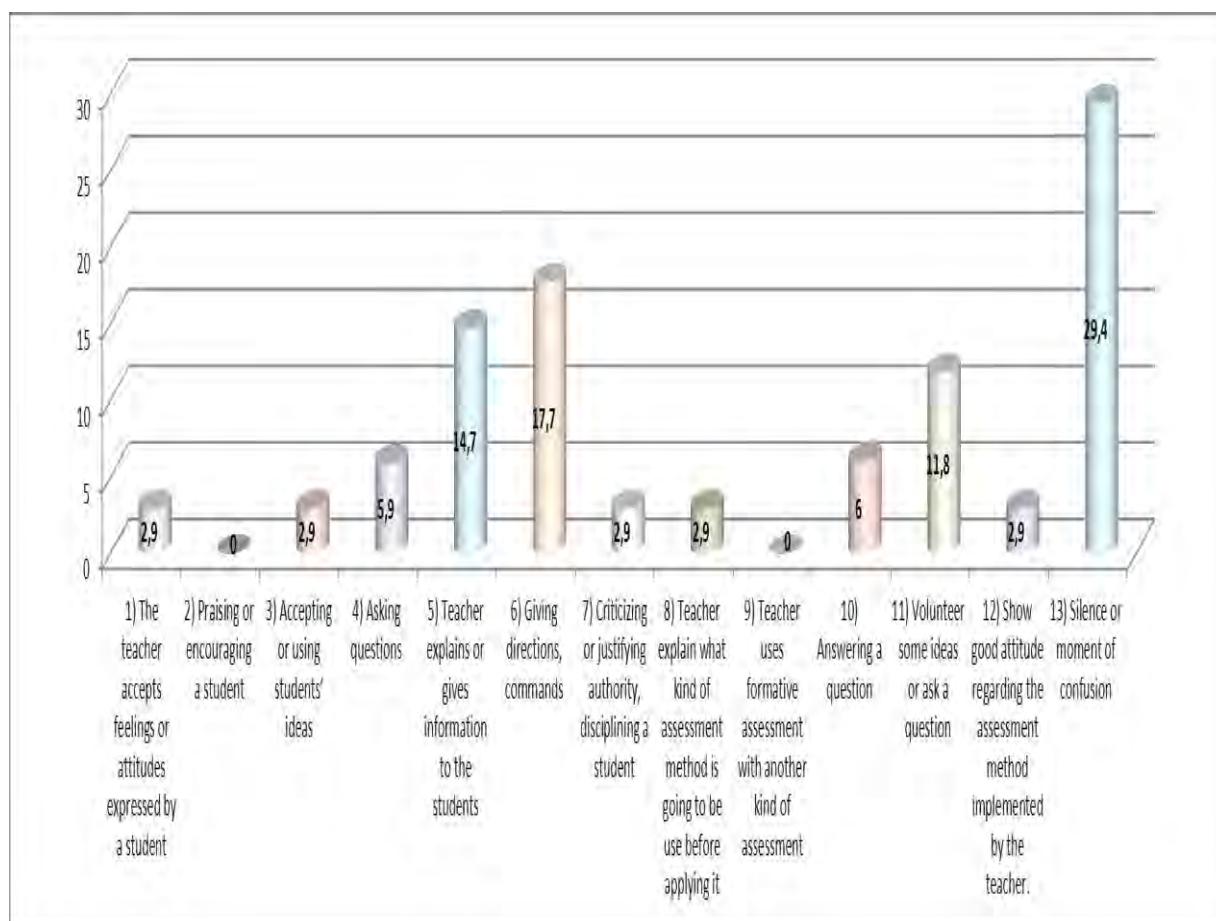
Graphic 1 Classroom Observation

This observation was carried out in the English computer room; at first, the teacher greeted the students and presented the tasks and activities for that lesson. The L2 class lasted two hours and it was completely conducted in Spanish. Given that the teacher's tone of voice was low and there was a plenty of noise in the classroom, it was evident that the teacher had little control of students and classroom management was no effective. The computers were rather obsolete and the room conditions were

not suitable for students to work comfortably in. The room was dark and reduced. Furthermore, there were wall charts in English, but unfortunately, the phrases displayed transliteration and translation into Spanish which rendered them less effective as a way to provide students with input in the L2.

When the teacher used English Discoveries (an educational software) in order to introduce the simple past tense, it was observed that students were not engaged with the activity. Even though the activity of copying in their notebooks was designed as an assessment task, students seemed uninterested one wonders if copying something is an effective assessment task to develop or measure communicative competence in an L2.

Additionally, and taking into account that they are adolescents and they are really keen on technology, we can say that the software English Discoveries Network was not attractive to them at all. Tasks were neither challenging, nor engaging and they were not framed within a bigger framework or connected to clear communicative goals within the syllabus.

In conclusion, a huge drawback was evident; the whole lesson was conducted in Spanish. Also, there was little teacher-student or student-student interaction, formative assessment could have not been carried out by the teacher because the activity of copying and writing in their notebooks made little sense and the students' oral production was scarce. The attitudes and tasks

observed are opposed to one of the principles of language
assessment (practicality) because students just were wasting time
and that is completely impractical. So, students were not
interacting with the program, due to the software misuse and
limited instructions by the teacher. In this situation it was
necessary to have control over class size (four students per
computer), dividing the group in two parts. In this way, a pair
of students faces the software's activities taking into account
the verbal tense which was introduced; meanwhile the other group
develops a filling gap (present tense) activity.
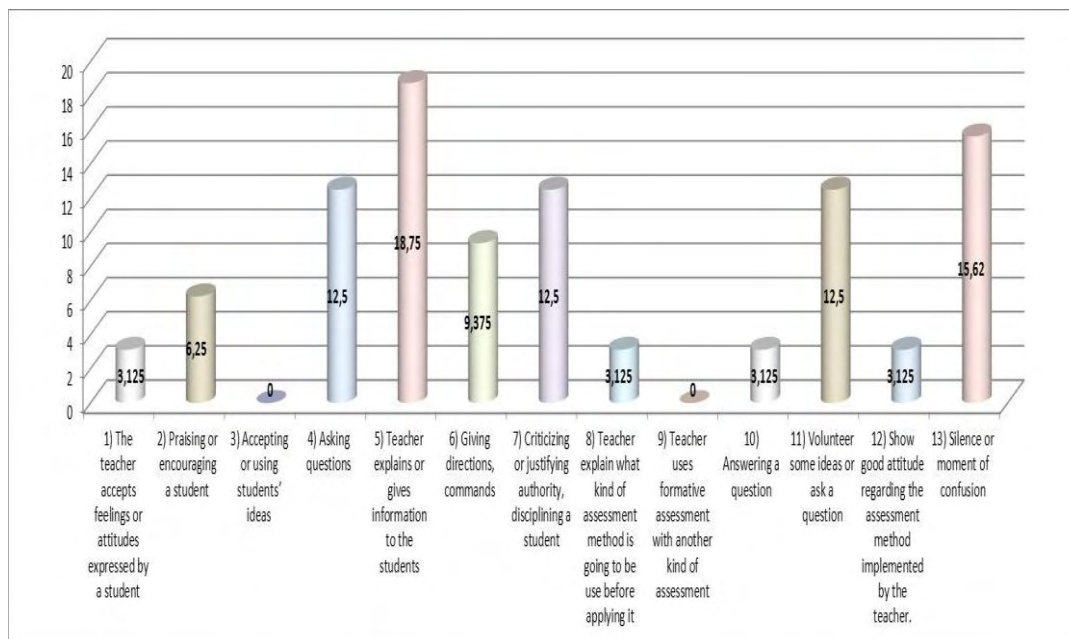
Observation 2
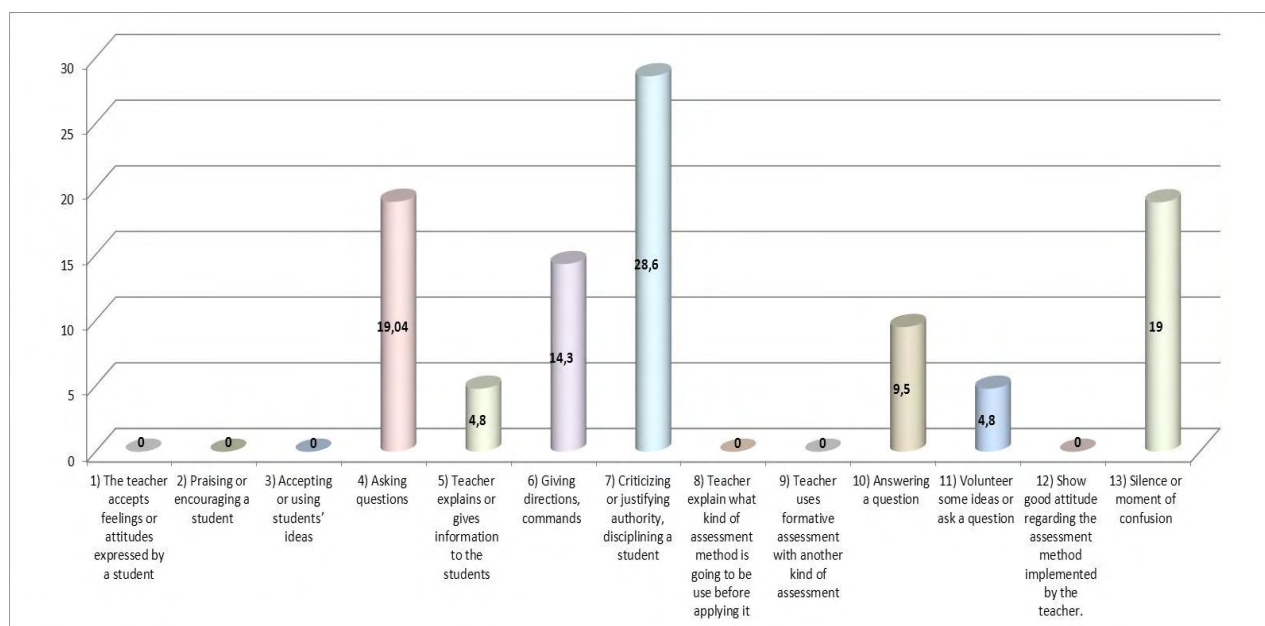
Graphic 2 Classroom observation

In this session, the teacher gave the students back an
evaluation on the future tense. It seemed to be a complex and
confusing one because of the students' complaints. The teacher

refused to explain what happened and he just confirmed the grades. Again, an assessment principle, washback, was neglected. Then the teacher simply began the class presenting a new topic, and students tried to pay attention and copy all the grammar information which was written on the board. In the middle of the class, the teacher copied on the board a written exercise to be developed in classes. The students tried to do the exercise and it was evident that they were afraid of asking for explanation, so, they did the exercises by themselves. When the lesson was over, the teacher collected all the exercises and announced an exam for next class, and then students handed in the exercises as quickly as they could, in order to get a grade. Finally, they left the classroom for a break.

It is relevant to take into account that most of the class was conducted in Spanish and the teacher's instructions were not clear enough to do the exercise properly. This, as Brown (2004) suggests, can affect the students' performance and their grades. In addition, it was easily perceived that unfortunately there was little exposure to the target language on behalf of the learners.

It is highly suggested that the teacher conducts a brief discussion on the tests handed out and the mistakes made by students in order to clarify some doubts; this way the students might know what they did wrong to avoid repeating it and assessment would truly be a way to learn.

Observation 3

Graphic 3 Classroom observation

The next observation was developed with the group previously analyzed, so teacher began the lesson by organizing students separately in order to do an exam, so that they could not cheat. They took out a sheet of paper and waited for the teacher's commands. After that, the teacher began to copy five exercises on the board and waited until students finished re-writing them on their papers. In addition, the teacher translated into Spanish what students had to develop in their test.

When comparing the previous situation to the principles of language assessment, it could be effortlessly inferred that the teacher lacks practicality because of time poorly used in writing the whole test on the board.

Conversely, assessment principles state that a test has to be easy to administer to a number of people as well as displaying a specific scoring/evaluation procedure, also the assessment principles claim that the teacher must spend time efficiently since it is a crucial factor of practicality. In conclusion, the teacher spent the little available time poorly and practicality was never seen throughout the lesson. It can also be mentioned that this type of assessment also lacks authenticity since the type of output students have to produce has no application to real life. This task did not seem to contribute to expanding the learners' knowledge or to make them use their grammatical knowledge in a productive way.
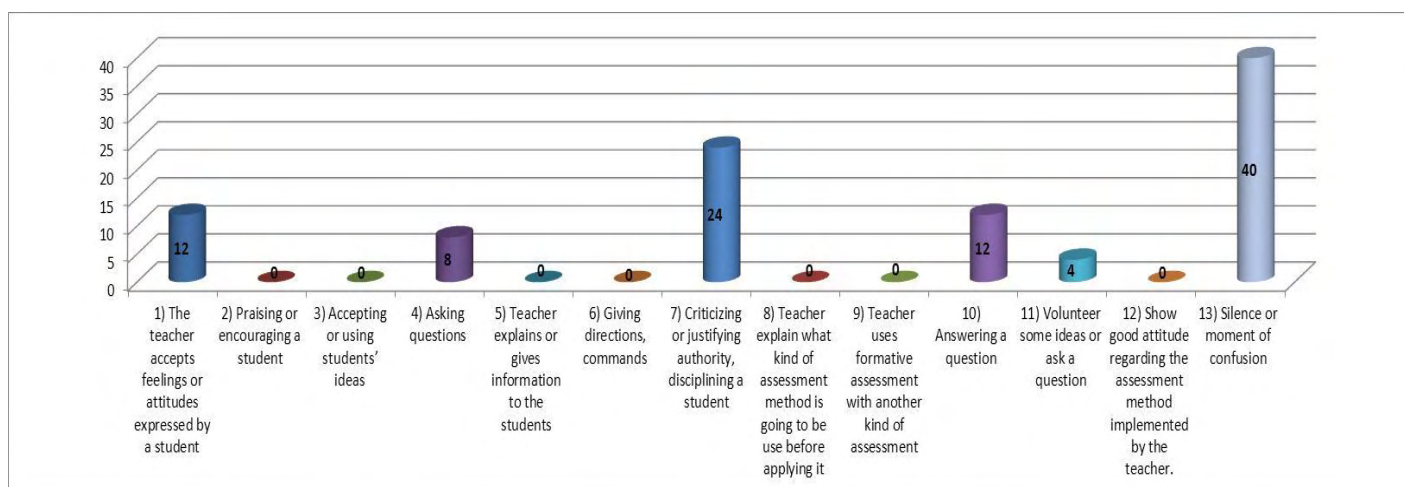
Observation 4
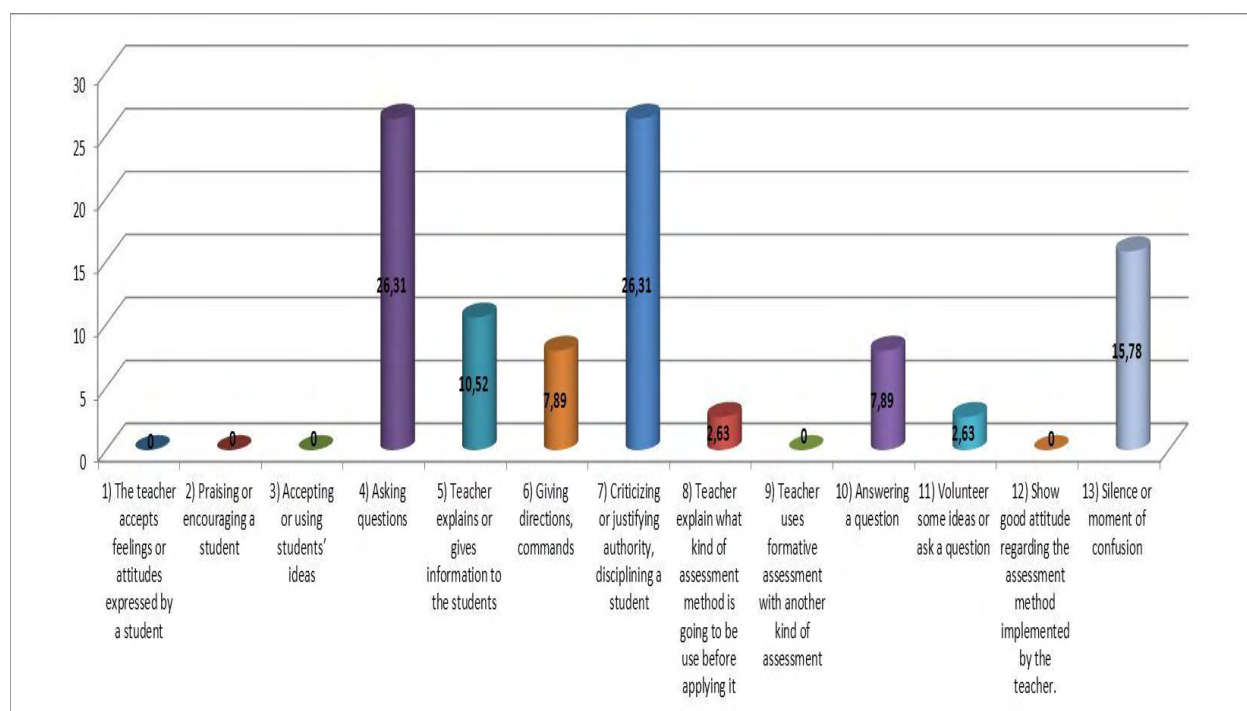
Graphic 4 Classroom observation

This time, the teacher came into the classroom and students were still out of control and hyperactive, so he tried to control them by threatening with low grades. Although this strategy worked, it could be said that it is not something that teachers should do. Assessment should not be a weapon to threaten students or to force them to behave in a certain way. Behavior and performance in the L2 are two different things that should not be mixed. The class continued and the teacher moved on to explaining the numbers. One of the students claimed that that topic had already been introduced. The teacher responded in a rudely and inappropriately to the student's comment and he moved on with the topic. In fact, he did not even know the students' names so he addressed to them by using nicknames. This evidently goes against the existing theory regarding classroom management, since a teacher should never be disrespectful with students. Using last names, nicknames, numbers or making any kind of reference to a person's features or physical appearance is not acceptable at all. This is a shocking and improper behavior on the part of the teacher, especially if we consider that the teacher is working with teenagers and at this age, they have fragile egos and therefore their self-esteem may be seriously touched. From this experience, it is possible to confirm sadly that most teachers do not take into account the students' ideas and lack an adequate and ethical behavior towards them.

A few minutes later, some students wanted to know their grades for the previous tests and teacher replied that he had not finished marking all the exams yet and he tried to avoid them by introducing "Modal Verbs", it was evident students felt upset and they did not pay attention to what the teacher was saying.

This suggests that the teacher is not aware of assessment principles and is not even interested in encouraging them in the classroom. We might mention specifically that there is an issue on rater reliability which suggests that grading may not be as objective as it should be. Subjectivity bias may enter into the scoring process. Another problem could be the lack of experience and preconceptions such as when a teacher labels students as a competent enough one or not. In this case, using nicknames and failing to hand in tests and grades when appropriate turns assessment into something that does not contribute to learning or to the progress of students. Also, it was evident that tests designed by the teacher were impractical because he took too much time to grade them, so the effect of washback was lost.

(See appendix 4- Observation format)

Graphic 4 Classroom observation

Observation 5

Students had to carry out a presentation explaining what they had reviewed in last class: Present Perfect Tense. There was a lot of noise because the presenters were not ready at all, and the teacher just sat without telling students to be quiet or organized. Again, a clear lack of classroom management was evident and the principle of reliability was violated. If the conditions for assessment are not the best, if there is noise, lack of lighting, lack of organization or unclear directions, then the grades derived from that assessment task are not reliable. This was not an adequate environment for the presentations and the task itself was not the best. Presenting about grammar does not contribute directly to developing the students' communicative skills and it was not a task that students found appealing. So, we can also say that the assessment

task lacked face-validity. After some minutes, five students in charge of the presentation began their presentation using Spanish as a language for clarifying grammar, they did it reading from the wall charts that they had previously made. They showed plenty of confusion and nervousness while the teacher only tried to listen to what students were saying about the verbal tense they wanted to reinforce. The other students did not pay attention.

The presentation ended and the teacher told to the explainers that it was not a really good presentation and their final grade was 3.0.

The observers were surprised because of the teacher's attitude. It was clear, teacher did not know how students had to be assessed or he had a wrong concept about what formative assessment means. There was not feedback between teacher and students, so they ignored what they needed to improve and they were not sure about why they had obtained 3.0 as their mark.

Researchers also perceived that, one of the most important elements of formative assessment, reliability was limited. The teacher failed to identify the "gap". If he had made the effort to do this, he could have provided suitable support to help student progress, to clarify their doubts and to make them see what they needed to learn. Thus, the learning purpose could have been achieved.

Observation 6

The final observation coincided with the final activities demanded by English teacher at the end of the term. Some days before, students had handed in a written report or essay about what they had learnt throughout the course. Then, the teacher came into the classroom to hand out the assessed paper and he did not provide any explanation about them and he just left the room. Students could notice that people who wrote more words obtained a higher mark, and they felt completely upset about their marks. Some of them wanted to ask the teacher what were their mistakes and others complained since they were aware that their short reports were better written than the long ones. Again, there was no washback and the fact that students realized that the teacher had graded the essays considering only the number of words made the task lose completely the face validity. It can be said that the teacher's attitude also contributed to the lack of face validity. Some teachers may think that not interacting with learners or refusing to explain their criteria for grading makes students respect them when it is the opposite. We could observe that learners were disappointed on their teacher and they felt he did not respect their work.

Concerning the previous information, it is possible to determine that students did not feel comfortable with the method through which they were assessed. The lack of feedback

constrains the learning progression and teacher must make sure to focus on quality rather than quantity or at least to clarify criteria before the assessment task is applied.

The analysis of our observations is overall negative. Assessment is an aspect of teaching and learning that should be planned, that should have a rationale behind it; that should serve the purpose of learning; that students should perceive as something they need to do in order to learn. None of this happened during our observations of assessment tasks. Assessment seemed unplanned and the teacher seemed to lack any assessment criteria to apply in each of the tasks. Unfortunately assessment was used as a way to threaten students, as a weapon to keep them quiet or as an activity that had to be done, but which lack any meaningfulness.

Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

In this analysis it the perceptions about formative assessment exposed by five teachers are presented. The questionnaire contained four open questions and eight closed-ended questions, which led the observers to make comparisons between the teachers' perspective, the theoretical background used and reality.

The first question was: Can you write what you understand about Formative Assessment?

The first teacher answered: "It implies an Integral assessment" what was complemented with the answer of the second one: "Well, I can say that formative assessment is the one that is focused on assessing, not only quantitative evaluation, but also activities that help to develop skills and formation" and the other three teachers agree to motivate students and giving them the freedom to express their ideas. Those teachers answered on this way:

A:"Hacerles caer en cuenta de lo bien o mal que han hecho la evaluación."

B: "La evaluación formativa es observar en los estudiantes, situaciones, el por qué no se motivan con más entusiasmo y hacerles entender que pueden ellos expresar lo que sienten en otra lengua"

C: "Este concepto trata sobre un tipo de evaluación que brinda a los estudiantes la capacidad de pensar y crear a través de ciertos estándares que permiten una formación más eficaz y en donde el estudiante demuestra creatividad"

    After reading the statements, it is important to appreciate the ideas of the teachers, because to some extent they have some sense of what formative assessment is. Indeed, Brown (2008) defines it like this: evaluating the students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process. Taking into account the previous opinions and what the author says, it is important to suggest that teachers and students work together to identify strengths and weaknesses in the process of assessing to support the acquisitions of language.

    On the second question: Do you consider Formative Assessment a good alternative to evaluate students?

    This question was divided into two positions, and then, two teachers answer the following:

Teacher 1: "Yes, of course, because it takes into account the qualities related to the development of skills, for example, how to make something or the research related to any topic."

Teacher 2: "Si considero que es importante porque ella puede crear y exponer lo que ellos verdaderamente han aprendido"

They agree with the position of Cummings (2012) who expresses that a teacher engages in assessment in a variety of ways, as captured in the following questions: what is the mood of students as they enter to the classroom? How attentive do they seem today? What do they remember about this topic from yesterday or from last week? Are students ready for the upcoming test? How can students support each other in the learning process? Lately students and teachers engage to monitor learning and to inform future instruction; in fact it has been shown to have a positive impact on student learning.

Certainly, the observations made by teachers in their classes allow them to organize and modify the class according to the students' proficiency.

On the contrary, there were three teachers that claimed to use formative assessment was not a good idea, because of the setting and students' attitude, giving answers like these: Teacher 3: "In this institution is very hard and difficult because the students don't have criteria to do it; they are not serious in their answers or assessment" and teacher 4: "La evaluación formativa me parece muy importante, lastima que el estudiante no le dé la importancia que esta requiere"

These opinions point out the teacher does not trust their students, due to the fact that there is little confidence and poor engaged work between student and teacher.

Finally, another teacher claims: "No, porque la evaluación debe permitir al estudiante y al profesor observar en qué nivel académico se encuentra, en este contexto vemos que la mayoría del estudiantado lo hace por pasar logros que el colegio implanta y no por aprender y ser eficaz en Inglés"

The idea of this teacher seemed to be blurry because he mentioned the fact that students and teachers need observation in their learning progress which is attributed to formative assessment, despite of that idea, he thought formative assessment is not a good alternative to evaluate, so he contradicted himself. Taking into account the main purpose as a teacher is to assist his/her learners in their learning process by means of feedback and if formative assessment is to provide guidance to teachers and students, it must be linked to a learning progression.

Moving on the third question: In which ways do you think Formative Assessment has to be applied?

For this question two teachers agree that formative assessment has to be applied "when students work into groups", what is a valid answer and can be supported with The National Forum on Assessment (1995) that suggests the assessment systems include opportunities for both individual and group work. Listening in on student partners or small-group conversations allows the teacher to quickly identify problems or

misconceptions, which he can address immediately. Often, the
opportunity to work with others before working on their own leads
students toward mastery. The group assessment process is part of
the learning; although it will be most useful if the teacher
provides some feedback to the learner, perhaps in the form of a
brief comment or, with a brief verbal explanation about what each
symbol indicates (*You have mastered the skill*, *You need more
practice,* etc.).

The other teachers answered: "Debe ser aplicada para que el
estudiante tome conciencia tanto del material como también del
estudio" and "For example: the application of the topics using
same strategies." They expressed their ideas in a general
perspective, the first teacher states that the goal of formative
assessment is to guide students toward the development of their
own "learning to learn" skills (also sometimes referred to as
"metacognitive" strategies). Students are thus equipped with
their own language and tools for learning and are more likely to
transfer and apply these skills for problem solving into daily
life; they strengthen their ability to find answers or develop
strategies for addressing problems with which they are not
familiar. In other words, they develop strong "control"
strategies for their own learning.

"Metacognition" involves awareness of how one goes about learning and thinking about new subject matter and is sometimes referred to as "thinking about thinking". The student who has an awareness of how he or she learns is better able to set goals, develop a variety of learning strategies, and control and evaluate his or her own learning process.

Teacher strategies are essential for effective self-regulation of learning because they help students to adapt their learning to particular features of the task on which they are working. Schools may need to give more explicit attention to allowing students to manage and control their learning in order to help them all to develop effective strategies, not only to support their learning at school but also to help them with the tools to manage their learning later in life". (OECD, 2001, p. 110)

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, motivation has to be present in every moment of the class, and then students learn how to analyze their progress and make use of strategies that empower their learning.

Unfortunately, when the researchers compared what they observed with the teachers' answers, it was noticed that what the teachers regard as relevant and what they actually do in the classroom differed considerably. The teachers' answers also

tended to suggest that when a lesson does not develop as expected is mainly due to the learners, and that is not the case. Assessment needs to be planned even before the term starts and consequently classroom management needs preparation as well. Having a classroom where things work properly and where assessment is perceived as something valuable to foster learning, does not happen by accident. Teachers need to become aware of this and start planning more, so better results are obtained gradually.

Finally the fourth open question was: Which assessment tasks do you use to assess learners' skills?

Teachers answered, this way: teacher 1: "When students WORK looking at a same horizon - for example theme: how to make tools". They help each other and present the work. He made reference about cooperative learning which is correct and is an specific issue of formative assessment.

Teacher 2 and 3: "For example: "Learn to sing a song" in which they learn vocabulary in an easy way "and "Lecturas, canciones, coplas, exámenes escritos, orales, descripciones de lo que les rodea". They go along with teaching and learning English is a whole process that requires the development and correct handling of all communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). On the other hand, teacher 4 said: "Dialogar con los

estudiantes" that means, a classroom environment in which teachers and students are partners in learning. Teachers must assist students in the development of metacognitive thinking about their own learning. This enables students to take responsibility for learning and evaluating their own progress in the learning process.

In particular, the teacher in a classroom that applies formative assessment must give up some control and encourage students to participate in developing learning goals and outcomes.

Recurrently, although the teachers have a general idea about assessment tasks, it is important to mention that any teaching task can become an assessment task. Given that teachers plan and organize the task and create a grid or a set of clear parameters, any teaching activity can be used to get grades and to measure the progress of learners. In fact, inside alternative assessment it is desirable to create assessment tasks that can be carried out as learning activities and that help teachers make the most out of the limited time they have for instruction at public institutions in Pasto. For example, the presentations students did about grammar, which nobody paid attention to, and which had no clear parameters for grading, could be replaced with an oral assessment task such as those suggested by Brown (2008).Students

can be asked to do short presentations about themselves,
presentations that may last 2 or 3 minutes and that might be used
to assess different aspects of oral production such as
pronunciation, vocabulary use, fluency or grammar accuracy. This
could give teachers the chance to listen to each student
producing something in the L2 and to start each class with two or
three students doing their presentations. That way, the teacher
would reduce the classroom management problems that were observed
when learners were doing long, uninteresting presentations in
Spanish that were scheduled to give them a grade in the English
class.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

After having collected and analyzed all the information gathered in observations and questionnaires, it can be concluded that:

Assessment in ITSIM High school was based on MEN's standards which is reflected on the teacher's attitude in the way they evaluated students and reported grades. As a result of this, the assessment process was absolutely summative. It is perceived that the most visible assessment tasks are summative and those are used to measure what students have learnt at the end of a term in order to promote students and to ensure they have met and required standards on the way to earning certification for school completion or to enter certain occupations, or as a method for selecting students to get into further education which has been the methodology of education in our country. However, observations allowed us to conclude that assessment is not a carefully planned process and teachers do not consider that assessment is a crucial part of teaching and learning.

The experienced difficulties to implement formative assessment led to the following situations: the tension between new ideas from the researchers and the traditional institution methodology which was the use of summative tests. The information gathered in the research project was seen as irrelevant or

unhelpful to some of the teachers. However, it is considered appropriated to share our ideas, views and suggestions about it, by means of socializing the importance of giving feedback to students for a better learning process. The fact that some teachers currently disagree with the theoretical background behind assessment, does not mean that all the ideas need to be dismissed. Students would benefit from a change in the way assessment is carried out in schools and teachers may actually see a gradual progress in L2 learning. Additionally, it is advisable for teachers and administrators to find out about current assessment in second language learning and begin to regard it as a process and not as something that must be done once in a while because it is mandatory. Teachers also need to connect assessment tasks to learning activities so that the surprise factor is eliminated from assessment and students can do their best without biases.

Teachers need to work also on their classroom management skills. If assessment is going to be effective, it needs to be carried out in an environment where students know that they will be treated fairly, where students know that their grades will not be affected by the teacher's subjectivity or preconceptions against them. Face validity and reliability are principles that need to be strongly developed inside formative assessment.

Once the information about formative assessment is shared with the institution including teachers, students and some administrators, it is expected that formative assessment principles are initiated and included. The information on students might generate new knowledge on what really works and why, share their knowledge with colleagues, and build their ability to address a greater range of their students' learning needs.

One positive conclusion after giving some formative assessment activities was evident in student's motivation and self-confidence. Also, the teacher could think about student's learning process, being both involved in a mutual interaction which pretended to correct mistakes as well as reinforcing their weaknesses. (see appendix # 3)

Formative assessment was an improved alternative in the process of learning in students from ITSIM high school. Teachers and their students could notice there were better outcomes after applying tests due to the feedback benefits obtained and thus a better understanding on behalf of the students regarding topics previously studied in class. Consequently, it can be inferred that making students aware of their mistakes made in tests and socializing them with the entire class was one the most remarkable findings.

The objective initially set was accomplished because the researchers could analyze the effects of formative assessment in ITSIM high school in spite of some misconceptions which some observed English teachers owned. After sharing a short socialization with them, the second step was to apply the new ideas that they learnt about how to provide activities and the way how they are supposed to assess these, in a formative process. Moreover, Boston, (2002) mentions one important benefit of formative assessment for teachers: They can inform students about their current progress in order to help them, set goals for improvement.

When researchers went from the theory to practice, they found some difficulties attributed to the context of ITSIM high school, here most of teachers and students were not involved in formative assessment process. That meant researchers had to adapt their suggestions to the environment where they used to assess the learning process in a summative way.

As it was seen in the observations, teachers were analyzed in the assessment process. It could be presented some mistakes because of lack of attention to score students' test. The teacher may have been tired, biased or may have not had clear criteria at the moment of marking tasks. Also, another issue may be the probable inexperience and preconceptions when entitling a student as bad or good.

Finally, researchers were satisfied with the new alternatives of formative assessment adopted by teachers and students in their classes. It was evident in students' motivation and the self-confidence to communicate their feelings to the teacher looking for a possible solution to the mistakes made in some activities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made with the purpose of enhancing learning and teaching in an EFL setting like ITSIM High school or in any institution where L2 instruction is carried out.

It is important that teachers establish clear parameters and criteria for assessing students at any particular stage during the scholar term. Likewise, they also need to dedicate some time to designing clear, purposeful, appropriate assessment tasks, tests or activities that could accomplish goals which enable teachers collect suitable information to be applied with students who are involved in the learning process.

Besides, teachers should guide students set short-term goals within these learning progressions in order to keep track of their progress and to make them see that foreign language classes may be useful and interesting and they may get something positive out of them.

It might be suggested that teachers keep a binder to register short and attainable goals (how students' progressions are being assessed) at the beginning of the week to be accomplished; finally these goals have to be analyzed by the whole class. Afterwards, the teacher has to communicate goals to students in order to help them achieve intended learning outcomes. These goals have to be communicated in a learner-friendly language, so students can understand and participate in the completion of these goals.

It is recommended as well that the feedback process be done whenever an assessment tasks takes place, and it should be about particular learning areas with suggestions about what the students can do to improve.

Teachers must assist students in the development of metacognitive thinking about their own learning. This enables students to take responsibility for learning and evaluating their own progress in the learning process.

Teachers should provide opportunities and instruction that models how students can participate in this reflective process for meaningful and constructive feedback. In this case, the teacher can organize his/her free time in the school to give students the chance to clarify, correct and give opinions about their last test and how they were assessed. In fact, if teachers provide clear information about directions, topics, nature and

purposes of the assessment task, students will ask less questions and they will feel they were more fairly assessed.

Teachers must create an environment where students feel that they are partners in the learning process. Here, it is suggested an engaging task which consists of a meaningful question with multiple correct answers exposed to small groups of students where they have to choose the best answer and then share their ideas and opinions with the entire class.

For example there was an activity with 11th graders which was developed as follows. The teacher gave this general statement:

"The uniform depicts a general rule in most the educational institutions, there are different views about this scholar outfit, which is yours?

A. Some pupils prefer to wear diary clothes because they feel comfortable.

B. Others believe it is necessary to wear the same garments so as to be identified by the institution they belong to.

C. Some others consider both options feasible since they are allowed to wear the uniform until Wednesday and allowed to wear a secondary outfit (a sweatsuit) on Thursdays and Fridays.

State which opinion you feel identified with and why?.

Discuss in your group and be ready to report your ideas to

your classmates.

With this task, the students realized that all their views

and opinions were meaningful and therefore taken into account by

the class because the teacher did not limit their comments and

gave a variety of positive answers. In this way, the teacher is

giving new alternatives for the learning process and interaction

among students, since they felt widely involved during the

activity because they participated actively first in small groups

and then with the whole class. Additionally, after having

concluded the tasks, the teacher provided each group with

individualized feedback regarding vocabulary and possible grammar

mistakes.

The teacher should establish a trustful and respectful

environment where all students feel safe to participate on

constructive feedback. It can be recommended a use of varied

lesson plans to satisfy diverse students' needs and achieve their

goals. In the same way, feedback on student performance might be

given as well and to some extent, consider adapting activities to

meet students learning needs.

Active involvement of students in the learning process

should be present in order to assess them in an appropriate

formative way. There exist several effective activities to engage large classes, (e.g) "One minute test", which can be very productive; this activity was experienced along the research project. The teacher asked a question about a topic developed in class and students took out a sheet of paper and answered it, in one minute, after that the teacher and students analyzed the answers by sharing ideas, giving opinions and finally they made a general conclusion. The activity was considered successful because both the teacher and students took part actively in the learning process.

On the other hand, regarding the use of technology as well as the internet access to promote language learning, it is recommended to employ different tasks such as online quizzes, online blogs along with web pages that might be an engaging option to the out-of-date educational software English Discoveries being currently used, thus taking a great advantage of the lab sessions that the pupils have at their disposal.

Finally, formative assessment provides a suitable English teaching and learning frame as an optional way of approaching English students and their current needs to develop communicative competence. Considering our Colombian educational system and conditions under which our students are supposed to learn a foreign language and under which teachers develop their academic labor, formative assessment is a motivating and challenging

choice to consider, as a means and resource to change the

traditional view that our students might have towards the

learning of the L2.

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    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formative_assessment

ANNEXES

APPENDIX # 1

OBSERVATION FORMAT

The following observation was developed to know the kind of assessment applied in English classes and if formative assessment was taken into account when evaluating students.

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

THE EFFECTS OF APPLYING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN AN EFL SETTING AT

ITISM HIGH SCHOOL

OBSERVATION FORMAT

	Assessment category	Occurrence	Total
Teacher	The teacher accepts feelings or attitudes expressed by a student		
	Praising or encouraging a student		
	Accepting or using students' ideas		
	Asking questions		
	Teacher explains or gives information to the students		

	Giving directions, commands		
	Criticizing or justifying authority, disciplining a student		
	Teacher explain what kind of assessment method is going to be use before applying it		
	Teacher uses formative assessment with another kind of assessment		
Students	Answering a question		
	Volunteer some ideas or ask a question		
	Show good attitude regarding the assessment method implemented by the teacher.		
Silence	There		

Adapted from Flanders' FIAC system (1970: completed tally sheet.

APPENDIX # 2

FORMAT FOR TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was applied to English teachers from ITSIM high school and had as main purpose to have the first

contact with them and analyze what was happening in the school in terms of assessment.

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EFL SETTING AT ITSIM SCHOOL"

Teachers QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has strictly research purposes and it will be totally anonymous. The main objective is to get as much information as possible. So, your collaboration will be significant in our project.

This questionnaire has two parts: open-ended questions and yes/no questions.

I. Write what you know or think about these questions.

1. Can you write what you understand by Formative Assessment?

    _____

    _____

_____

_____

2. Do you consider Formative Assessment an alternative to evaluate students? Yes/NO Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. In which ways do you think Formative Assessment has to be applied?

_____

_____

_____

4. Which assessment tasks do you use to assess learners' skills?

_____

_____

_____

II. In this section, you have to choose what do you consider more relevant in you English classes. Mark the option with X.

1. Do you assess students after finishing any topic?

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

2. Grades are more important in English classes

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

3. Comments and motivating phrases are given after a test is applied.

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

4. Comments and directions are given before and after applying tests.

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

5. Other methods to evaluate are used in classes

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

6. Do you prepare the tests for the students?

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

7. Do you correct the test with the whole class?

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

8. Do you want to receive more information about formative assessment?

Yes ☐   No ☐ Partially ☐

APPENDIX # 3

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY LESSONS

ITSIM HIGH SCHOOL

Date:

Teacher:

Grade: 8th

Time: 2 hours.

Topics:

- Modal verbs

  Verbal Tense: Should/ Must/ Can / Could / Might

Objectives:

- Students will able to give opinions using modal verbs

- Students will practice speaking and grammar structure.

Aims: Realia, board, gestures, teachers' input and dictionary.

Procedure:

8:15 8:20 Greeting students and organization

8:20 8:30 Propose a debate about "SOCIAL NETWORKS"

Teacher explains that he/she has the power to ban permanently all

social networks from Colombia and the students have to debate

reasons why they should or should not be banned. In this way, teacher divides the group in two at random.

8:30 9:00 Students have to share and join their reasons to defend their own opinions.

9:00 9:45 Teacher starts with a general question for both groups. Students begin to debate and defend their position.

9:45 10:15 Teacher ends the debate and he/she has got conclusions about the activity.

Assessment: Teacher assesses to their students taking into account the topic which had been learnt in previous classes and the way students adapt that knowledge for giving opinions and supporting their ideas in real life.

Grade: 9th

Class Theme: First Conditional

Time allowed: 2 hours

Aims: At the end of the class the students will be able to:

    Identify and use the first conditional structure

    Come up with their own sentences

    Make up s short piece of writing including the first

conditional

Materials:

Teacher's input, worksheets, textbook.

Procedure:

Start the class by going over the reading which contains the

first conditional structure and discuss about shops,

supermarkets.

Make Ss read to check their pronunciation

Check unknown vocabulary and develop the exercises proposed.

Introduce the grammar part by means of lots of examples supported

by the exercises from the book so the Ss understand as well as

possible.

Hand in worksheets to reinforce their understanding and clarify

their doubts

Make up a brief story using first conditional structure to be done in small groups.

Assessment

The assessment will be basically informal since it will be carried out throughout the class, that is, the teacher will see whether the students achieved the above goals or not based on their interaction and performance.

Grade: 7th

Class Theme: Books and Movies

Time allowed: 2 hour

Aims: At the end of the class the students will be able to:

    Talk about their favorite books and movies

    Use the correct vocabulary to do so

Materials:

Teacher's input, worksheets, textbook, tape-recorder.

Procedure:

Start the class with the discussion about creativeness and make them answer the questions in small groups and get some feedback from them.

Make the Ss read a text called "the three ways to become more creative" and answers the questions to that text.

Introduce the topic "The book or the film" and the vocabulary related to this topic. (plot, soundtrack, sequel, performance…) and ask them about their favorite films or books.

As a final product , students will be asked to describe a scene from a film in the book which contains some words with theses sounds /ae/, /a/, /a:/ , then the recording will be played to check the answers.

Assessment: Teacher assesses to their students taking into account the topic which had been learnt in previous classes and the way students adapt that knowledge for giving opinions and supporting their ideas in real life.

Grade: 10th

Class Theme: Articles

Time allowed: 2 hours

Aims: At the end of the class the students will be able to:

    Get familiar with some vocabulary related to travelling

    Know the rules for the appropriate use of the articles

Materials:

Teacher's input, worksheets, tape-recorder, DVD film, TV set.

Activities:

Start the class by eliciting from students strange things they have lived when traveling. Ask them to add as many details as possible.

Then, introduce the vocabulary related to "Travelers' tales" and begin to read "Strange things happen when you travel…"

Move on the grammar part regarding "articles" and do the exercises proposed in the worksheet.

Watch a movie about "Travels in Time " and hand in questions for the discussion next class.

Assessment

The assessment will be basically informal since it will be carried out throughout the class, that is, the teacher will see whether the students achieved the above goals or not based on their interaction and performance.

Grade : 7th

Class Theme: Countable and Uncountable nouns

Time allowed: 2 hours

Aims: At the end of the class the students will be able to:

    Remember the Countable and Uncountable nouns theme

    And talk about the skills they have to do something.

Materials:

Teacher's input, worksheets, textbook, Realia.

Procedure:

Warm-up: ask them about their favorite restaurant and the worst they have ever visited.

Start reading about the world's best restaurant to check Ss reading. As the text contains the grammar topic Countable and Uncountable nouns, Ss will get familiar with it to move the exercises.

Develop the exercises and clarify Ss doubts and hand in worksheets.

The next topic is SKILLS, make them guess the meaning of the word and ask them to tell me ones of their skills.

Then, Ss will choose a skill or anything they enjoy doing and they will prepare to tell the others about it. They will include information about the personal qualities necessary and some background about what they do.