

Assessing Speaking Skill...

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS FOLLOWED BY TEACHERS IN SOME PUBLIC
HIGH SCHOOLS TO ASSESS SPEAKING

By

María Isabel Herrera Gómez

And

Afralia Sánchez Cortés

School of Human Sciences

Linguistics and Languages Department

English and French program

University of Nariño

August, 2013

Assessing Speaking Skill...

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS FOLLOWED BY TEACHERS AT A PUBLIC
HIGH SCHOOL TO ASSESS SPEAKING

By

María Isabel Herrera Gómez

And

Afralia Sánchez Cortés

Advisor

Mg. Noé Vicente Araújo Quintero

Submitted to the School of Human Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of B.A in
Linguistics and Language Department
English and French program
University of Nariño
August, 2013

Assessing Speaking Skill...

NOTA DE RESPONSABILIDAD

“Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en este Proyecto de Trabajo de Grado, son de responsabilidad exclusiva de los autores”

Artículo 1^a del Acuerdo No. 324 de octubre de 1966 emanado del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

Assessing Speaking Skill...

Nota de aceptación:

Firma del presidente del jurado

Firma del jurado

Firma del jurado

San Juan de Pasto, Agosto de 2013

Acknowledgements

Dedicated to God, my family
especially my mother and also
my friend Maria Isabel.

Afralia Sanchez Cortés

Assessing Speaking Skill...

Dedicated to God, my parents
who have supported me all the
way since the beginning of my
studies and my friend Afralia
for her support and
unconditional friendship.

María Isabel Herrera Gómez

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo y descriptivo intenta identificar los procesos de evaluación que siguen los profesores para valorar la producción o el desempeño oral de sus estudiantes en la ciudad de Pasto mediante el uso de entrevistas y cuestionarios. Así, este estudio incluye descripciones de cómo son llevadas a cabo las evaluaciones orales durante las clases de inglés. De esta manera después de haber terminado la investigación, nos dimos cuenta que hay algunos aspectos positivos y negativos cuando los profesores evalúan sus estudiantes y a la vez se tuvieron en cuenta temas relacionados que corroboran al análisis de la información obtenida, todo esto con el fin de optimizar y facilitar los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje.

Abstract

This qualitative and descriptive study attempts to identify the process followed by teachers to assess oral production or performance of their students in Pasto through the use of interviews and questionnaires. Thus, this study includes descriptions on how they have carried out oral assessments during English classes. Therefore, after finishing the research we have realized that some positive and negative aspects are present when teachers assess their students, and at the same time some related topics corroborating the analysis of the information obtained were taken into account. All this aiming at improving the teaching and learning process.

Table of contents

ABSTRACT.....7

RESUMEN.....7

CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem.....13

Problem description.....13

Problem statement.....13

Problem delimitation.....14

Conceptual delimitation.....14

Geographical delimitation.....16

Population delimitation.....16

Objectives.....17

Significance.....18

Limitations.....19

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Evaluation, testing and assessment.....20

Principles of assessment in languages.....22

Practicality.....22

Reliability.....22

Validity.....23

Authenticity.....23

Washback.....23

Formal and informal assessment.....24

Types of assessment.....25

Assessing Speaking Skill...

<i>Proficiency assessment</i>	25
<i>Achievement assessment</i>	25
<i>Summative assessment</i>	26
<i>Formative assessment</i>	26
<i>Assessing writing</i>	26
<i>Definition of speaking</i>	27
<i>Assessing speaking: methods</i>	28
<i>Test types of assessment</i>	31
<i>Self-assessment</i>	32
<i>Teacher assessment</i>	32
<i>Progressive assessment</i>	33
<i>Activities for assessing speaking</i>	34
<i>Interview</i>	34
<i>Role play</i>	35
<i>Discussions</i>	36
<i>Oral report</i>	37
<i>Questions and answers</i>	38
<i>Participation</i>	38

CHAPTER III: THE RESEARCH METHOD

<i>Research type</i>	41
<i>Population</i>	41
<i>Sample</i>	41
<i>Setting</i>	41
<i>Data collection technique</i>	42

Assessing Speaking Skill...

Interviews.....42
Questionnaires.....42
Procedure.....42
Data analysis.....42

CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS

Interpretation of data.....43
Interview.....43
Category 1: Defining assessment and reasons of assessing.
Category 2: Frequency and type of assessment.
Category 3: Importance of oral production.
Category 4: Ways of assessing oral production and its aspects.
Category 5: Feelings taking oral tests.
Category 6: Limitations.
Questionnaires.....60
Category 1: Feelings in English classes.
Category 2: Types of tests and frequency.
Category 3: Topics of classes evaluated in the test.
Category 4: Oral tests during the scholar year.
Category 5: Activities for assessing.
Category 6: Suggestions after a test.
Category 7: Speaking in English if front of the class.
Suggestions made by the students.

Assessing Speaking Skill...

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

<i>Conclusions</i>	76
<i>Recommendations</i>	79
<i>References</i>	81
<i>Appendix</i>	84
<i>Appendix I</i>	84
<i>Appendix II</i>	87

CHAPTER I

The research problem

This chapter presents relevant information of this research. Additionally, it seeks to describe the problem description, problem statement and sub questions, objectives, significance, delimitations and limitations of this work.

Problem Description

In the language teaching field, assessment could be considered as a process in which teachers can identify some kinds of strengths and/or problems in the academic development of students.

However, in the English teaching and learning process Brown, 2004 defines assessment as an ongoing process that encompasses a wider domain whenever a student responds to a question, it offers a comment or tries out a new word or structure; the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance.

According to Brindley (2001, p. 137), the term Assessment refers to a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement.

On the other hand, to assess is not only to give a grade to students, it requires some principles that a test should follow to do a good test.

Taking into account what Brown (2004) points out, we can say that assessing is important in our society, where English

teachers carry out the assessment taking into consideration the performance of their students, what they respond when assessing. Considering the theory stated by Brindley (2001, p. 137) and Brown (2004), we can say that nowadays, assessing does not have a completely relevance in our society, especially in high schools, because Brown (2008) says that there are five principles that must be included in the assessment, principles that can be used by most of the English teachers when they assess their students. Maybe the lack of information about on how to prepare an assessment makes that the English teachers can make some mistakes when assessing their students.

Problem Statement

What are the assessment processes followed by teachers to assess their students' oral performance in some public high schools in Pasto?

Sub questions

Does the teacher apply oral skill assessment?

What are the types of assessment used by teachers to assess the speaking skill?

What are the activities that teachers use to assess the speaking skill?

Problem Delimitation

Conceptual delimitation

Assessment: According to Brindley (2001, p. 137), the term Assessment refers to a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement.

Assessment: assessment is the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, also assessment can be focused on the individual learner, the learning community such as class, workshop, or other organized group of learners, as the institution, or the educational system as a whole. According to the *Academic Exchange Quarterly*: "Studies of a theoretical or empirical nature (including case studies, portfolio studies, exploratory, or experimental work) addressing the assessment of learner attitude and preparation, motivation and learning styles, learning outcomes in achievement and satisfaction in different educational contexts are all welcome, as are studies addressing issues of measurable standards and benchmarks.

The final purposes and assessment practices in education depends on the *theoretical framework* of the practitioners and researchers, their assumptions and beliefs about the nature of human mind, the origin of knowledge and the process of learning.

Test: according to Brown (2000, p. 384) "is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given domain".

Speaking: Harmer. J (2007, p. 343) states that if students want to speak fluently English, they need to be able to pronounce phonemes correctly, to use appropriated stress and intonation patterns and to speak in connected way.

Proficiency: Richards, J. C. Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992 p. 204) they refers to proficiency like "a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose".

Proficiency: Taken from glossary of education, language proficiency is a measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language. Proficiency is measured in terms of receptive and expressive language skills, syntax, vocabulary, semantics, and other areas that demonstrate language abilities. There are four domains to language proficiency: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language proficiency is measured for an individual by each language, such that the individual may be proficient in English and not proficient in another language.

Fluency: Richards, J. C. Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992 p. 141) state fluency such as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal including native like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking and use of interjections and interruptions".

Accuracy: Richards, J. C. Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992 p. 142) it is "the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write"

Accuracy: Taken from dictionary reference, accuracy is the condition or quality of being true, correct, or exact; freedom from error or defect; precision or exactness, correctness.

Geographical delimitation

This study was carried out in three different public high schools in Pasto city of the Department of Nariño.

Population delimitation

The population needed to carry out this research was composed by seven English teachers and five students of each teacher of the public high schools in Pasto.

Objectives

General objective

To describe the assessment processes that teachers use to assess their students' speaking skill.

Specific objectives

To establish if the teachers know theory on assessing oral skills.

To identify the type of assessment that teachers follow.

To describe the activities that teachers use to assess speaking.

Significance

This research project has a great value in the educational field because in a setting like Colombia, especially in Pasto oral assessment in public high schools does not take a real place when being applied, for this reason the information provided in this research is an important contribution, taking into account this research the main issue about assessing speaking is the time, students and teachers agreed that they do not have enough time to assess their students. However, the teachers try to apply different ways for assessing their students; so, this research intends to determine how teachers are assessing them; in addition, review general theory on assessment could be useful for English teachers in order to have a better knowledge and in this way they can apply it with their students.

Limitations

The limitation that we had during the development of this research was that some of the teachers were busy when applying the interviews.

In order to solve this limitation, we tried to be available when the teachers could attend us to carry out our research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, the relevant information according to the problem statement is presented; some of the most important aspects that contribute to understanding and clarifying the problem are included, taking into account that, this research is about the assessment process in speaking skill where it is necessary to begin describing evaluation, testing and assessment; as well as some principles and types of assessment. Also, it is considerable to define speaking and the assessment process in speaking skill; finally, some techniques and activities for assessing speaking are stated.

Evaluation, testing and assessment.

Evaluation, according to Brindley (2001), is a collection and interpretation of information about aspects of the curriculum including learners, teachers, and materials for decision making purposes. Kendle, (2000) refers to two different types of evaluation, internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluations are conducted to get information about programs so that managers can make sound decisions about the implementation of those programs. This collaboration helps ensure that the evaluation is fully participatory and builds commitment on the part of all involved to use the results to make critical program improvements. External evaluations are required for funding purposes or to answer questions about the program's long-term

impact by looking at changes in demographic indicators such as graduation rates or poverty level. On the other hand, Brown (2004) refers to testing as a method of measuring person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain. Besides, he says that a test is an instrument, an administrative procedure that occurs at identifiable times in a curriculum. Finally, assessment, as Brown (2004) states, is an ongoing process that encompasses a wider domain whenever a student responds to a question, it offers a comment or tries out a new word or structure, and the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance. After having defined these terms, it can be said that evaluation is the general term which covers the other terms.

Evaluation and assessment can often be terms which are used interchangeably, but for these purposes their meanings are quite different. Assessment here refers to tasks which students undertake so that teachers can assess their level of competence in a course; on the other hand, evaluation means the process used by teachers to evaluate how effective these assessment tasks have been in meeting their aims.

This research is focused on assessment and it is the reason why it explores principles and types of assessment. But, first it is considerable to say that a test has to have clear objectives, according to Brown (2008), a test cannot be done because the

teacher wants, it should take into account what is seen in class and measures what it wants to measure.

Bloxham, S. (2007), it is referred "Assessment for learning" which is related to see how students are performing academically during a course and how the performance of them can be helpful for giving a good feedback and improve learning and teaching. Besides, assessment determines whether or not curricular goals are being met. It is used to measure the recent knowledge or skills that a student has acquired. Rennebohm, K. F.

Principles of assessment in language.

To assess is not only to give a grade to students, it requires some principles that a test should follow to do a good test. According to Brown (2008), there are five principles which are practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity and washback.

Practicality

Brown (2008) says an effective test is practical when, it is not expensive, it stays within appropriate time constraints, it is easy to administer and it has a scoring/evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient.

Reliability

According to Brown reliability means when the teacher presents a test and after, she/he gives the same test to the same student, the test should yield similar results; it is what

reliability consists on. However, there are some characteristics that can do that student's grade change; for example, fatigue, illness, anxiety and some others physical or psychological factors; additionally, conditions of classroom which could make that a student does not pay enough attention to the test, conditions such as: noise outside, light in different parts of the room, temperature or conditions of desks and chairs.

Validity

Validity is when the results of the test are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment. In other words, a test or task measures what teachers want to measure. When a test has validity, learners encounter a well-constructed format with familiar tasks, items and directions are clear, tasks are related to course work and it presents a reasonable challenge for students.

Authenticity

A test that shows a natural language as is possible, contextualized items, meaningful topics and real-world tasks is what shows that a test is authentic.

Washback

It refers to the effect of assessment on teaching and learning. Washback gives the opportunity to teachers and students to give feedback to realize problems language learning and improve them.

Taking into account these principles, it is necessary to mention Gross (1999) who establishes at least four functions of a test. She states that a test helps teachers evaluate students and assess whether they are learning what you are expecting them to learn. Second, well-designed tests serve to motivate and help students structure their academic efforts. Third, tests can help teachers understand how successfully you are presenting the material. Finally, tests can reinforce learning by providing students with indicators of what topics or skills they have not yet mastered and should concentrate on. Despite these benefits, testing is also emotionally charged and anxiety producing.

According to these characteristics, it can be said that a test that follows these parameters, is beneficial for teachers and students, because the former can know what is happening with the students' learning and then latter, find in a test a good opportunity to demonstrate what they have been taught.

Formal and informal assessment

According to Brown (2004), Assessment is divided in two: formal and informal assessment.

Formal assessment

Formal assessment deals with exercises or procedures specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge. They are systematic, planned sampling techniques

constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement.

Informal assessment

It refers to the number of forms starting with incidental, unplanned comments and responses to give student feedback. Some example to be used in informal assessment is to say '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 homework. However, when informal assessment is applied, a problem can happen and it is that students could not feel satisfied looking ☺ or a phrase, because as we said in our setting grades play an important role.

Types of assessment

According to Carter & Nunan (2001), there are different types of Assessment, they are:

Proficiency assessment:

Proficiency assessment refers to the assessing of general language abilities acquired by the learner independent of a course of study. This type of assessment is often done through the administration of standardized commercial language proficiency tests.

Assessment of achievement

This type of assessment aims to establish what a student has learnt in relation to a particular course or curriculum (thus

frequently carried out by the teacher). Achievement assessment may be based either on the specific content of the course or on the course objectives.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is often 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. Final exams in a course and general proficiency exams are examples of summative assessment.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out by teachers during the learning process with the aim of using the results to improve instruction (Carter & Nunan 2001). And according to Brown (2008) this type of assessment refers to evaluate students in the process of forming with the goal of helping them to continue in the growth process.

Regarding these types of assessment we can say that in our context, the most common type developed by teachers is summative assessment, in this case students are frequently assessed at the end of the course.

Assessing writing

Assessing writing can be used for different purposes, for example to place students in appropriate courses or awarding a grade,

allowing them to exit a course or sequence of courses. In CCCC Committee on Assessment (2006).

It is crucial that when a test is applied, it needs to be appropriate and valid for the purposes it has.

Also, Joughi (2010) states "Written examinations are based on an assumption that the written word is unambiguous and readily understood, in the way it was intended, by all students. This may often not be the case. Oral assessment provides the opportunity to ensure that each student understands the questions being asked" Page 1.

Definition of speaking

Harmer (2007) says "if students want to speak fluently English, they need to be able to pronounce phonemes correctly, to use appropriated stress and intonation patterns and speak connected"; but, he adds that it is not only that, it is to be able to survive in a typical functional exchange, where students could be able to maintain a conversation in a daily life, expressing what they want. In addition, (Lazaraton 2001, cited by Celce-Murcia Teaching English as a Second Language 2001: page 103) mentions that learning stress, rhythm, and intonation in English is not only complicated but the most difficult aspect is to have well-spoken English, there should be interaction with at least one other speaker which demands to understand the other speaker, to respond what the other says and some others aspects.

And when there is interaction between students and teacher, or students-students there might be an improvement in learners, because some students could help others students when they are speaking.

But, when it is being talked about interaction, it can be considered cite Ur (1996) who explains some of the implications about interaction between a learner and a native speaker. She says that the learner could feel in disadvantage when she/he is talking to a native speaker, because learner listens how the native speaker speaks and she/he can feel that this person is judging what it is being said and maybe, the nerves might not permit that learner speaks as usually she/he does it.

However, nowadays speaking has formed an important part at the moment to teach a language because communication is a part of daily live, it does not matter which language is being learnt.

Assessing speaking: Methods.

Harmer (2007) says that assessing is used to measured the students' abilities and how they getting on. So, it could be said through assessment the student may demonstrate her/his ability to the teacher, and in this case, teachers gives a grade for each student according to the proficiency of students. Assessing speaking requires taking into consideration the oral production in which learners have to speak and to be understood by the teacher. Furthermore, Ur (1996) refers to "oral tests assessments

are usually based on a sample of ten minutes", which implies that students in that time have to do the best to demonstrate their ability; however, it can be said that in this time some students cannot express what they want. Besides, some students could feel nervous when they listen to the teacher saying the word "assessment", taking into consideration this, it could be said that assessing is not an easy task for teachers, because they have to realize on all of these characteristics.

However, when assessing speaking there have been some misuses of tests according to Cohen (2001) who cites a survey made by Shohamy (1985), here are some of the misuses of EFL public schools:

"Tests were used as punishment", for example when a student did not do the homework, and then she/he would be asked to present the test.

"The tests were the only measure for grading"

"Tests did not reflect what was taught", in this part, there are some teachers who do a test and sometimes they include some things that they did not explain in classes.

"There was a lack of teacher confidence in their own tests".

"Students were not adequately trained to take the test", maybe this is why students do not obtain a high grade when they do the tests.

On the other hand, also it exist another view of language assessment, but in this case Cohen (2001) states about a constructive way. Some of the positive comments are:

Testing is seen as an opportunity for interaction between teacher and student where students and teachers can express and interchange opinions about certain topics.

Tests tend to help students to improve their skills. Taking into account that, it can be said that according to the mistakes made by students, teachers and learners can realize what is going not so good and they could be try to work out this situation.

Following with methods it is necessary to mention Mead and Rubin (1985) who refer to two methods for assessing speaking skills. One is Observational approach in which the students' behavior is observed and assessed unobtrusively. The other method is structured where the students are asked to perform one or more specific oral communication tasks. In other words, students' performance on a task is assessed which can be with a test administrator on a student or a group. These approaches are important in order to know the way how students should be assessed in a class; also, if the teacher uses these methods, students maybe could feel more comfortable; moreover, Mead and Rubin establish that students should feel that they are communicating and meaningful content to a real audience. Knowing

these approaches, the teacher can choose which approach she/he is going to use according to the purpose of the assessment.

Ur (1996) points out about the way of assessing oral skills, she says that assessment must be carried out through different suggestions; one of the first is that it could be spontaneous with no planning time and decontextualized tasks do not make best performance. The second is that students can demonstrate the best through visual activities, or interactive techniques, (e.g. an interview which is going to describe next). Also, it is added that the teacher is who assesses the students' ability because he/she has the experience of the language. While when a student is face to face with a teacher, it creates anxiety in students when the test is presented and it can badly affect their performance, learners can feel confused about what they are talking about and they could be thinking about the mistakes they are doing and at the same time they work to obtain a good grade. To have better grades, teachers might create a good environment for students in order to encourage them to demonstrate their proficiency in languages.

Test Types

Ur (1996) described some types of assessment where it is found Self-Assessment, and teacher assessment; also, Harmer (2007) mentions about progressive assessment.

Self-assessment

It refers that people are constantly assessing how successful their communication is. Besides, she states about what students speak, and everything that they say could affect the appearance and behavior of a person. In addition, a relevant aspect named is that the learner is in the best position to say how good she or he is at the moment of speaking because when a person is studying she or he can realize about her/his effort, noticing that every day the student is trying to do the best in order to improve their knowledge or the student tries to communicate in foreign language.

Teacher assessment

Ur (1996) describes an important disadvantage of teacher assessment, she says that a teacher can compare each learner with another one; it means that the teacher can take a student as a reference to assess the others students without taking into account that if a student has not the same level that others, that students have improved in every course and also, it could be that when there is generally higher level that another class the rating may not be comparable on an absolute bases; besides, another disadvantage named is that "good teachers do not necessarily make good assessors". It signifies that a teacher could have good classes but when she or he is going to assess the judgment given by teacher is not the best.

Progressive assessment

Harmer (2007) refers to progressive assessment is a test gave for the teacher to students every few weeks to see how well they are doing their work during classes; also, he adds that if students have new materials, it does not only measure the learning that they have but also it can measure their general proficiency in languages, for example to be able to comprehend new vocabulary. After, student recognizes their mistakes by herself/himself; the teacher is the second person who can assess the student because in the most teachers are who have the experience in English.

Taking into consideration these types of assessment, it is important to say that as we said, in an oral test the learner can feel anxious or nervous in front of a teacher, but it is different when the learner is with another learner because they could feel that they are talking with someone who is in her/his same level which might make that students demonstrate their proficiency in a better way, and the trust between them helps so that the communication could be improved. For this reason as Harmer (2007) says, students tend to be more spontaneous because they are with people which help to feel comfortable. This type of assessment could be done among pairs instead of working with five or more students because, it could have some students who are going to participate more than the others, for this reason the

teacher should be partial and to have a considerable strategy in order to make that everybody speaks.

Activities for assessing speaking

Teachers at the moment to assess she/he can use some activities which could make that assessing is not so monotonous. According to Ur (1996) a well-organized test, the duration is between eight to twelve minutes, it is said "well-organized" because the teacher does not need improvisation and the student could comprehend easier and faster.

Knowing the duration of a test, it is said that there are many techniques which are very common in assessing speaking. But, here some of them are only named and described such as Interview, Role plays, Discussions, Oral Report and Questions and answers

Interview

This first technique according to Ur (1996), it is the most common oral test where the teacher asks the students to respond some questions, usually the questions are planned by the teacher. Besides, the interview can be between five to eight minutes or when it is longer, the interview can last from ten to fifteen minutes, but some things should be taken into account by the teachers when they are doing the interview, here there are some of them:

The teacher does not interrupt unless necessary, because when it happens, student could feel uncomfortable or she/he could think that she/he is doing something wrong and after learner might feel more nervous for another interview.

The teacher does not impose her/his opinion; it is going to be supposed that a teacher and a student think totally different according to any topic, teacher can express her/his opinion and the learner does the same, but teacher does not have to seek that students think in the same way that their teacher.

Role plays

Lazaraton (2001) refers to a model to practice some phrases used in speech acts. After practicing those acts, the students can perform their own role play. Furthermore, Ur (1996) adds something about this activity, she says this activity can be done between learner-teacher, in this part, the students are given some instructions and a situation presented by the teacher and here it is named some situations and examples that teachers can use:

Particular functions e.g. complaining, enquiring, giving directions.

Particular structures e.g. narration of accident (past tenses); report of theft, break-in (passive); getting information (asking questions).

Particular topics, vocabulary e.g. hotel or flight booking; ordering goods.

In these examples, the teacher can observe the ability to speak the language and like in the examples, the teacher can realize if students can use the tenses the language correctly. Role play cannot be only done with the teacher, in this point; the role play can be carried out between students in order to reduce the fears of students at the moment of speaking. Besides, learners tend to get well-involved when they are doing a role play and they want to work spontaneity and creativity than when they are talking to the teacher.

Discussions

According to Lazaraton (2001), teacher could use another activity which is Discussions, it says that in this part, the students are given some readings or listening activities in order to make a discussion, where they can practice their abilities in speaking, and also, they can express their opinions. In this part, Krieger (2005) clarifies an activity which is part of discussions, it is called Survival, it consists on each student having a different role and the partners have to choose who is going to be saved, it deals with thinking about the arguments that each one has. This activity is considerable because, each one has to save her/his life and say the importance about that.

This technique, Ur (1996) calls it "learner-learner joint discussion/decision making" page 29. Here are some examples:

Choosing a suitable educational course for a person with specified interest.

Choosing a suitable holiday for a particular person or family from brochures.

Choosing the best bid for a contract from a number of bids.

Choosing the best candidate for a job from among a number of applicants.

Some of these examples are interesting so that students might improve critical thinking, because students not only practice English, but that they have to search more than grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation so that they can resolve a situation presented, and from another point of view, these activities could help students for the future; for example, when it is said that it is necessary to choose the best candidate for a job, it is seen that it refers to an interview, which maybe the learner has to do that in real life, she/he could remember that. Besides, with this kind of activities students might feel more confident, because they could not only see that as a test, but they could feel that as a game.

Oral report

In this type of activity; the learner has time to prepare his/her presentation, where the student can demonstrate his/her

speaking ability. In a formal test, the presentation can be made directly with the assessor, and also, there is an informal assessment which is mini presentation inside class, where each day one learner turns to do the presentation, it could be considered as a progressive assessment. If this technique is used as informal assessment it will be great to obtain a grade; also, it could help students to be able to speak in front of the class, and probably she/he is not afraid to face an audience.

Questions and answers

This technique is about a series of disconnected questions, and where student is limited to respond what is being asked. However, Ur gives a good way to start this part and it is asking about an opinion of the students, for example asking them about how well they can speak English. Although, these questions are not connected they can have questions from which students are interested. (Ur, 1996, p.60)

Participation

Bean and Peterson refer that participation is a component in grades, which refers that participation, sometimes is taken as informal assessment. That is why some students disagree about this way of assessment. Because participation, "depends on a student's personality thus disadvantaging shy or introverted students; record-keeping is problematic". So that is a challenge to give a grade for students' participation.

Finally, according to Ur (1996), there are some suggestions when speaking. It says that a factor like personality and background have influence at the moment to present an oral test, because the lack of confidence could make that a person feels nervous and when she or he is answering a question maybe she or he will be confused, on the other hand, a person who is self-confident about her/his knowledge, she/he is going to produce more speaking and her/his trust will help to improve her/his oral skill. In addition, it is argued that there are some cases when students have time to prepare the test, and it is positive for students, because, preparation promotes confidence to the students and they feel familiarized according to what they are talking. Besides, the place where the test is presented sometimes change the attitude of students, for example it is very different to present a test in a classroom or in an office that present it in a corridor or in the garden, because learners could feel more confidence being in a corridor that in the classroom, and confidence or nervous affect what people say.

In conclusion, it can be said that assessing speaking it is not an easy homework as for teachers as students, because assessing it is not only listen to the learner who is presenting the test. It could be good to take into consideration some features like grammar, pronunciation, and thinking skill. Additionally, there are some techniques so that assessing cannot

be monotonous. These activities help to realize the problem in students and they improve English in a student. Also, it is important to create an environment, where students feel comfortable when they are in the test, because as we mentioned previously, anxiety and nervous can affect the students' proficiency.

Taking into account students' feelings in class, it is remarkable to state Gazzana (2011) who refers that to be creative is important to have a long-term relationship with the students.

According to Vernon and Jones (1981), it is important to point out that students spend 5 or 7 hours in a school, so it is considerable to have a good relationship student-teacher, so that the teacher can realize about students' difficulties on learning.

CHAPTER III: THE RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter are presented methods and instruments that were used for this research.

Research type

The method used was Qualitative, it was the most appropriate for this project because the instruments that we used in this research supported and corroborated in the development of our project. Also, this research was Descriptive because this work tries to see the assessment process used by teachers to assess their students in speaking skill.

Population

The participants required for this research were seven English teachers and five of their students who belong to three different high schools in Pasto.

Sample

As sample, we worked with seven EFL teachers and 35 EFL students.

Setting

This research was carried out in three different high schools in Pasto.

Data collection techniques

Interview

The interview was designed for teachers. It included closed and open questions, asking about their opinions of assessment and how they apply assessment, especially if they are doing oral tests.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were applied for the students; those were made with the purpose of knowing if teachers are applying oral tests or any activity for assessing speaking and how teachers are developing them.

Procedure

This research worked with seven EFL teachers and 35 EFL students.

First, there was an interview for the teachers asking them about knowledge on theory on assessment and how they apply it. Then, questionnaires were applied for students of that class questioning about if the teacher is doing any type of oral assessment and how she/he is doing that process.

Data analysis

After having applied the instruments, we analyzed the information taking into account our theory and responding the question and sub questions of this research. We made categories in order to analyze and to interpret data.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection took place since March to May 2011. The interviews were done for seven teachers of three different high schools in Pasto, they were closed and open questions. After, questionnaires were applied for 35 students of the high schools; in the questionnaires were asked open and closed questions in order to corroborate the information given by the teachers.

Interpretation of data

The data collected through the interview was categorized. In order to analyze data, it was necessary to categorize the answers in six different parts; also the data collected through questionnaires was categorized in seven parts.

Interview

Category 1:

Defining assessment and reasons of assessing.

This category contains information given by seven teachers regarding the definition of assessment and the reasons why students are assessed. The first question was:

"How do you define assessment?"

Four teachers stated assessment as a guide to know the knowledge students have acquired.

Two teachers considered assessment as activities or techniques that teachers apply in order to know the mistakes students have.

One teacher said "assessment is a continuous process".

Considering the answers provided by the teachers, it is important to highlight that teachers have a clear idea about the definition of assessment.

According to the answers given by the four teachers, Harmer (2007) says that assessing is used to measure the students' abilities and how they are getting on.

Also, assessment determines whether or not curricular goals are being met. It is used to measure the recent knowledge or skills that a student has acquired.

Through assessment, the teacher gets information in order to adapt his/ her teaching practices so that the student can learn better.

According to the answers given by teachers and in relation to what authors say, our perception about this first question is that teachers have a comprehensible idea about the definition of assessment and they have taken into consideration that assessment help not only to students, assessment is benefit for teachers in order to know what problems students have and to realize if they are getting the goals according to the program.

The second question was: "do you assess your students?"

"And why?"

All of the teachers agreed that they assess their students. According to their answers three of them pointed out that they assess their students in order to know the problems they have.

And the other four said that the reason is because they want to see the progress of students.

First, it is necessary to point out that tests serve at least for four functions, those help teachers evaluate students and assess whether they are learning what you are expecting them to learn. Second, well-designed tests serve to motivate and help students structure their academic efforts. Third, tests can help teachers understand how successfully you are presenting the

material. Finally, tests can reinforce learning by providing students with indicators of what topics or skills they have not yet mastered and should concentrate on. Despite these benefits, testing is also emotionally charged and anxiety producing. Gross, D, Barbara. 1999.

According to the first answer done by teachers in Bloxham (2007), it is referred "Assessment for learning" which is related to see how students are performing academically during a course and how the performance of them can be helpful for giving a good feedback and improve learning and teaching. Taking into account the second answer given by the teachers, it is needed to state Kendle (2000) who refers to Testing and assessment such as important components of the education process, which are used to decide which students are better at a particular topic, or to certify that a student has achieved ability at a certain level.

On the contrary, In Brown's article it is mentioned that they are some teachers who give tests simply because is Friday or the third day of the course. Fortunately teachers have clear objectives at the moment of assessing students.

Taking into consideration these questions it is remarkable to express that teachers are doing a good work when they assess students, first because they really assess students; also,

because teachers consider tests such as a way to know problems and the progress students have.

Category 2:

Frequency and type of assessment developed.

The second category focuses on the frequency which teachers assess students and the assessment developed by them, which kind of assessment they apply most of the time, oral or written. The question in the interview was:

"How often do you assess your students?"

According to this question, four teachers interviewed said they assessed their students every single class.

Other teacher said "assessment is a continuous process".

But two of the seven teachers interviewed affirmed that there is a formal assessment at the end of each period.

Regarding the first answer of the four teachers, it is important to point out about informal assessment, which usually occurs in a more casual manner and may include observation, inventories, checklists, rating scales, performance and portfolio assessments, participation, peer and self-evaluation, and discussion.

Also, taking about informal assessment it is necessary to cite Brown (2004), who refers to the number of forms starting with incidental, unplanned comments and responses to give student feedback. Some example to be used in informal assessment is to

say '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 homework. However, when informal assessment is applied, a problem can happen and it is that students could not feel satisfied looking ☺ or a phrase, because as we mentioned in our setting grades play an important role.

Considering the second answer given by one teacher, a continuous process is referred to as formative assessment and also called educative assessment which is carried out through a course or project that is helpful for the learning process. In an educational setting this continuous process must be managed by someone like a teacher or a learner providing feedback on a student's work. In formative assessment is not necessary a grade.

Finally, taking into account the final answers, it is important to refer to According to Carter & Nunan (2001), who talk about Summative assessment that is often 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. Final exams in a course and general proficiency exams are examples of summative assessment.

“What kind of assessment do you develop? Oral or written?”

All of them agreed, they develop written assessment most of the time.

Six of the teachers stated that oral assessment is applied in participation in class and when students answer questions done by teachers.

One of them said "assessment depends on the skill he/she wants to implement in his/her English class".

According to the first answer, in CCCC Committee on Assessment (2006) is stated that writing assessment can be used for some purposes, inside and outside the classroom, for awarding a grade, placing students in appropriate courses, allowing them to exit a course or sequence of courses, certifying proficiency, and evaluating program.

So that is a reason why it is crucial when a test is applied, it needs to be appropriate and valid for the purposes it has.

Also, Joughi (2010) points out that written examination are based on an assumption that the written word is unambiguous and readily understood, in the way it was intended, by all students. But, sometimes it is not the case. And also, he affirms that oral assessment provides the opportunity to ensure that each student understands the questions being asked.

From this category, for teachers, assessment is not only a test applied once a year, for them informal assessment plays an important role, so that they consider that such as oral assessment. And also, when they apply formal assessment, it is

done in a written way and especially at the end of a period or a year.

Category 3:

Importance of oral production

This category is based on the importance that oral production has for teachers and the different ways that they use in order to assess it.

The questions were:

"Do you consider that it is important to assess the oral production of your students? Why?"

The answers given by the teachers were:

Three teachers consider that it is important to assess the oral production because they can see the progress of their students.

Three more teachers affirmed that in assessing the oral production they can see the pronunciation and the communication students have.

One teacher said "oral production is a way of overcoming fear, speaking in public".

Considering the responses given by them, it is considerable to say that assessment is an essential component of effective instruction.

So, such as in the first response it is necessary to clarify progressive assessment. Harmer (2007) refers to progressive

assessment. This is a test given by the teacher to their students every few weeks to see how well they are doing their work during classes; also, he adds that if students have new materials, it does not only measure the learning that they have but also it can measure their general proficiency in languages, for example to be able to comprehend new vocabulary. Then, the student recognizes their mistakes by herself/himself; the teacher is the second person who can assess the student because the majority of teachers have the experience on teaching English.

Taking into consideration the second answer, it is reasonable to cite Harmer (2007) who says that assessing is used to measure the students' abilities and how they getting on. So, it could be said through assessment the student may demonstrate her/his ability to the teacher, and in this case, teachers gives a grade for each student according to the proficiency of students. Assessing speaking requires taking into consideration the oral production in which learners have to speak and to be understood by the teacher.

Taking into account how important speaking is; some others factors play a significant role, such as fear or anxiety, Cohen (2001) comments that students see tests as a threat to their competence, because they are afraid that they will not perform well and the fear is a negative point which could confuse the learner in the test time.

So that, considering the third answer, tests can help students overcoming the fear when speaking in other language Harmer (2007) says students tend to be more spontaneous because they are with people which help to feel comfortable, assessment could be done among pairs instead of working with five or more students because, it could have some students who are going to participate more than the others, for this reason the teacher should be partial and to have a considerable strategy in order to make that everybody speaks.

It can be said that assessing speaking is not an easy task as for teachers as students, because assessing it is not only to listen to the learner who is presenting the test, but it could be good to take into consideration some features like grammar, pronunciation, and thinking skill.

Besides, factors such as fear, anxiety or nervousness can affect students' performance. However, it also depends on the teacher for doing a good environment so that students can feel more comfortable when they are taking an oral test.

Category 4:

Ways of assessing oral production and the aspects for considering.

This category describes how teachers assess their students and the aspects that teachers take into account at the moment of assess them.

The question done for the teachers was: "How do you assess your students' oral production?"

Three teachers apply oral presentations as a way for assessing the oral production.

Three teachers established that participation is a way of assessing speaking, through examples and answering questions.

One of these six teachers assesses students through dialogues.

First it is necessary to cite Ur (1996) who points out about the way of assessing oral skills, she says that assessment must be carried out through different suggestions; one of the first is that it could be spontaneous with no planning time and decontextualized tasks do not make best performance. The second is that students can demonstrate the best through visual activities, or interactive techniques.

Moreover, taking into account the first answer, Lazaraton (2001) refers about oral report that is an activity the learner has time to prepare his/her presentation, where student can demonstrate his/her ability when speaking. In a formal test, the presentation can be made directly with the assessor, and also, there is an informal assessment which is mini presentation inside class, where each day one learner turns to do the presentation, it could be considered as a progressive assessment. This

technique, if it is used in informal assessment not only is going to be good to obtain a grade; but also, it could help students to be able to speak in front of the class.

Considering the three others answers about participation, Bean and Peterson refer participation is a component in grades, which refers that participation, sometimes is taken as informal assessment. That is why some students disagree about this way of assessment. Because participation, depends on a student's personality thus disadvantaging shy or introverted students; record-keeping is problematic, so that is a challenge to give a grade for students' participation.

According to the final answer, Lazaraton (2001) refers to *Role plays* as a model to practice some phrases used in speech acts. After practicing those acts, the students can perform their own role play.

Ur (1996) adds something about this activity, it says this activity can be done between learner-teacher, in this part; the students are given some instructions and a situation presented by the teacher.

Following with this category, the question asked for the teachers was:

"What aspects do you take into account when assessing your students? Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary or fluency?"

Three teachers said that they take into account the four aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency and one of them adds understanding.

Two teachers focused on grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

One teacher established that she focused on pronunciation.

Luoma (2004) establishes that among the macro skills of language, speaking is the most difficult language skill to assess. In addition, this article stresses that assessing speaking not only means to speak but it says when assessing speaking there are some factors which should be considered, they are pronunciation, spoken grammar, spoken vocabulary, and even sociolinguistic applications of speech all fall into the construct of speaking because the testing of pronunciation is very different from the assessment of spoken grammar or the testing of speaking in meaningful interaction. Taking into consideration this, it could be said that assessing is not an easy homework for teachers, because they have to realize on all of these characteristics.

Palmquist defines pronunciation involves far more than individual sounds. Word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and word linking all influence the sound of spoken English. English pronunciation involves too many complexities for learners to strive for a complete elimination of accent, but improving pronunciation will boost self-esteem, facilitate communication,

and possibly lead to a better job or at least much respect in the workplace.

Taking into account this question, it is necessary to say that teachers focus on Pronunciation but the others and Palmquist affirm, Students are usually even more sensitive about their pronunciation than their grammar, so that is important to allow that students play with pronunciation and they practice.

Taking this category; oral report, participation and role plays are the most common activities that teachers apply for assessing oral production and in this category; pronunciation is the relevant aspect in any activity.

Category N. 5:

Feelings taking oral tests.

For this category, the question was:

This category takes some aspects that students feel when they are evaluated.

"What do you think students feel when they are taking an oral test? Those factors can affect the assessment?"

Four teachers considered that nervousness and fear are aspects that students feel when they are taking a test.

Two more think that students feel anxious and ashamed in an oral test.

One of them said "students feel confused in an oral test".

All of them agreed that any of these aspects affect the assessment because they can forget what they have studied. Cohen (2001) comments: students see tests as a threat to their competence, because they are afraid that they will not perform well and the fear is a negative point which could confuse the learner in the test time.

Ur (1996) affirms, when a student is face to face with a teacher, it creates anxiety in students when the test is presented and it can badly affect their performance. Also, learners can feel confused about what they are talking about and they could be thinking about the mistakes they are doing and at the same time they work to obtain a good grade. To have better grades, teachers might create a good environment for students in order to encourage them to demonstrate their proficiency in languages.

According to Ur (1996) lack of confidence could make that a person feels nervous and when she or he is answering a question maybe she or he will be confused, on the other hand, a person who is self-confident about her/his knowledge, she/he is going to produce more speaking and her/his trust will help to improve her/his oral skill.

In addition, it is argued that there are some cases when students have time to prepare the test, and it is positive for students, because, preparation promotes confidence to the

students and they feel familiarized according to what they are talking. Besides, the place where the test is presented sometimes change the attitude of students, for example it is very different to present a test in a classroom or in an office that present it in a corridor or in the garden, because learners could feel more confidence being in a corridor that in the classroom, and confidence or nervous affect what people say.

According to Kendle (2000) says many adults and children alike experience enormous stress and anxiety when they are completing an assessment or a test".

Some factors such as fear, anxiety or confusion, can make a student fail in a test, as we said, learners do not feel so confident when they are talking with their teachers or partners. However, sometimes when students prepare their own oral tests, for example a presentation when students prepare themselves in front of a mirror, making gestures or practice with a friend that makes students feel more comfortable when they are taking an oral test.

Category 6:

Limitations.

This category is based on the limitations teachers believe oral assessment has. The question was:

"Which limitations do you think oral assessment has?"

All teachers considered that a big limitation for applying oral tests is the number of students and the hours per week in the English class.

First it is necessary to cite Egan (1999) "Speaking was until recently largely ignored in schools and universities, primarily for logistical and programmatic reasons, such as emphasis on grammar and culture and unfavorable teacher student ratios. Speaking was also absent from testing because of the difficulty in evaluating it objectively and the time it takes to conduct speaking tests".

Considering this part and that in our society, large classes are one limitation where they are 40 to 50 students per class and also, English subject does not have enough hours in a week.

Considering these factors, it is considerable to refer to Ur (1996) who explains that a well-organized test, the duration is between eight to twelve minutes, it is said "well-organized" because teacher does not need improvisation and the student could comprehend easier and faster. So, taking into account this and if a teacher has two hours per week and 50 students, it will take almost four classes for doing a well-designed test.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were applied for 35 students of three different high schools; it was a relevant resource which helped us to corroborate the information given by the teachers.

The questionnaire analysis was divided in seven categories.

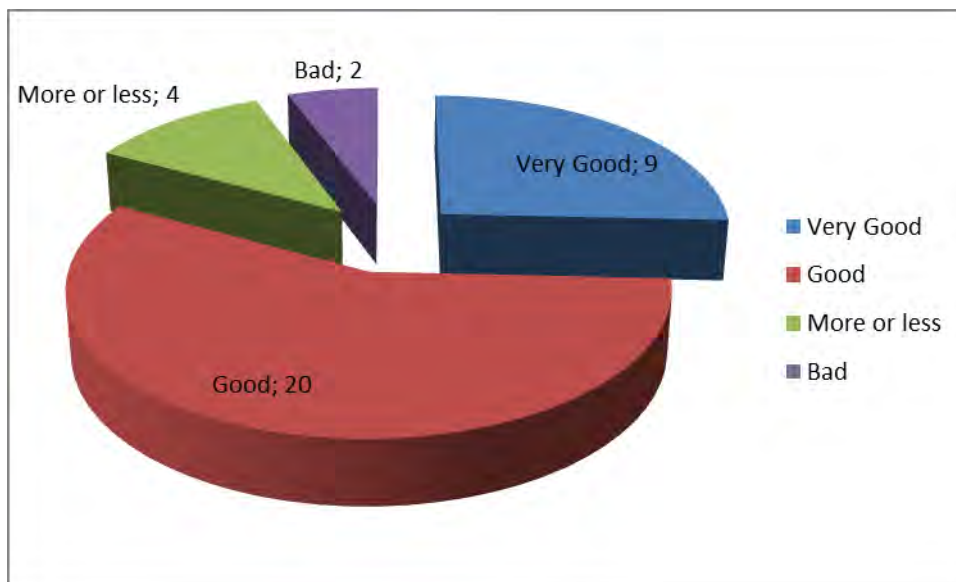
Category 1:

Feelings in English classes.

This category focuses on how learners feel when they are taking their English classes.

The question was: ¿cómo se siente en clases de inglés? ¿Por qué?

The answers given by students were the following: nine of the 35 students answered that they feel very good, 20 of them responded that they feel good, four of these students said that they feel more or less and only two answered that they feel bad.



Graphic 1. Students' feelings in EFL lessons.

Students who answered this question, they said that they felt very good or good because of the creativity of the teacher and she or he gave a good explanation; also, they really liked English, and finally because students had a good relationship with the teacher.

Also, according to the answers given by students about they feel bad in English classes, the most predominant response given was that the teacher speaks in English and she or he does not explain in Spanish; besides, they affirmed that some of their partners make a lot of noise and they could not listed the class.

Taking into account the reasons why students like or dislike the English class, it is necessary to point that some external factors affect students' reaction, as some students said, they like English when the class is creative and dynamic, according to Gazzana (2011) refers about being creative in language teaching is obviously important, especially if you want to have a long-term relationship with your students. It says that students pay more attention and keep interest in the subject.

Referring to the good relationship teacher- student. Also, when teachers have a good relationship with their students, teachers can understand problems or difficulties in students' learning.

Considering the reasons why students feel bad, they affirm students do not like the teacher speaks and explains in English.

Taking our own experience as a reality, we have realized that students feel less confident if we speak in English; maybe it happens because they are not used to listen and practice English every class.

There are some students who really like English; however there are some partners that make a lot of noise in the class, that make students do not listen the teacher and they are distracted in the classroom. Flaming (2002) affirms some students struggle to pay attention in class and other study areas because small background noises interfere with their concentration. But, noise can affect students in different ways and taking into account that students have different personality. It is important to recognize that factors and improve classes so that students could feel more attracted in the classroom.

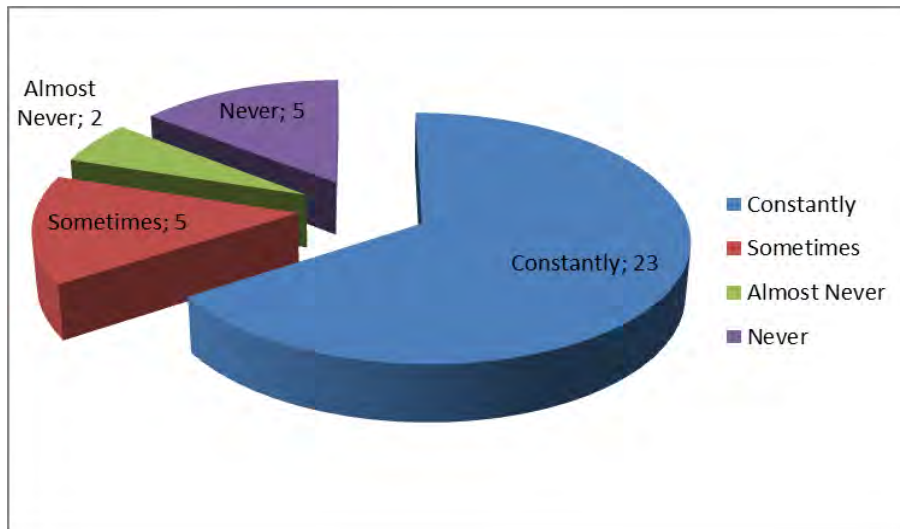
Category 2:

Types of tests carried out and frequency of assessment.

This category contains information about if teachers carry out tests constantly.

The first question was: ¿su profesor realiza evaluaciones permanentes?

In this question we could observe that teachers make tests constantly due to the affirmative answers given by 23 students, five of them said that sometimes, two students responded almost never, and five of the students answered that never.

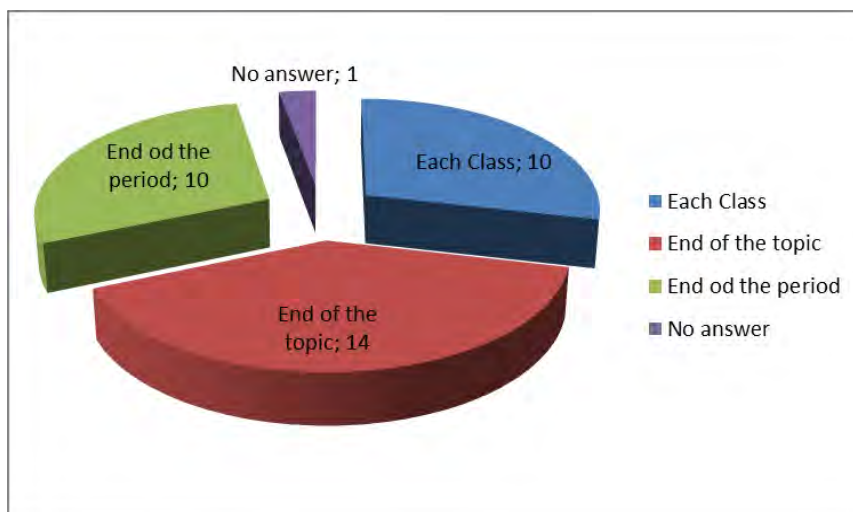


Graphic 2. Tests carry out constantly.

The second question was: ¿Cada cuanto es evaluado?

To this question 10 students answered that they are evaluated each class, 14 of them said that teachers assess them at the end of a topic, 10 responded that at the end of a period one of the 35 students did not give answers.

In this question it is important to highlight students wrote that they were assessed in each class through their participation.



Graphic 3. Frequency of tests.

As students affirmed, participation is applied in the classroom for assessing them, in Promoting Effective Classroom Participation, it states "participation can include short exchanges between instructors and students, or within small groups of students", it means teachers and students can say their own ideas and opinions about the topics they talk about. Moreover, in "Assessing Student Participation in Class" (2004), there are significant reasons why participation should be assessed, some of the reasons include:

Encouraging students to prepare for class and to do the background reading; Encouraging students to think and reflect on issues, developing of communication skills; Encouraging social interaction, Developing group and team skills.

As it is said, all these reasons are favorable for students specially to improve their oral skills and to share ideas. considering answers given by students according to the teacher assesses them at the end of the topic or the period, we can say teachers applied summative assessment, according to Carter & Nunan (2001), "Summative assessment is often carried out at the end of a course term", for example when the teacher develops final exam. Also, it is necessary to mention that this assessment is formative, because as Brown (2008) states, this type of assessment refers to evaluate students in the process of forming with the goal of helping them to continue in the growth process,

which means that at the end of each topic or period there is at least a goal to be achieved and if that is accomplished, that helps teachers and students to follow the learning process.

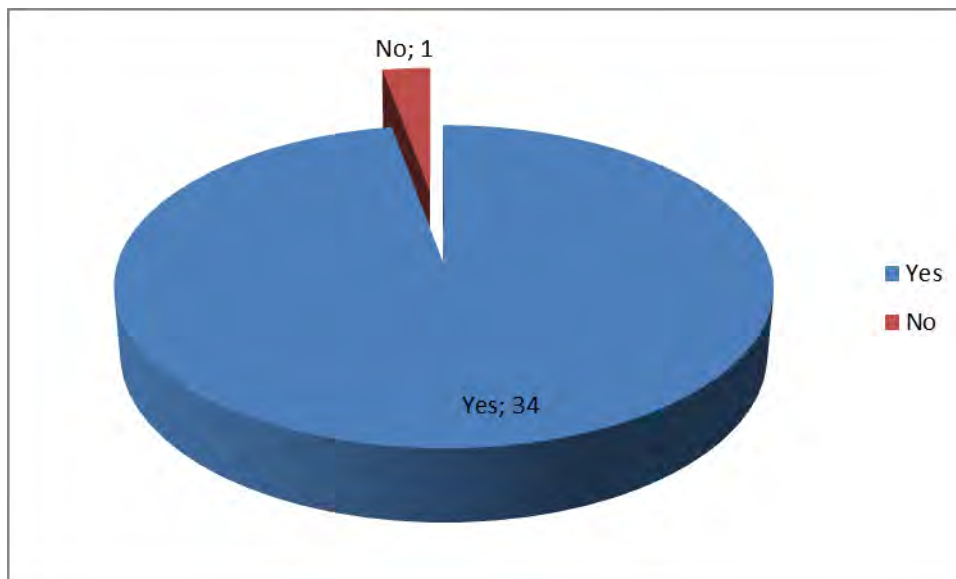
Category 3:

Topics of classes evaluated in the test.

In this category is stated if teachers evaluate the topics already seen in classes.

The question was: ¿Los temas evaluados están acorde con lo estudiado en clase?

In this question, 34 students agreed that tests are related to the topic seen, just one of the 35 students responded no.



Graphic 4 . Topics seen in class are related to the tests.

It is considerable to say that a test has to have clear objectives, according to Brown (2008), a test cannot be done because the teacher wants, it should be took into account what is seen in class and measures what it wants to measure.

Taking into consideration the answers provided by the students, we can say that the teachers are consequent when assessing their students; teachers do a test in relation to what they are teaching in their classes.

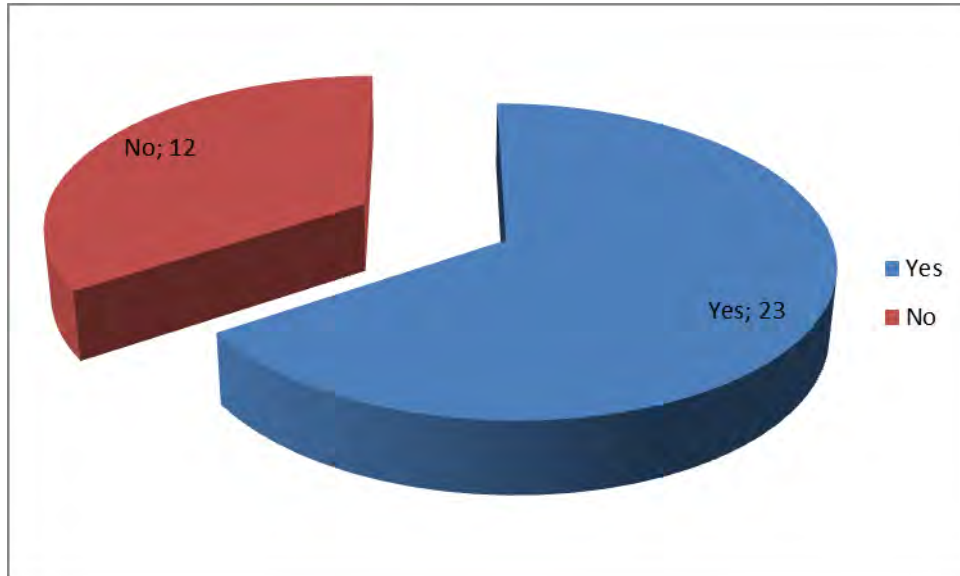
Category 4:

Oral tests during the scholar year.

In this category is established the times that students have been evaluated during this scholar year.

The question was: ¿Ha sido evaluado de forma oral en este año escolar?

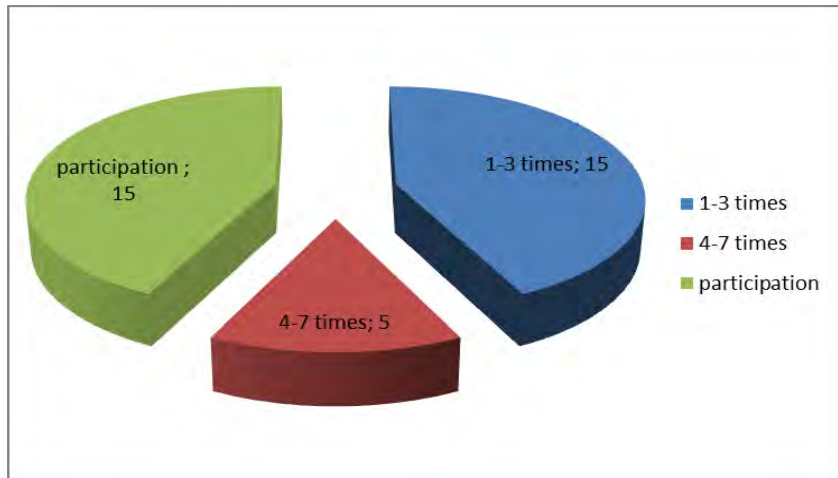
23 of the 35 students pointed out that they have been assessed during this scholar year, while 12 of them said no.



Graphic 5. Oral tests during the year.

To the other part of this question ¿cuántas veces han sido evaluados en el año?, 15 students responded that one to three

times, five students said four to seven and 15 of them answered that participation in class every day is a way of assessing them.



Graphic 6. Frequency of oral tests.

Taking into account this answers, it is necessary to see the relationship about what teachers mentioned about the participation in class in a way to assess oral performance of students. The students agree about their participation in class is their assessment.

Besides, when students affirmed that they are assessed orally one to three times in the year considering that teachers said they assess their students each final period as their formal assessment.

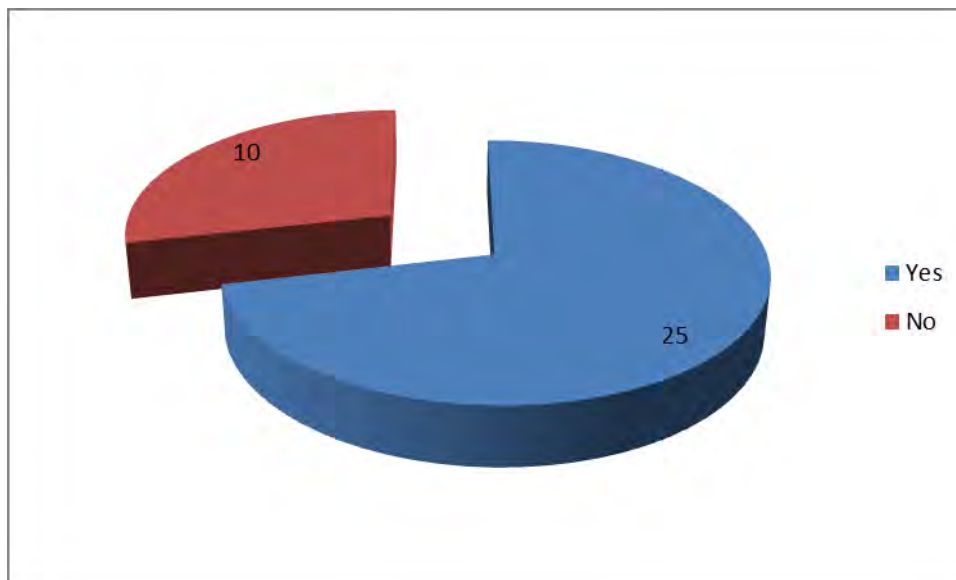
Category 5:

Activities for assessing oral skill.

This category contains two questions with the aim of analyzing how students feel when presenting activities for being evaluated.

The first question was: ¿Ha presentado actividades como: dramatizaciones, presentaciones orales, entrevistas entre otras?

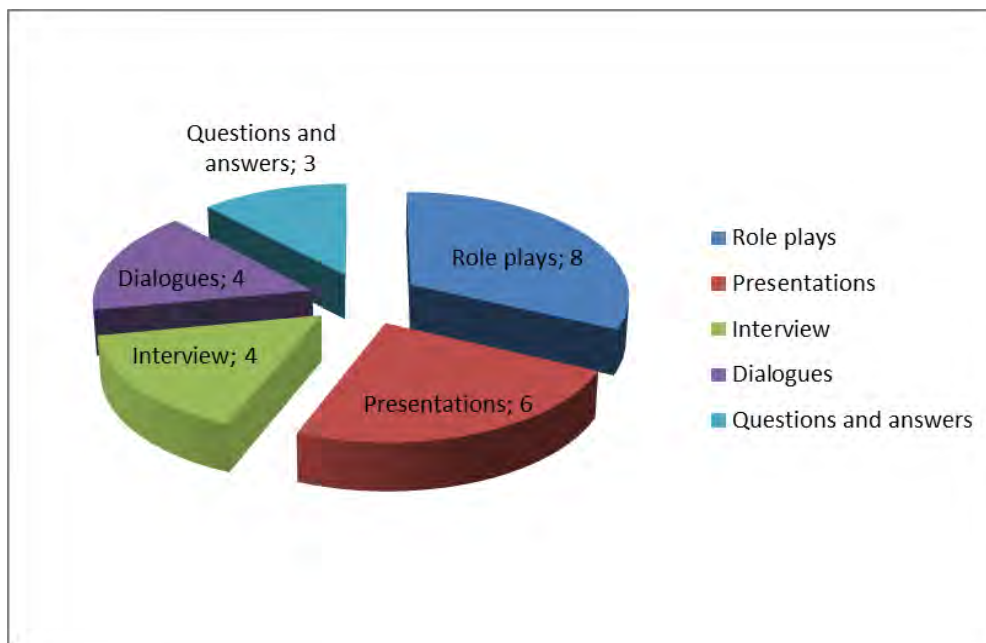
From this question we got 25 affirmative answers, where students corroborated that they have presented activities in order to be assessed, however 10 students stated that they have not presented these types of activities.



Graphic 7. Presenting oral activities.

Taking into consideration the 25 affirmative answers, it is important to state the activities that they develop in order to be assessed.

Eight students pointed out that they are assessed through role plays, six students said that oral presentations is another way of being assessed, four students responded that their teachers use interviews as a way assess them, four learners said that they are assessed through dialogues, questions and answers is another way of assessing according what three students said.



Graphic 8. Oral activities.

According to Ur (1996), interview is the most common oral test where the teacher asks the students to respond some questions; usually the questions are planned by the teacher. However, looking at the responses given by students, the most useful activity done by the teachers is the role plays, because as teachers told us for making interviews, it is necessary to have enough time and as Ur affirms, for a good interview the teacher needs five to eight minutes per student.

Regarding that role plays is the most common for teacher and students, Lazaraton (2001) refers role plays to a model to practice some phrases used in speech acts. After practicing those acts, the students can perform their own role play.

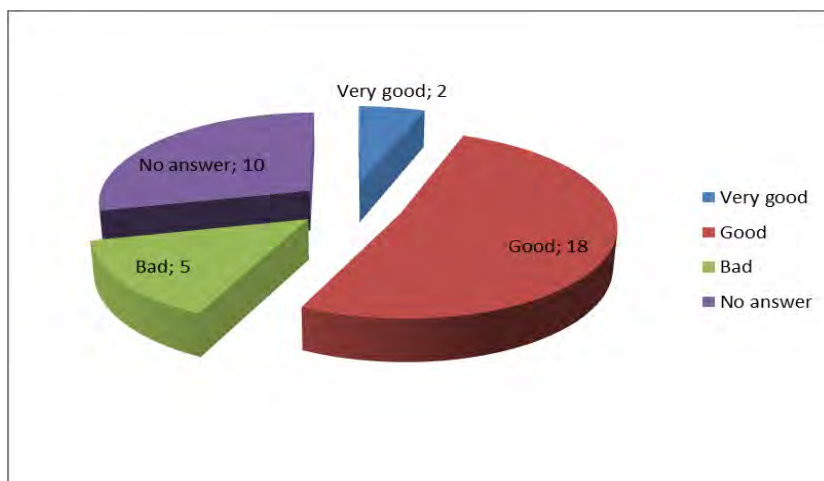
Furthermore, Ur (1996) adds something about this activity, it says this activity can be done between learner-teacher, in

this part; the students are given some instructions and a situation presented by the teacher.

Also, it is important to point out about presentations or oral reports, which is used by teachers, in this kind of activities the learner has time to prepare his/her presentation, where the student can demonstrate his/her ability when speaking. This technique, if it is used in informal assessment is not going to be good to obtain a grade; but also, it could help students to be able to speak in front of the class, and probably she/he can overcome her/his fear to face an audience.

The second question was: Si las ha presentado, ¿cómo se siente al realizar estas actividades?

About this question, two students said that he/she feels very good; others 18 responded that they feel good, five stated that they feel bad, while 10 of the students did not give us information.



Graphic 9. Feelings when students are presenting oral activities.

To the other part of this question ¿por qué? four students responded that is difficult, six learners answered because are different from the routine, five of them because of the grade, two student pointed out that there is no feedback and eight because they learn.

According to Ur (1996), there are some suggestions when assessing speaking. She says that a factor like personality and background have influence when presenting an oral test, because the lack of confidence could make that a person feels nervous and when she or he is answering a question maybe she or he will be confused, on the other hand, a person who is self-confident about her/his knowledge, she/he is going to produce more speaking and her/his trust will help to improve her/his oral skill. Here we can say that students when presenting these kinds of activities for being assessed, they feel comfortable because for them is a different way to do the test and at the same time they learn.

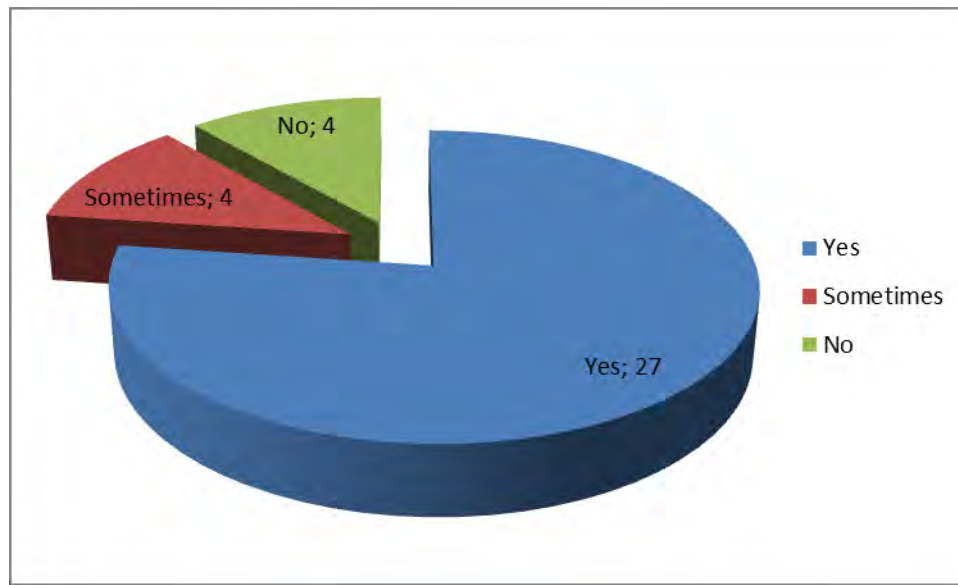
Category 6:

Suggestions after a test.

This category focuses on the suggestions that teachers make after a test.

The question was: Después de una evaluación, ¿su profesor hace sugerencias respecto a esta?

To this question 27 students gave affirmative answers, four of the 35 students said that their teachers do not make any suggestions after a test and the other four responded that the teachers sometimes make suggestions.



Graphic 10. Suggestions after a test.

EAFIT (2002) says "Through feedback students get information about their areas or strength and areas to be improved which fosters further learning or review. Teachers also benefit from feedback on what is being learned and on the effectiveness of his/ her own teaching. Feedback gives teachers information on whether the students are making progress or not".

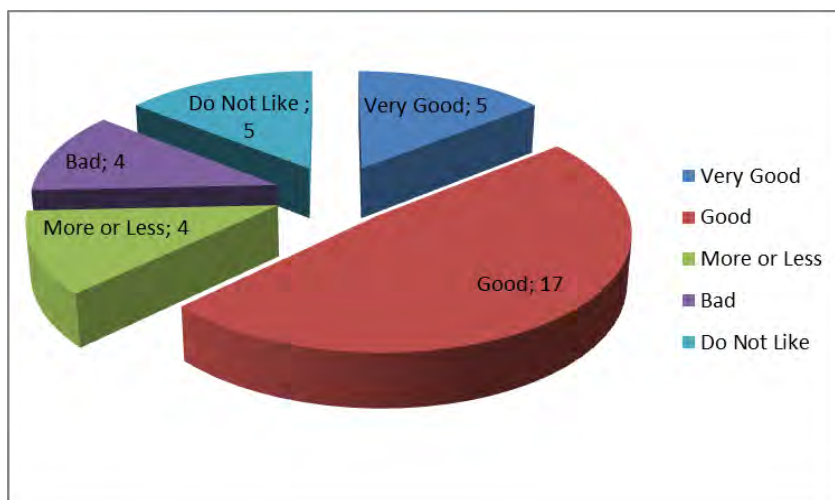
It is palpable that students receive suggestions of their teachers when they finish a test in order to make a better understanding.

Category 7:**Feelings of talking with classmates.**

This category describes the feelings of students during a conversation with their classmates.

The question was: ¿cómo se siente al hablar en clases con sus compañeros?

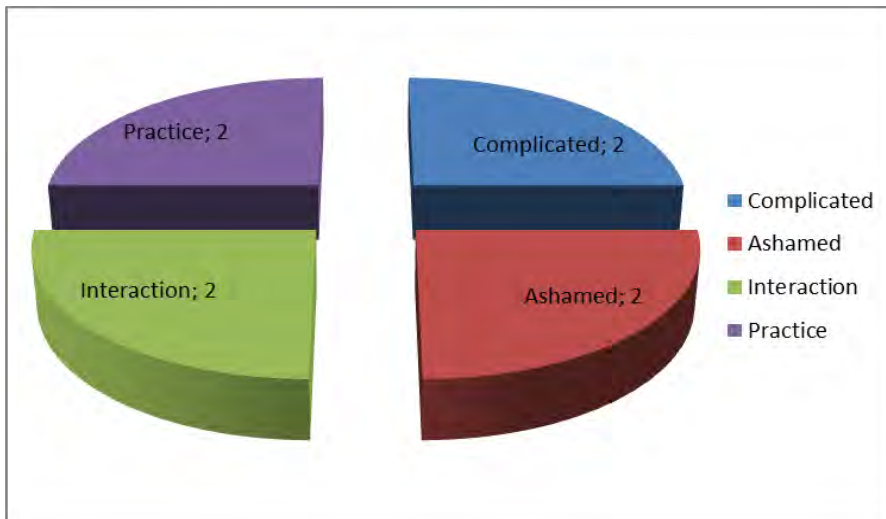
Five students pointed out that they feel very good when they are speaking with classmates, 17 said that they feel good, four learners responded that they feel more or less, other four feel bad and five of the 35 students do not speak in English.



Graphic 11. Feelings of students about speaking with their classmates.

To the other part of the question, ¿por qué?

Two learners of the 35 students pointed out that are complicated, other two learners answered because they feel ashamed, two responded that there is not interaction and other two said because they do not have enough practice.



Graphic 12. Reason Why students Ss do not speak in English.

Regarding the answers given by the students, their feelings when they are speaking in front of their classmates, it is grateful to see that most of students feel very good or good speaking in the English classes.

Also, making a comparison about the responses by teachers and students, it is clear that students feel bad in the situation of speaking in class because of they do not have enough practice or interaction when speaking in class with their partners; moreover, for them, it is complicated and they feel ashamed. However, Klende(2000) affirms if students practice, they will be more comfortable when they are presenting speaking activities.

Suggestions made by students.

The following suggestions were made by the students who cooperated in this project.

Just 12 of the 35 students who responded to the questionnaire made some suggestions in relation to their English classes. Three students suggested that English classes should not be done in Spanish, one of the learners wrote that the teacher changes his/her character, four said that teacher makes the class more dynamic, one learner suggested that they can have more hours for English classes in the week and three pointed out that there should be more discipline in the classroom in order to have a complete hour of class.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

After having revised the literature related to this topic followed by the analysis of the information collected through interviews and questionnaires the participants provided, it can be concluded that:

Taking into account the results we obtained from interviews and questionnaires one of the first conclusions we can establish is that teachers, although they do not have not enough theoretical background about assessing speaking, they develop different oral activities to identify their students' skills and their progress during the English classes.

Once having realized that teachers apply oral assessments to their students, it is important to point out that most of them when assessing use more informal than formal assessment, that is to say that teachers assess their learners each class through participation, one of the reasons is because there are some limitations, such as; the lack of hours for English classes and the big number of students, these limitations do not allow teachers to conduct their formal oral assessments and so often during the school year, we can also add that these limitations make that the number of written tests is greater than oral tests.

Another conclusion is that teachers consider important to assess oral production in order to realize the fluency students have and to help students overcome fear for speaking in public.

Besides, we can establish that the teachers are concerned with organizing or carrying out some activities like oral presentations, dialogues, questions and answers or techniques that permit the development of oral assessments, activities which are accepted and developed by the students positively. These techniques and activities make that teachers assess some aspects and abilities of the language in order to improve their students' oral production, moreover these other activities encourage students to be more involved with the language.

Through the oral activities developed by the students, teachers focus on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency to assess their students.

When analyzing the information collected, we could observe that teachers told us about how students are affected by oral assessments in a negative way. The Reactions of students during an oral test such as fearless and anxiety, that makes their grades are affected.

Also, a positive aspect is that there is a relation between the topics seen in class and the test applied by teachers. Besides, after applying the test, the teachers give feedback to their students.

Finally we can conclude that the teachers carry out oral assessment and to the students catch the attention, because it is different to the normal classes. However, there are some limitations that do not allow carry out these activities constantly.

Recommendations

Some of the following recommendations are taken from the some suggestions made by some of the students who helped us during our research.

The purpose of this guideline is to improve the teaching-learning process.

A very important recommendation that students suggested is that teachers take a positive attitude during English classes. It is relevant to know that learning a foreign language especially English is not as easy to learn, due to the fact that this as a different subjects for them it can be seen as a threat and thus they do not feel comfortable with the subject. So, a recommendation we can make is to be patient with students so that in this way the classes are very enjoyable, moreover the results are optimal.

Another relevant recommendation made by students is discipline during English classes. It is recommended to teachers who collaborated on this project to try to carry out activities that allow students' concentration and also the interest of them so that in this way they can have a good discipline in the classroom and especially enjoy the academic performance.

Finally, we recommend that teachers can be informed with the whole theory about assessment in order to undertake a more

complete and organized their work as English teachers and to improve the teaching-learning process.

References

Bean, J. and Peterson, D. (1998) "Grading Classroom Participation"
http://www.csufresno.edu/academics/documents/participation/grading_class_participation.pdf

Bloxham, S. (2007). "Assessment for learning". Unpublished paper for HEA.

Brindley, G. (2001) Assessment. In Carter and Nunan (Eds The Cambridge guide for teaching English to speakers of other languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (2000) Teaching by Principles an interactive approach to language pedagogy. Second edition. Longman.

Cohen, D. A. (2001) Second Language Assessment. In Celce-Murcia, M. Teaching English as a second or foreign language. Third edition. Editer.

CCCC Committee on Assessment, (2006). "Writing Assessment: A Position Statement". Illinois.

[http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/writingassessme
nt](http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/writingassessme
nt)

Flaming, G. (2002) Noise Distraction, Does It Affect Your Grades? In "The Effects of Noise Distraction on SAT Scores," by Janice M. Chatto and Laura O'Donnell.

<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/studymethods/a/noise.htm>

Gazzana, M. (2011). Creativity in English Language Teaching.

<http://blog.marcosgazzana.com/?p=459>

Gross, D. B. (1999) *Quizzes, Tests and Exams*. In *Tools for Teaching*. Berkeley. University of California.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Chapter 22, *Speaking*. Fourth edition. Pearson Longman.

Kendle, A (2001) "Evaluating assessments and tests: Not just an "add-on" retrieved from

www.suite101.com/articles.cfm/testing_assessment

Lazaraton, A. (2001) *Teaching oral skills*. In Celce-Murcia, M. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Third edition. Editer.

Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

Muñoz, Aristizabal, Gaviria, Lopera, Crespo and Palacio (2002). *Assessing Spoken Language in EFL: Beliefs and practices*. Medellin, Colombia. Revista Universidad EAFIT.

Nancy, A. -Rubin, Donald L. (1985) *Assessing listening and speaking skills*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-923/speaking.htm>

Palmquist, M. (1993) "Teaching Pronunciation"
<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/esl/pronunciation.cfm>

Richards, J. C. Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992) *language teaching and applied linguistics*. Longman Dictionary.

Ur. P. Testing spoken language. (1996) A handbook of oral testing techniques. (pp. 22-58) Cambridge handbooks for languages teachers. Series editor.

Vernon F., and Louise Jones, 1981. Responsible classroom discipline: creating positive learning environments and solving problems. Boston.

Appendix

Appendix I

Interview n° 1

University of Nariño

Linguistics and Languages Department

English and French Program

This interview has been designed for research purposes. It has the purpose of collecting information related to oral assessment in public high schools. This interview is anonymous and your answers will be relevant for our research.

1- How do you define assessment?

2. Do you assess your students? _____

3- Why do you assess your students?

4 How often do you assess your students?

5- What kind of assessment do you develop? Oral or written?

If the teacher assesses the oral production:

6- Do you consider that it is important to assess the oral production of your students? Why?

7- how do you assess your students' oral production?

8- What aspects do you take into account when assessing your students? Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, or fluency?

9- What do you think students feel when they are taking an oral test?

10- do you think that factors such as anxiety, fear , among other
can affect the assessment?

11- which limitations do you think oral assessment
has? _____

Appendix II

Questionnaires: students

University of Nariño

Linguistics and Languages Department

English and French Program

Este cuestionario ha sido diseñado para propósitos investigativos. El propósito de este cuestionario es de encontrar información acerca de evaluaciones orales. Es anónimo y sus respuestas serán muy útiles para nuestro proyecto.

Responda las siguientes preguntas de forma clara y honesta de acuerdo a su propia experiencia.

1- ¿Cómo se siente en las clases de Inglés? Por qué?

2- ¿Su profesor realiza evaluaciones permanentes, orales o escritas? _____

3- ¿Cada cuánto es evaluado? _____

4- ¿Los temas evaluados están acorde con lo estudiado en clases?

5- ¿Ha sido evaluado de forma oral en este año escolar? ¿Cuántas veces?

6- ¿Ha presentado actividades como: dramatizaciones, presentaciones orales, entrevistas, entre otras? _____

7- Si las ha presentado, ¿Cómo se siente al realizar estas actividades? ¿Por qué? _____

8- Después de una evaluación, ¿Su profesor hace sugerencias respecto a esta? _____

9 ¿Cómo se siente al hablar en inglés en clases con sus compañeros? _____

Observaciones: _____
