ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPMENT

SECOND EDITION

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

RESEARCH FROM THE SPECIALIST PROGRAM IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION

ÚNICA
INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA
COLOMBO AMERICANA

CNG Colegio NUEVA GRANADA

JOSEPHINE TAYLOR SERIES EDITOR

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Josephine Taylor
Series Editor

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PRESENTATION

María Lucía Casas Pardo

President, Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana – ÚNICA

Since ÚNICA was created, almost fifteen years ago, we defined as our mission to work towards improving the quality of education in Colombia and to spread bilingualism both through training teachers and by creating and disseminating new, pertinent knowledge. We have been able to accomplish this ambitious goal thanks to the professional and thorough work of our professors, and the creative and rigorous efforts made by our graduate students. I do not think we really realized the extent to which their final research projects could impact the different fields that they have covered so far. However, Professor Josephine Taylor did, and undertook the task of defining topics, curating papers, and now we have this exciting collection called VOICES FROM THE FIELD. The studies on Inclusion and on English Language and Bilingualism in Colombia that were chosen have made it possible for us to publish two volumes so far that have proved to be of great interest and a source of great pride for educators throughout Colombia that we come in contact with.

At this moment, we are very proud to present the second edition of the second volume of VOICES FROM THE FIELD, which aims to address one of the hottest topics in education in Colombia today: the teaching of English in bilingual contexts, as a second or as a foreign language. In this issue, the editor carefully selected some of the numerous student research papers that address that topic from different perspectives and that, woven together, help us understand the state of the field in Colombia today. This issue starts by highlighting the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and then moves towards evaluating the impact of different interventions and methodologies. The last part is devoted to illustrating the different factors that have an impact on the effectiveness of strategies and on public policy.

I not only want to thank professor Taylor for her dedicated editorial work, but I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Anne Marie Truscott de Mejía for writing the Foreword to this second edition of our book. We feel highly honored. Dr. Truscott was a professor in our school some year ago, and she has never ceased to be a role model when it comes to thinking about academic robustness, integrity and human values.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this new edition of VOICES FROM THE FIELD and that you will feel as motivated towards contributing to improving the quality of education in Colombia and to the spreading of bilingualism as we do.

That is our mission. We want to share it with you.

María Lucía Casas Pardo is the President of ÚNICA, the first bilingual Teachers College in Colombia. She earned an undergraduate degree in Modern Languages and Education and a Master's degree from the *Universidad Javeriana*, in Bogotá. Ms. Casas has worked as a school teacher, and Professor of English and Pedagogy in the *Universidad Javeriana*. She was Academic Director of the *Gimnasio Campestre* and IB Coordinator at the *FUNDEFA-Gimnasio del Norte*. She was also the Dean of the Business School and Director of the International Relations Office in CESA, Director of Education in Compensar, and Coordinator of the Colombian National Bilingualism Committee. She has acted as advisor for the National Ministry of Education in Colombia, and the *Universidad Católica de Chile*.

FORWARD

Anne-Marie Truscott de Mejía
Universidad de los Andes

English is a relative late arrival in the linguistic landscape in Colombia. In fact, together with most of Latin America, Colombia has been associated not with English but with indigenous languages, and later with Spanish from the fifteenth century onwards and the Spanish colonisation, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when this language was the principal language of education for the indigenous communities. Similarly, educational provision for the descendants of the Spanish settlers was in the hands of the Catholic missionaries who followed in the wake of the *conquistadores* (conquerors).   Most schools were private and the languages taught were mainly Latin, Greek and Spanish. The sons and daughters of the wealthy were sent to study abroad, in France and England, and on their return, promoted the spread of these languages in the country, particularly French, which was considered the language of culture and society (Zuluaga, 1996).

It was only after the Second World War in 1945 that English became the most important foreign language in Colombia, due to the economic expansion, social, political and economic influence and the technological development of the United States. More recently, with the General Education Law (1994) foreign languages were introduced in the country at primary school level, usually in Third Grade Primary, and it was stated that, at this level, attention should be focused on: "The acquisition of elements of conversation and reading in at least one foreign language" (Article 21, objective m). Although no particular foreign language is specified by law, most institutions have adopted English. The choice of this language was later ratified by the Bilingualism Law (2013) which referred to English as the foreign language to be taught.

Even though there is evidence of a wealth of national legislation passed since 2004 referring to bilingualism and the teaching and learning of English (e.g. the National Bilingual Programme (2004), the National English Programme (2014), Bilingual Colombia (2015)), as Casmir Rubagumya (2013) notes, ¨Despite the evidence we have of what works and what does not work in classrooms in global South countries, why is it that in most cases language-in education policies are not informed by … research evidence ?¨ (p.236). This can be exemplified clearly in the Colombian context. Despite having a clear policy set out since 2004 to stimulate the expansion of bilingualism, the results have been disappointing, as documented in the recent *Education First* evaluation (2015) which shows Colombia was classified as 57 out of a total of 70 countries, with a score of 46.54 (very low). However, the Ministry of Education has generally not evaluated the success of the implementation of these initiatives, or whether there have been studies to evaluate new developments.

This is where the publication of this book is particularly timely. As its title "Voices from the field" suggests, these are chapters written by students and teachers who are familiar with developments in English language teaching and learning and bilingualism in Bogotá and provide empirical evidence to support the results and conclusions of the different research studies carried out. I was particularly struck by the variety of projects presented. There are voices from the field referring to teachers and students' attitudes and beliefs, the development of intercultural competence, language and content issues, as well as ELT in rural schools, among others.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in current research into bilingualism and English language teaching and learning in Colombia and congratulate both the Series Editor, Josephine Taylor, and María Lucía Casas Pardo, President of ÚNICA, on this valuable initiative.

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Anne-Marie Truscott de Mejía worked at the School of Education at Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia for 13 years and was the director of the Ph.D Programme in Education. She holds a Ph.D in Linguistics in the area of Bilingual Education from Lancaster University, U.K. Her research interests include bilingual classroom interaction, the construction of bilingual curricula and processes of empowerment, language and education policy, and bilingual teacher development. She is the author of a number of books and articles in the area of bilingualism and bilingual education both in Spanish and English. Her latest publications include *Empowering Teachers across* Cultures (2011) jointly edited with Christine Hélot, *Immersion education in the early years* (2016), jointly edited with Tina Hickey, as well as *Bilingüismo en el contexto Colombiano. Iniciativas y perspectivas en el Siglo XXI* (2011), co-edited with Alexis López and Beatriz Peña Dix and *Exploraciones sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas y contenidos en programas bilingües* (2012), co-edited with Beatriz Peña Dix, María Cristina Arciniegas and Marta Luisa Montiel.

INTRODUCTION

Josephine Taylor

Since publication of the first edition one year ago of *English Language and Bilingual Programs in Development: Voices from the Field,* little has changed to alter my assertions in the previous Introduction to the book. English is still the desired second language in Colombia, having long secured its status as the main or only second or foreign language taught in schools. The Colombian government and Ministry of Education continue to prioritize English over other possible or logical second languages for our context, e.g. Portuguese, and push ahead with initiatives, materials, training, and curricular and textbook development dedicated to English language teaching.

Unfortunately, as Anne-Marie Truscott points out in her Forward to this second edition, results in terms of student proficiency are generally limited to poor. The precise formula or strategy to improve English language instruction and student outcomes continue to elude the Ministry, and surely the implementation of large-scale initiatives and evaluation of their impact is a daunting if not impossible task in an era in which government resources for education, particularly public tertiary education, are being targeted for budget cuts.

A recent assessment of Colombian education by the OECD (2016), to which Colombia was only recently granted membership, highlights important gains in recent years in terms of school life expectancy, reading levels, and spending. However, the report also pinpoints the continued need for improvement and prioritizing of education as a key to overcoming decades of war and poverty in the country. Part of this prioritization includes a call for ambitious and well-resourced plans, particularly in the early years and in the most needed schools and sectors, namely rural areas.

In terms of English language teaching, the goal of the National Bilingual Colombia Program is essentially stated as the need to prioritize English as the official second language in order to prepare the country for globalization and cultural contact by forming citizens who can act and interact in these contexts. If this goal remains accurate, then fundamental, sustained actions are needed whose impact is also measured consistently in order to create a feedback spiral of gains, issues, adjustments, inputs, actors, models and outcomes. Unfortunately, Colombia finds itself at a key juncture in which, from the perspective of this observer, it faces sticky problems that threaten not only improvement in the area of foreign language teaching, but the educational system as a whole. Exposure of rampant corruption in public and private sectors is daily, funding for public education is slated for decreases by the current government, causing widespread protests by students and teachers throughout the country. The idea that education does not merit substantial investment by the State, that public funds are simply not available, and that corruption in all levels of government, including local school authorities, continues unfettered works in stark countercurrent to the core of educators' motivation to continue to strive to make a difference.

Nevertheless, dedicated educators are everywhere in Colombia, and they continue in spite of often inadequate conditions and systemic challenges to persevere to ensure student learning. Many teachers seek out and complete postgraduate programs, often in their own time, and on their own dime. The Specialist Program in Bilingual Education of the *Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana - ÚNICA* is such a program, where dedicated schoolteachers and other education professionals come to hone their language teaching skills and general instructional effectiveness. This endeavor culminates in the program's final research projects in which students investigate areas of interest tied to real life challenges and issues they encounter in their classrooms and institutions. Their valuable work serves as a clear contribution to a broader understanding of educational realities in Colombia, and has served as material for our publication project: a several-volume series entitled *Voices from the Field: Research from the Specialist Program in Bilingual Education.*

The first volume in the series highlights research on academic and social inclusion in Colombia. The research in this second volume addresses English language and bilingual programs in development in public and private contexts in and around Bogotá and was so successful among professionals in our field that we decided to add two more chapters and publish a second edition. It is our hope that by contributing to scholarship on this issue, we may aid in informing policy and practice in and beyond our setting. The research in this volume of *Voices from the Field* focuses on two main areas: English language programs and bilingual/immersion education in development. Most of the programs examined find themselves in various stages of development, renovation and reform. Some of them are new programs or innovations being developed as we publish, and others offer insights to conditions and programs that already exist in educational institutions in an effort to establish a description of baseline conditions and point the way forward for future work. The research in the volume includes exploratory and descriptive studies as well as action research, and small scale studies on well-established programs. All of the studies offer unique insights into teaching and learning processes in and around Bogotá as well as outside the capital, with one study from Sasaima, Cundinamarca and another from the city of Cartagena. We feel that our studies will undoubtedly also shed light on similar processes elsewhere in Colombia and Latin America.

In terms of these processes, clear findings emerge when we examine the studies in the series and the theory and research they review. These findings are clustered around the areas of teachers as important stakeholders and factors in learning processes, students and student motivation, and connections and communication among stakeholders in specific educational contexts. Most of these findings intersect with and support overall findings in the first volume in this series, *Academic and Social Inclusion in Colombia.* In reference to the latter, clear findings emerge across subject areas and settings that all-sided efforts in educational contexts yield better results than isolated attempts. When school administrators, school authorities, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders communicate and cooperate, innovations and targeted actions are more effective as they contemplate the role of each and all involved in the delivery of learning. This conclusion is backed by the research, and this volume contains several studies in which this is clear. In ***Chapter 1, Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers and other Stakeholders in Curricular Innovation: The Case of Bogotá's Language Immersion Rooms,*** **Clara Inés Lozano Espejo** examines the process of curricular innovation. She found that communication of the aims and process of curricular innovation is crucial to the project's success. The innovation

in this case involved the implementation of language immersion rooms in which Colombian English teachers collaborate with international language volunteers to bring hands-on language learning experiences to high school students in the optional immersion rooms.

Another consistent finding in the literature and also in the studies in *Voices* is the centrality of student motivation in language learning processes. In *Chapter 2, Factors Affecting English Language Learning and Language Maintenance in Air Traffic Controllers,* by **Nubia Torres Alvarado,** we find that language learners have clear expectations in terms of instructional preferences, as well as their needs in terms of language improvement and maintenance. This supports research that suggests a more internal locus of control and a stronger source of motivation from within as pivotal for long-term learning. This runs counter to common opinion that often places the teacher in the center of the responsibility for student motivation.

This finding is further borne out by **Héctor Jesús Mancipe Salguero's study in** *Chapter 3, Effects of Interaction with International Visitors on the Development of Intercultural Competence in High School Students,* in which experiences interacting with English speakers in real life prove to be quite challenging but extremely motivating at the same time for students. The study points out that when we listen to students' voices, and consider factors that affect their engagement, they often point the way in which they wish to go.

The internal motivational core of students is also borne out strongly by **German Eduardo Huertas Mayorquin in** *Chapter 4, The Impact of Authentic Materials on Oral Proficiency and Motivation of English as a Foreign Language Students*. In this case, the author-researcher proposed the use of authentic material for listening, considering in advance what might possibly interest high school students the most. He found that by connecting with students' interests, learners became not only more engaged with the material and the English lessons, they were willing to take actions themselves to search out interesting input on their own.

Two studies in this volume take place in contexts of partial immersion as described previously in this introduction. In both contexts, school administrators have decided to move to a subtractive bilingual model in which core academic subjects are taught in English in early grades rather than in the child's first language. The findings in these studies coincide with the points raised above regarding the role of the first language, and the need for coordinated efforts and teacher training in order to ensure that this innovation results in actual benefits for students, rather than harm.

In *Chapter 5, The Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Strategies on Learning Math in English,* **Liliana Astroza Jaime** reports positive outcomes when students' first language, Spanish, is used in specific ways to support math instruction in English. Particularly, the study points to two strategies: *glossaries* and *reflective talk* as particularly effective mother tongue support that aided not only students' math performance, but also positively impacted their attitudes towards math.

In a similar context also in an English language math program in primary school, **Lady Alvarado Santis, Claudia Bareño Rodriguez,** and **Lucía Mendoza Medina** examine in *Chapter 6* the *Factors Influencing Effective Implementation of a CLIL Math Curriculum.* Their findings also coincide with the theory and research not only on bilingual and immersion education, but also the findings outside of bilingual education, pointing to the key factors of teacher training and

coordinated efforts among stakeholders and their power to impact the success or failure of curricular innovations.

These findings also emerge in **Fanny Zambrano Orjuela's** study in *Chapter 7, Conditions of English Language Teaching in Eleven Rural Public Schools in Bogotá: Perspectives of Students, Teachers, and School Community.* In this case, the lack of communication from the center to the periphery in terms of English language policy and strategies give rise to several phenomena including a lack of development of the curriculum in rural schools, and a lack of knowledge about support and resources available from local or national school authorities. The result in this and many other cases in the studies in this and other volumes in our series is the ever-common finding of teachers seeking out and paying for their own training as a result of a lack of consistent programs for teacher training provided by schools or school authorities.

Our second edition includes two new articles by dedicated teacher researchers on the effects of instructional innovations involving formative assessment and task-based learning models. Both studies took place outside Bogotá, and offer a view from other regions in the country. In *Chapter 8, Teachers and Students' Attitudes towards Formative and Authentic Assessment and its Effect on Student Performance and Motivation*, **Juan Carlos Figueroa Pinilla** demonstrates the positive effects in mindsets and attitudes towards English language learning on the part of high school students and teachers by implementing a TBL instructional model and formative assessment. In a similar study with disadvantaged youth in Cartagena, **Nolvin López Ortega's** research highlighted in *Chapter 9, The Effect of Formative Assessment and a Task-based Curriculum on Oral Language Proficiency in an After-school Program for At-risk Youth* demonstrates clear, consistent gains in language proficiency when using a TBL model as a basis for formative assessment with these youth.

It is our hope that the research in this volume, and the theory and research reviewed by these studies can help shed light on local realities and at the same time contribute to overall conclusions that might have the power to empower and celebrate individual educators' efforts in spite of substantial challenges in our country.

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Josephine Taylor holds a BA in English and French from Emory University and an MS in Teaching English as a Second Language from Georgia State University, both in Atlanta, Georgia. She has taught for over 30 years and is currently full time professor and editor at ÚNICA.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF TEACHERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN CURRICULAR INNOVATION: THE CASE OF BOGOTÁ'S LANGUAGE IMMERSION ROOMS

Clara Inés Lozano Espejo

The Language Immersion Rooms in Bogotá schools are just one of several curricular options offered to students as part of its 40x40 policy, in which high school students spend more time in school (40 weeks per year and 40 hours per week). This policy aims towards the deepening of extracurricular activities such as sports, culture, music, and language, through a complementary but flexible curriculum. Most importantly, students choose which activities to attend according to their own interests. As an insider in the process of curricular diffusion of the Language Immersion Rooms, Clara Lozano had the unique perspective of participant researcher that enabled her to examine and understand the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and other stakeholders in the process of curricular development.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand factors affecting the implementation and diffusion of curricular innovation in the Language Immersion Rooms program in the Bogotá School District. The study focused on discovering attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of teachers and other stakeholders in relation to this particular curricular innovation. In order to answer these questions, the participant researcher surveyed 37 supporting (Colombian) teachers, 13 cooperating (foreign) teachers, and eight members of the administrative staff in the schools (principals or coordinators), conducted follow-up interviews with six teachers, and analyzed documents generated during the piloting and implementation process. In terms of results, most of the stakeholders believe that the program contributes to strengthening the students and the teachers' level of English as well as their intercultural competence, students' citizenship competence, and teachers' methodological strategies. On the other hand, however, teachers pointed out the lack of support from the administrative staff in the schools and the continuous logistical changes from the District Education Secretariat as obstacles in the implementation and the diffusion process.

Key words:

Curricular innovation, Diffusion, Implementation, Teacher attitudes, Beliefs, Foreign language

RESUMEN

Este trabajo de investigación buscaba fundamentalmente comprender los factores que afectaron tanto la implementación como la difusión de la propuesta de innovación curricular del programa Aulas de Inmersión de la Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá. El interés particular del estudio era analizar hasta qué punto las actitudes, creencias y percepciones de los profesores y los demás participantes contribuían al éxito del proceso, o por el contrario lo retrasaban. Con el fin de resolver estos interrogantes, se encuestaron 37 docentes de apoyo (profesores colombianos), 13 cooperantes extranjeros (acompañantes del proceso en las aulas junto con los docentes colombianos) y ocho directivos docentes (rectores y coordinadores). Adicionalmente, se entrevistaron a seis docentes y se analizaron algunos documentos que surgieron durante el proceso de pilotaje e implementación de la propuesta. En términos generales, los resultados de la investigación evidenciaron la gran influencia

que ejercen las percepciones y actitudes de los participantes, especialmente las de los profesores, en la implementación exitosa de una propuesta curricular innovadora. En el caso particular del programa Aulas de Inmersión, la mayoría de los participantes considera que el programa contribuye al fortalecimiento del nivel de inglés tanto de los estudiantes como de los docentes, al igual que al desarrollo de la competencia intercultural y de la competencia ciudadana de los estudiantes, y al mejoramiento de las estrategias metodológicas de los docentes. No obstante lo anterior, los docentes señalan que la falta de apoyo por parte de algunos directivos docentes en los colegios y los continuos cambios organizacionales y logísticos por parte de la Secretaría de Educación del Distrito son factores que obstaculizan el proceso de implementación y difusión de la propuesta. Para concluir, en este estudio se presentan algunas sugerencias relacionadas con el papel de los directivos docentes en la implementación de cualquier propuesta de innovación curricular; se establece la necesidad de evaluar continuamente los procesos antes de ejecutar cambios y se subraya la necesidad de creación de equipos en los cuales se tenga en cuenta las ideas de los docentes en el momento de iniciar una nueva propuesta.

Palabras clave:
Innovación curricular, Difusión, Implementación, Actitudes de los profesores, Creencias de los profesores, Lengua extranjera.

INTRODUCTION

The presentation of a new curricular proposal invites reflection about what defines the initiative as an innovation. This means to observe the extent to which the proposal affects a specific population in a context, as well as whether it is perceived as a valid and reliable solution to an identified problem. Innovation is also a changeable and continuous process that starts with the observation of a need, plans based on that observation, development of an idea, implementation, and evaluation in order to adapt and contextualize the idea.

Studies show that innovation takes time and team work because it needs to be understood by all the participants of the process. It is not easy for stakeholders to implement new ideas that are strange or out of context. For this reason, researchers emphasize the need to work cooperatively with members of the community, especially teachers, because they are the final stakeholders of the initiative.

Recent studies have found that the teachers' attitudes, beliefs and experiences determine the success of implementation and diffusion of new or renovated curricula. This is why it is fundamental to involve them from the beginning of the process. Teachers should be part of the developmental stage and should also be the ones in charge of the diffusion of the proposal in their specific environments. Research has also identified that factors such as the level of language of students and teachers, lack of resources, lack of support from administrative

staff, and lack of time for team work or preparation can become obstacles in the process of implementation and diffusion of any innovative language proposal.

The Language Immersion Rooms or *Linguaventuras* program in the Bogotá School District is considered such an innovative idea. The project is intended to increase the English level of students in selected public schools in the city through strategies that promote the use of language in natural environments in which students can communicate with people from different cultures and develop citizenship skills. These skills can help learners become more aware of their role as members of a community.

This study intended to analyze the stakeholder's beliefs and attitudes towards the project, and how these beliefs and attitudes impacted the implementation of the Immersion Rooms program. The study of the data also helped the researcher to identify other aspects that may contribute to or stifle the process of development, implementation, and diffusion.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CURRICULAR INNOVATION

Variation and context are two fundamental points to be taken into account when explaining the concept of curriculum (MacCarthy & Carter, as cited in Hall & Hewings, 2001). This means that defining curriculum implies the idea of a continuous and changeable process, as described by Hall and Hewing (2001), who say that language curriculum is the combination of a set of aspects related to "the planning, implementation and evaluation of a series of language learning events conceived as a coherent whole with a specified purpose" (p. 1). Markee (1997) describes a curriculum as a collaborative and reflective process that is guided consciously and presupposes the presentation of new materials or ideas on teaching or developing skills in order to be implemented in a specific context by a particular group of users as a response to an identified need.

Curricular innovation should be perceived as a regular activity in the field of education; however, research and experience show that success in the development and implementation of new proposals depends on factors such as the perception of the people participating in the process, the type of involvement of those participants in the development and implementation, the way the ideas have been introduced, executed, and expanded, and the relationship with previous studies or experiences (Markee, 1997).

In general, the difference between innovation and change involves the degree to which participants have been involved in the process, and are aware of the need for implementing new proposals in a given context. Innovation is understood as conscious, desirable by a group, and created with a purpose. Rogers (2003) defines it as "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (p. 11). Change is an unconscious and continuing process that transforms some relatively known aspects into a new idea (Hall & Hewings, 2001). Markee (1997) states that innovation and change are two interchangeable and

complementary terms because it is not clear enough to which point an idea could be completely new for the people involved, nor the length of the proposal or its effect over time.

Hylland and Wong refer to innovation as "constructive change" (Hylland & Wong, 2013, p.2). They define this concept as a "process which implies deliberation and consciousness," which suggests a goal to be reached, and indicates an order to follow (Kennedy, as cited in Hylland & Wong, 2013, p.2). Besides, they clarify that change is "systemic and holistic" (Hylland & Wong, 2013, p. 6), which means that it is impossible to imagine one aspect without establishing its relationship with the others. They also explain that the difference between these two concepts lies in the "perception" of those who are participating in the implementation.

Another aspect to reflect on when talking about the importance of "perception" in the definition of change and innovation is the idea of *newness*, which is presented by Markee (1997) as a subjective concept because it depends more on the "individual end users perception" (p. 54) than on general standards. Rogers (2013) develops this same idea by saying that "the perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines his or her reaction to it" (p. 11). This conception leads us to think about the relevance of working on individuals' beliefs since the beginning of the process when developing an innovative idea. Markee further points out that development and innovation can be understood as synonyms (Jéquier, as cited in Markee, 1997) and poses differentiating two stages of the change process: "under-development," which involves the beginnings, and "development," covering the whole plan and the last stage of it.

To deepen into the relationship between innovation and development, Markee proposes differentiating between primary and secondary innovations. Primary innovations deal with all the aspects directly affecting the teaching and learning dimensions: pedagogical values, methodological skills, and teaching and/or testing materials (Fullan, as cited in Markee, 1997). Secondary innovations refer to the organizational aspects that make possible the execution of the primary innovative actions.

Markee (1997) analyzes six factors described by Cooper in the following question: "Who adopts what, where, when, why, and how?" (Cooper, as cited in Markee, 1997, p. 42).

Who refers to the participants involved in the process, some of them adopters and others resisters, depending on their participation and representativeness: teachers, government officials, representatives of specialized institutions, and staff in schools (other English teachers, principals, coordinators, among others). Teachers are fundamental in the process of curricular innovation because most of the times, they are the ones in charge of developing and implementing, at least in part, the new proposals (Markee, 1997). To emphasize the role of teachers as managers in charge of daily innovative alternatives, Markee borrows the concept of management from Mullins (as cited in Markee, 1997), and concludes that teachers need to think about themselves as managers because they perform most of the duties that define the role of a manager in their everyday activities: they plan the work based on established goals, organize and distribute activities and tasks, and direct and control the performance of others' work (the students). Understood in this way, teachers are able to improve or make more valuable the development of any curricular innovation. Besides, Markee (1997) suggests involving teachers in any curricular innovation since the beginning because they affect the success of the experience with their beliefs as they play a critical role in the development and implementation stages. Hylland and Wong (2013) explain that there is a need to help teachers

as end users of the innovative proposals to reflect on the way they are implementing them in such a way that they can be an active part of the process. They synthesize the role of teachers in the following sentence: "Innovations can, and should, be supported from above and forced through by clear policies, adequate funding and professional development initiatives, but if teachers have not fully embraced the concepts, then the innovation will die" (Hylland &Wong, 2013, Introduction).

Adopts has to do with the making-decision process. Rogers and Shoemaker (as cited in Markee, 1997) define four phases: acquiring and understanding knowledge about the innovative idea, persuasion, deciding if adopting or rejecting the innovation, execution of the proposal, and ratification or not of the first decision.

What is about the concept of innovation itself, which Markee defines as "a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters" (Markee, 1997, p.46).

According to Cooper, **where** is related to the sociocultural context (as cited in Markee, 1997); however, Markee argues that **where** also implies geographical issues that can influence the success of an innovation in a great amount. Kennedy (as cited in Markee, 1997) establishes the different sociocultural issues that can generate any impact in the process of innovation (institutional, educational, administrative, political and cultural), and concludes that more than thinking of the idea of organizing those factors into a hierarchical way, it is relevant to talk about the interrelation existing among them, and to reflect on the way in which the importance of those factors varies depending on the context. Hylland and Wong (2013) agree that it is not possible to generalize proposals because only by understanding the particularities of a context can we present sustainable and valid innovative ideas.

When considers the relationship between time and number of users who implement the innovation, which is directly related with the concept of *diffusion*. In terms of acceptance of new ideas, Markee (1997) and Hall and Hewings (2001) explain how much of the success of a proposal is determined by the techniques of diffusion applied. The more participants involved, convinced, and satisfied in the process, the more the success of the idea can be assured. Hall and Hewing (2001) mention that in general, innovation can be seen as an imposition at first, but the perception tends to change as time passes if people become involved in the process through various means: workshops, consultation, surveys, and team analysis. Rogers (as cited in Markee, 1997) defines change as a resultant action of two sequential factors: invention and diffusion, which are influenced by cultural, economic, political, social and individual features.

Hylland and Wong (2013) define *diffusion* as "the process through which an innovation is communicated and made real" (Rogers, as cited in Hylland & Wong, 2013). This part of the process is of a great value because it is the time when those who are being involved directly establish contact, and understand the idea and the way it is put into practice. Rogers (2003) describes *diffusion* as a two-way process of communication in which the individuals exchange information concerning new ideas about a shared goal (Rogers & Kincaid, as cited in Rogers, 2003). Additionally, he identifies four fundamental elements in the *diffusion* process: innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system (Rogers, 2003), and proposes two types of diffusion: centralized and decentralized. In the centralized system, a group of experts makes

the decisions about the *diffusion* and evaluation strategies, the communication channels, and the diffusion time. In a decentralized system, the decisions are made horizontally; all the potential adopters propose and conclude about the most appropriate strategies to carry out the proposal widely. Markee (1997) also relates the number of adopters with the diffusion process. He establishes five types of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Huberman & Rogers as cited in Markee, 1997). The stability of the innovative proposal is declared reached when the laggards and resisters start participating in the process. Regarding this topic, Markee (1997) concludes that to make any proposal lasting, it is fundamental to involve the highest number of participants in the diffusion process. However, this can be a tiring task. It is not easy to reach positive results in a short period of time because it necessarily implies moving the late majority from the comfort zone. At the beginning, the users can feel a kind of discomfort experimenting with new materials or methodologies, but as time passes by, they feel more relaxed, confident and convinced.

Why deals with the psychological qualities of adopters and the characteristics of successful proposals (Markee, 1997). When referring to the profiles of the adopters, Markee considers two categories: "the early adopters and the laggards" (p. 58). Early adopters are open to new ideas due to personal and sociocultural factors such as high levels of education, having had the chance to share experiences in mass media, participation in events related to professional development, among others. Laggards, on the other hand, do not feel confident enough with innovation and prefer to observe in the distance while they continue the practices they believe have been successful. The relationship between these two different profiles establishes a relevant effect in the implementation because early adopters are seen as leaders by the other teachers. As a consequence, when they make a decision, the period of time for the laggards and resisters to observe is going to be less, and as such the adoption of the innovation.

The second aspect related to why are the qualities of innovation itself. Rogers and other authors identify five fundamental characteristics that can affect the decision-making process: "the *advantages* of adopting the new proposal, the *compatibility* with preceding experiences, the *complexity*, the *trialability*, and the *observability*." (Rogers as cited in Markee, 1997, p. 56). Besides these first five, Markee (1997) states five further attributes: the *form*, the *explicitness*, the *originality*, the *adaptability*, and the *feasibility*. Markee (1997) says that the adoption of a proposal that fulfills these ten attributes is easier to sustain because potential users have the feeling that it is beneficial for them, and that its ideas are similar to previous ones, i.e., are not too abstract, unobservable, or too difficult to understand or implement. Innovation also needs to be original, adaptable to the reality for which it is proposed, and needs to take into account the resources as well as the characteristics of the end users.

How establishes the ways of implementing new ideas in a context. To do that, Markee (1997) presents five models of change based on the reciprocal relationship between the strategies of change, the leadership styles, and the change itself. The *social interaction model* focuses on communication as a means of creating proposals from the base; participants in the process give ideas and make decisions together. *The center-periphery model* is defined from a hierarchical perception in which the power identities make decisions and teachers just implement by following directions. *The research, development, and diffusion model* centers the attention on the application of theories presented by experts, implemented by the teachers and mediated by groups of specialists who are in charge of planning, developing, applying and evaluating the

proposals. The *problem solving model* has as its point of departure the identification of a need for change, and takes into account the beliefs and reflections of participants in the process. The *linkage model* basically proposes the application of any of the models depending on the problem to be solved and the situations that surround it.

The diffusionist perspective, proposed by Markee, also advocates deep consideration of the different types of change as a way of understanding the reasons why some proposals are successful and others are not. Markee (1997) introduces four types of change established by modern diffusion theory based on two elements: who recognizes the need for change and who proposes the change. In cases of *immanent* change, who recognizes and who proposes are both part of the same system. *Selective contact change* occurs when a community adopts a proposal that comes from another social system. *Induced immanent change* happens when the problem is perceived by people who are out of the context, but it is solved by those who are experiencing the situation. The fourth type is *directed contact change*, which is characterized by the presentation of new ideas from outside into a social system to propose solution to situations those external experts consider important to be solved. Those programs which are developed by groups perceived as external by the community affected are difficult to sustain because of the way in which the changes are communicated to the stakeholders, the negative effect they cause in teachers who are observed as the center of the development, and the resistance to change of the end users (teachers, students, coordinators).

Concluding, innovation is an inherent characteristic of curriculum, and one of the most meaningful aspects to keep in mind about curriculum innovation is the role of the participants, as well as their attitudes and beliefs, in the process. They can become adopters or resisters, and key points in the success of the development and implementation of the proposal. Another aspect to reflect on is the way in which the ideas are spread within the context and the coherence of the program with the needs and desires of the population involved. These two aspects are also the basis in the application of the present project and consequently, fundamental in the positive or negative results of it. As it is stated by Markee (1997), innovation breaks with previous practices, has solid academic basis, is supported by strong *diffusion* strategies, and is linked in form to some aspects of the previous experiences. When innovative materials or proposals have some similarities to previous ideas, it is easier to set positive contact with teachers because they perceive the new ideas as compatible with their behaviors and beliefs. As a consequence, there is a high possibility of successful implementation with the students. Finally, it is essential to observe all the adaptations of end users throughout the process because they determine the impact of the new proposal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been devoted to investigating the processes of curricular innovation, in particular the factors that affect curricular innovation implementation and diffusion. Following Rogers (1995), some authors have centered their attention on the fundamental characteristics that concern innovation in general: need, availability, compatibility, relative advantage, observability and achievability (Owston, 2006). Others have focused on internal aspects, such as the way the initiative is conceived, the methodological and theoretical fundamentals, the

participants (teachers, students, principals, parents, and the community in general), their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, the elements of the environment where it is developed and implemented, including the type of school or district, and cultural background (Owston, 2006). Others have observed the external factors that help the sustainability of the initiative: plans and policies, funding, rewards and recognition, among others. To understand the extent to which these factors affect development, implementation, and diffusion, it is essential to go in depth into the relationship between them and the way their interdependence becomes an obstacle or an advantage in the process.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF PARTICIPANTS

Jeffers (2008) found that the attitudes of the participants along the development, implementation, and diffusion of any innovation are diverse depending on the roles they play and their degree of involvement. For example, he identified that parents in general show a positive attitude although they continuously ask for more information about curricular implementation. Teachers, on the other hand, change their perception according to the degree of engagement, and external agents who support the proposal vary their level of enthusiasm or resistance in accordance with the results obtained.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Although the rest of the participants (parents, principals, government agents, students) have a relevant place in the process of innovation, teachers are considered to be the key factor when developing and implementing initiatives due to the coercive influence they have upon the others. Owston (2006) found that the innovation needs to be aligned with the goals of the teacher, that teachers' feelings, thoughts, and perceptions towards the pedagogical approach contribute to sustaining the proposal, and that teachers need to witness the advantages of the innovation for students, as well as its recognition in similar contexts or environments.

Similarly, Webster, et al. (2013) identified that teachers who perceive the school environment as more supportive are more open to seeing the innovation as a favorable strategy in terms of its relative advantage, compatibility, simplicity, trialability, and observability, creating in this way a positive climate for the permanence and diffusion of a program. Additionally, Ofsted (2008) and Mata and Suciu (2011) found that teachers worry mostly about organizational and external factors like national tests, finance, resources, management, and instructional and cultural aspects that can become impediments for them not to implement the curricula proposed.

When talking about teachers' perceptions of curricular proposals, Orafi (2008) and Fouzi (2014) report similar findings in which teachers felt that there was not a direct relationship between the initiatives and the context because they were not related to students' realities, level of language or needs, because they were beyond their own level and understanding, or were imposed.

Another aspect related to teachers as main agents of innovation is related to their resistance to change in the classroom although they express agreement with the newness. They continue with their old practices and justify their decisions with external factors, such as lack of time to implement new strategies or content. In the case of innovation for more communicative

language practices, teachers may be feel that there is a lack of time for the use of pair work or speaking activities, that controlled practices are better for large classes, or that these practices will not help students prepare for external exams, among others (Canh, 2007; Gorsuch, 2001; Longkai & Chee-Kit, 2014; Shiu, 2008). This is also confirmed by Mulat (2003), who states that teachers "articulated a number of constraints that hamper the affective accomplishment of CLT as planned" (p. V).

The studies also show that the main reasons for teachers' resistance or approval towards a new idea lie in contextual factors: number of students, students' life projects, type of school and form of instruction, training, resources, standardized tests, financial support, location and time available for the implementation, information about the proposal itself, and support from the school and school community (Canh, 2007; Gorsuch, 2001; Mulat, 2003; Shiu, 2008, Webster, et al.., 2013). However, there are also aspects concerning the teachers themselves that need to be considered when examining the causes for teachers' caution: age, years of experience, their own levels of language performance, policy awareness, intrapersonal variables, previous experiences, and old practices (Gorsuch, 2001; Webster, et al.., 2013).

On the other hand, research has also found that although there are cases in which teachers preferred to omit or transform activities instead of trying the principles proposed in the curricular initiative as a result of their previous beliefs (Orafi, 2008), there are many others in which teachers changed their minds about an innovative proposal, their perception towards classroom practices and management, as well as students' performance. Jeffers (2008), O´Donahue (2012), and Rahimi and Naderi (2014) report that when teachers begin reflecting on their own practices and perceptions, they become part of the change process, and as a consequence, the results seem to be more positive. In addition, Longkai and Chee-Kit Looi (2014), Ofsted (2008), and Owston (2006) report that teachers' positive attitudes towards innovation determine higher levels of performance and motivation of students, more professional development, and more engagement by leaders. Similarly, A Rahman (2014), McGee (2006), and Mulat (2003) emphasize the need to look for strategies that connect teachers' perceptions with the innovation because those previous ideas define the success of the implementation in terms of teachers' practices and student achievements.

O´Donahue (2012) and Walter (2012) also highlight the idea of involving teachers in projects as key actors in the process of diffusion because they create an appropriate environment for diffusion of the proposal within the community, creating an empathetic context of mutual interaction and contribution. Besides, Webster, et al. (2013) concluded that it is more certain obtain better results in terms of adoption and long-time life of the new initiatives if teachers perceive them as more compatible with their own teaching philosophies and abilities, if they feel part of their development, if they are aware of the policy, and if they feel they are supported.

OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING CURRICULAR INNOVATION AND DIFFUSION

Studies have shown that it is almost impossible to talk about teachers' attitudes and perceptions without mentioning the external factors considered as impediments or supportive elements in the development, implementation, and diffusion of an innovative idea. In general, there is a

consensus about the importance of building a proposal based on the context and needs of the population, team work, teachers' development, reflection, and supportive resources. In this respect, Ofsted (2008) states that a successful initiative needs to focus on understanding the reasons for presenting it, and on the creation of a team in charge of heading and leading the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the process. In addition, Ofsted (2008) establishes four aspects to be considered when analyzing any innovation: interdisciplinary work, time flexibility in the implementation, development of learning skills, and providing alternatives for the implementation.

Regarding contextualization, Fouzi (2014) and Mulat (2003) say that studying the reality of the schools is the first stage when planning a curriculum. In this respect, Wardford (2005) adds that state mandates are negative in the process of implementation and diffusion because they diminish reliability and validity. This author emphasizes the need to provide conceptual clarity and to show how useful a proposal may be for the context by saying that it is more powerful to look for procedures appropriate and acceptable for the context than imposing strategies that have worked in other environments. Similarly, Rahimi and Naderi (2014) as well as A Rahman (2014) underline the need to relate theory, context, and current practices before starting any implementation.

The studies also present teamwork as a major need to strengthen any innovation as the interaction between teachers and leaders contributes to the process of convincing and involving other teachers in the diffusion process, as well as a way of developing skills to reflect upon own practices. Longkai and Chee-Kit (2014) and McGee (2006) point out that teachers create a sense of ownership of the innovation and become leaders of the process inside their institutions. Warford (2005) sees teamwork as a way of sharing and spreading concepts, as well as a form to explain and predict the success or failure of an innovation. Additionally, Walter (2012) highlights the need for creating teams as a way of involving teachers in the establishment of local communities which can become leaders of larger innovative processes that emerge from the context and can be transformed into models for other proposals. Owston (2006) also says that teachers need to have the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues and to reflect on implementation issues in order to improve their professional development.

Considering external circumstances that affect teacher development and generate indirect effects on innovation, the studies indicate that teachers' low level of proficiency and the lack of training constitute two of the main constraints that delay processes of foreign language innovation because teachers do not feel comfortable or prepared enough for the changes. As a result, they prefer to continue with their previous practices. In this respect, Fouzi (2014) argues the need to update teachers permanently. Gorsuch (2001) and Shiu (2008) argue for the need to work on pedagogical and methodological training to help teachers feel confident enough implementing new strategies. Finally, A Rahman (2014) underlines the need to provide time for the teachers to try out the different approaches and to learn from the reflection about their own practices.

Time and space to reflect on and apply the new strategies, as well as support from the diverse leaders of the process (supervisors, principals, government, innovation planners), are considered as the factors that can generate positive or negative effects throughout the entire process of innovation. Hadley (2006) considers them fundamental for training and collaborative work,

and McGee (2006) believes that they are the basis of planning, management, communication and reflection on new ideas and practices. On the other hand, O´Donahue (2012), Rahimi and Naderi (2014), and Webster, et al. (2013) see them as possible important obstacles for the development and implementation, so they recommend increasing support and time as a means to empower all the participants and build teamwork and leadership environments. Canh (2007) also emphasizes this idea by saying that changing beliefs implies time and continuous work because it is a matter of assigning teachers a central role in the process of innovation.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The main focus of this study was to identify the factors that affect the implementation and diffusion of a proposed curriculum. As such, the research was based on features of the descriptive method as it is related to the observable circumstances and the relationships established among the different variables. As Best (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) states, "Descriptive research concerns the practices that prevail; beliefs, points of views, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing" (p. 205). Specifically, this research followed *trend study* procedures in that its intention was to analyze data in order to recognize possible features of change, and the extent in which they can become a positive or negative influence for the long-lasting life of the proposal. In this method, *inquiry* was the technique used to lead the description, comparison, and the analysis of the data. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that as we are working with human beings and their beliefs, feelings and perceptions, this study followed Mason's arguments about the need of combining methods in order to have relevant and complete explanation of the phenomenon studied (as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007), so techniques and instruments normally used in the qualitative naturalistic method were used.

CONTEXT

Since 2013, the Bogotá Education Secretariat has been implementing a curricular proposal for foreign language immersion rooms called *Linguaventuras*. This initiative is part of a general educational framework called "Curriculum for Academic Excellence and Integrative Education in Bogotá's Full-day Schools." This curriculum sets out to contribute to the *integral* or overall development of students and improve their academic level by offering different curricular alternatives (arts, sports, creative writing, science, citizenship, mathematics and languages), which are implemented in the interest centers during the "opposite shift" (morning students attend in the afternoon shift and vice versa). In this underlying structure, the Language Immersion Rooms curriculum aims to develop communicative skills as well as citizenship competences by creating an environment in which students have the opportunity to participate

in ludic activities, interact with people from different cultures, and reflect upon their need to become conscious citizens, aware of themselves and their environment. This implies becoming involved in the processes of change in their city, beginning with their own social, cultural, and academic transformation. (Téllez & Lozano, 2014).

Background of the program. The Language Immersion Rooms, or *Linguaventuras* program started with volunteer students from 21 public schools whose principals chose to be part of the project. A team from the Bilingualism section of the District Secretariat of Education (SED) of Bogotá developed a proposal based on the concept of a trip, so students would travel to different places in the Immersion Rooms with the help of an English teacher nominated by the SED, and a foreigner who was not necessarily a teacher. The main theoretical framework of this first version was another SED program entitled *Curricular Reorganization by Cycles*, which basically introduces the concept of organizing the schools' curricula according to stages of human development. This means that the topics of the curriculum observed the ages, interests, and motivations, as well as the socio-affective, psychomotor, and cognitive development of the students (Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá, 2011).

In 2013, there was a special interest in creating educational proposals focused on integrative development and academic excellence in schools that were part of the *40 x 40 Full School-day Program*[1]. In this context, the second version of the curriculum for the immersion rooms was created. The idea of creating immersion environments that include an intercultural experience derived from the alignment of the curriculum with others around the four pillars presented by Delors (1996): *learning to be, learning to get along, learning to know* and *learning to do*, four transversal guidelines (*genre, differentiation, technology* and *citizenship*), and *RAP-Reflection, Action and Participation* as the general methodological approach (as presented in the Orientations for the Area of Humanities – Foreign and Second Language, 2014). Based on that, the second document presented general standards to be achieved for each one of the pillars in each cycle. In this moment, 29 new schools also joined the program.

In the year 2014, 51 new schools were included, for a total of 101: 96 in English, 4 in French and 1 in Spanish and Woumeo[2] as a second language. In that moment, the third version of the curriculum was developed with the help of the British Council. It became the materialization of the general topics and goals presented in the Orientations document. It followed the same theoretical fundamentals, the methodological approach, and the organization in cycles, but the contents were organized into four modules, each one of them with five units: *identity and cultural diversity, healthy lifestyles, cultural values and traditions, and environmental responsibility for digital natives.* The macro-curriculum was planned to be implemented in 40 weeks, of two sessions of 90 minutes per week, which means that each module needed to be developed in 10 weeks. The methodological strategies suggested were inspired on three communicative approaches that are deeply related with the objectives of RAP: *Task-based learning, Problem-*

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[1] 40x40 is a new curricular proposal in the Bogotá school district, which allows for longer school days of 40 hours per week x 40 weeks per year.

[2] Woumeo is the language spoken by the Wounaan, an aboriginal community originally from Chocó. A group of them have settled in La Arabia-Ciudad Bolivar.

based learning, and *Soft CLIL.* All along this process, the teachers involved in the process began attending training workshops about the structure of the macro-curriculum and general methodological strategies to implement it in the immersion rooms (Arias, et al., 2015).

At the beginning of 2015, the lesson plans for the individual sessions were piloted with teachers of 40 schools. They were given specific units to be implemented and their classes were observed. Based on the analysis made by the teachers and the observations, the curriculum was edited and the final version was socialized with the rest of the teachers at the end of the year.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants from immersion rooms located in different zones of Bogotá (Fontibón, Engativá, Chapinero and Ciudad Bolivar) were invited to answer the survey. Finally, 37 supporting teachers, 13 cooperating teachers, and eight representatives of the administrative staff in the schools (principals or coordinators) voluntarily accepted to answer the survey.

The cooperating teachers' (foreigners) average age is 25 years old. Most of them come from Venezuela and Brazil, and the rest are from Russia, the United States, India, Cameroon, Canada and Portugal. Although just three of them studied education or a related field in university, most of them have had prior teaching experience. More than the half of them have been part of the program for one year.

The supporting teachers are English teachers from the District Secretariat of Education of Bogotá. Most of them are women (31), and the largest group are between 30 and 39 years old. Only eight are between 40 and 49, eight older than 50, and four between 20 and 29. Most of them have participated in the program for more than one year and a half, and 12 have joined recently.

Two of the principals and five coordinators who answered the survey are between 40 and 49 years old, and only one principal is between 30 and 39. All of them have been at their schools more than two years, and all their schools have been part of the program for one year or more.

At last, it is important to mention the role of the researcher as a participant. The researcher was deeply involved with the entire process as one of the members of the team in charge of leading the implementation and diffusion of the proposal in the different schools. This situation could be seen as an obstacle in terms of the validity of the information and the way it was obtained. However, to guarantee internal validity and to avoid any subjectivity, the researcher decided to apply different instruments and to read other studies so that the results could have been validated and sustained by the data obtained, as it is proposed by Cohen (2007, pp. 135).

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Instruments and techniques from different methods were applied: surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

Surveys. Morrison (as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007) explains that surveys are useful instruments to obtain information because they allow us to identify data from a large representative number of participants in a relatively short period of time. They also contribute to determining the relationships between the different variables and to establish general conclusions that could help to support or contradict the hypothesis.

To have a general idea about the perception of the highest number of people selected for the research, and to have enough up-to-date data on the existing conditions of the implementation phase of the Immersion Rooms curriculum, a survey was used to focus on participants' impressions of the curriculum, its proposed activities, training, roles or profiles of the different stakeholders, the diffusion strategies, and time and resources allotted (See Appendix A).

Fourteen questions were included for to the supporting teachers, cooperating teachers, principals and coordinators. Questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 13 aimed at revealing participants' their ideas about the process of implementation and diffusion. Questions 3, 4, and 14 looked for information on their points of view about training, and items 8, 9, 10, and 12 looked for their opinions on their own roles in the development of the program. At the end of the survey, two open questions were included with a view of identifying common trends and perceptions.

Interviews. These are useful tools to validate the results from other data inputs or to have more detailed information about the answers given by the participants (Kerlinger as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007), as well as to support the findings resulting from the data collection process (Cohen, et al., 2007). Interviews also allow the researcher to identify attitudes, preferences, and beliefs that cannot be seen when applying other types of methods (Tuckman, as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007). Based on these ideas, one group semi-structured interview with four supporting teachers and one individual interview with one cooperating teacher were conducted in order to confirm some of the facts identified through surveys and questionnaires.

The questions were planned after analyzing the results of the surveys in order to clarify some aspects, to complement and deepen into details and to look for additional information about the perceptions and attitudes of the principal stakeholders in the process of implementation and diffusion. (See Appendix B).

Document analysis. The implementation of any innovation implies an in-depth examination of what has been done previously and to study the resulting documents. They become an important reference point in the moment of interpreting the other instruments. The researcher needs to understand the main objectives of the innovation as well as the way its achievement has been planned for. In order to differentiate and compare the perception of the stakeholders who participated in different phases of the implementation and the ideas of the participants in the schools, documents related to the development stage were analyzed: the report presented by the British Council after piloting the curricular proposal at the end of 2015 and the research thesis on the implementation of the Immersion Rooms written by Ivan Felipe Mora Forero, one of the members of the International Association of Students in Economics and Management (AIESEC), who was part of the first organizational team in 2015. This work helped to establish categories in common and contradicted points of view based on the information given from diverse participants: the study presented by the British Council (May & Velasco, 2015) is focused on the implementation of the curricular proposal in the classroom and the perception of the end users based on their experience. The research by Mora (2015) presents the point

of view of the administrative staff who is outside the immediate implementation process, but has been part of introducing and giving form to the proposal as well as the ones in charge of supporting the idea logistically and financially.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Graphics representing quantitative results of the surveys and open coding to establish categories in the case of the interviews and the documents were used to conduct the analysis and interpretation of the information obtained through the instruments applied.

Survey. The survey was applied to 37 supporting teachers, 13 cooperating teachers and 8 representatives of the administrative staff at schools (principals or coordinators). The survey was created in English and Spanish and was sent using Google forms; however, only supporting and cooperating teachers answered them through that instrument. In the case of principals and coordinators, the researcher needed to print and apply it by visiting each one of the participants in their school. Teachers' survey results were tabulated and calculated automatically by Google forms while the principals or coordinators' survey results were calculated using Excel. As the number of participants in the different groups was not the same, it was necessary to transfer the results into percentages. Then, graphics were generated to represent the individual results and compare them. These graphs were studied, and descriptions of each were written. The two open questions on the survey were analyzed using open coding to establish general categories while reading the answers in detail in order to find repetitive comments.

Interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using open coding to group common comments of the participants. Three general categories were found and color coded: participants, diffusion strategies, and opportunities. As curriculum and training were repetitively mentioned as opportunities for students and teachers, they were considered subcategories of this last one and color coded too.

Documents. Two documents were read and analyzed: a thesis and a report about the curriculum piloting process. Each was considered independently due to their own nature. After reading Mora (2015), three main categories were identified and coded: social capital, advantages for students, and collaborative and trustworthy work. Although the report about the piloting process of the first version of the curricular proposal done by the British Council (May & Velasco, 2015) divides the document into several categories of analysis, after reading the document two general categories were observed and coded: curriculum and teachers' roles and attitudes in the implementation.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected helps to understand the process of the implementation of the Language Immersion Rooms Program as well as the way in which it has affected stakeholders. The research allows for a view of the diverse perceptions of the participants. In addition, it shows the positive and negative issues of the implementation of the project, according to

the collaborators in the different stages. Finally, it is also possible to identify the internal and external factors that have influenced the progress of the program and its diffusion.

Stakeholders of the Immersion Rooms Program include the following: a) the creators and organizers of the program (the District Secretariat of Education – SED and The International Association of Students in Economics and Management - AIESEC); b) *cooperating teachers* (foreigners recruited by AIESEC to work in the program with English teachers from the schools); and c) *supporting teachers* (regular Colombian English teachers in the schools who develop the proposal with the foreigners in the immersion rooms).

In general, stakeholders consider that the program and the curriculum contribute to improving students and teachers' level of English and their intercultural competence. They believe that the program prepares students to respond to the global needs of the contemporary world due to the interaction with the cooperating teachers and the contents of the curriculum. Besides, they see the program as an opportunity for teachers to try methodologies focused on student interaction instead of teachers' work.

In terms of the implementation of the project, teachers (supporting and cooperating) emphasize the importance of having clear and regulated administrative protocols that contribute to the development of the process. Additionally, they mention issues like the selection and the authorization of supporting and cooperating teachers and the support, in terms of resources and management, from the SED or from the administrative staff in the schools as elements that greatly influence the implementation and the diffusion.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE IMMERSION ROOMS PROGRAM

The data collected suggest that the fundamentals proposed from the SED and teachers' perceptions about the main goals of the proposal are similar. This goal was expressed by the Sub-Secretary of Quality and Relevance during an opening ceremony of the program, in which she encouraged the cooperating teachers to inspire the children, make them happy, and to increase their motivation to learn another language and get to know other worlds through the interaction in the immersion rooms (Mora, 2015). This is also stated by Fabiola Téllez, Coordinator of Bilingualism at the SED in that moment, who expressed that the greatest purpose of the Immersion Rooms program is the cultural, social, and political change that the project can impact in the educational community, the families, and the community in general (Mora, 2015).

This finding is confirmed with the answers given in the questionnaires in which supporting and cooperating teachers were asked if they believed that participating in the program helped them in their personal and professional growth. As Figure 1 shows, all of them totally or partially believe that the curricular proposal helps them to strengthen their teaching practices.
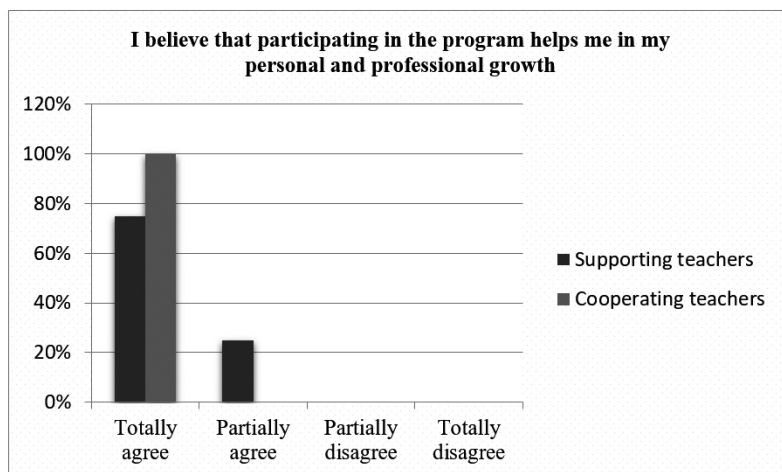
I believe that participating in the program helps me in my personal and professional growth

Figure 1. Contribution of the program to teachers' personal and professional growth

In the interviews, the supporting (Colombian) teachers also said that the program has greatly been beneficial for students, teachers, and cooperating teachers. One supporting teacher expressed it this way:

> The first reason was for the students to have more possibilities of deepening…besides being an opportunity, and I also saw it as an opportunity for me, to be able to do something different…the possibility that we had of working different materials compared with the ones we have in the classrooms of public schools in Bogotá. I could help my students with it[3].

One of the cooperating (foreign) teachers also saw the proposal as a possibility to help underprivileged children learn English in a pedagogical and entertaining way using a wide range of materials.

> What I could see was that I came to teach English to underprivileged children, or children with difficult opportunities, underserved communities, communities who cannot learn in institutes…in rooms full of materials… to work ludic and pedagogical activities which would allow them the possibility to learn English in a joyful way.

Although most of the end users in the program seem to be aware of its advantages for students and teachers, the questionnaire carried out with teachers, cooperating teachers, coordinators, and principals revealed that there is not complete understanding of the proposal or its objectives. More than the 50% answered to partially agree when they were asked if they felt confident enough to explain the curricular proposal and its objectives (Figure 2).

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[3] Translated from the Spanish.

I feel confident enough to explain the curricular proposal and its objectives
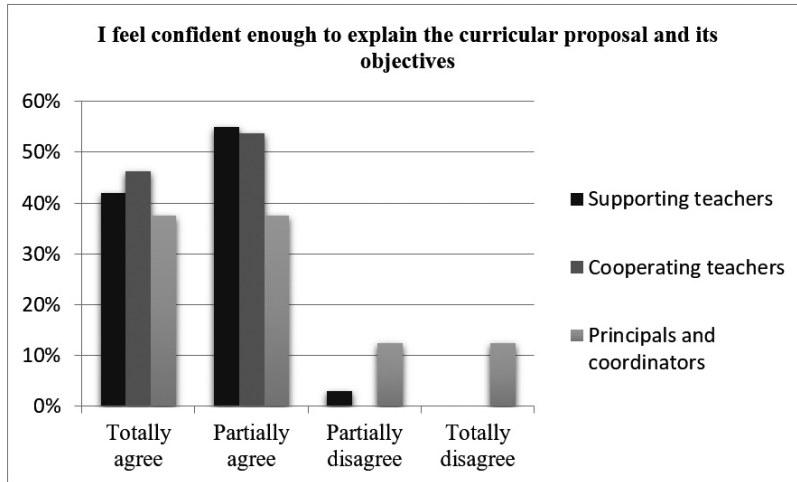
Figure 2. Level of confidence to explain the Immersion Rooms Program

This lack of confidence is due to a variety of reasons, but one of the main reasons teachers expressed was in terms of the time allotted and the different strategies used to involve the end implementers in the process. One teacher stated her reasons in the follow up interview:

> In my experience, the knowledge I have acquired is much more solid in the way of implementing and in what to do with the methodology and the pedagogy that must be used in the immersion room…when I started I didn't have any idea…In 2014 I got lots of training. This makes my job more enriching now and I can work better with my students. In the moment we began, we didn't have any idea on where the cooperating teachers came from, we just simply knew that the proposal came from the Secretariat of Education, but now we know that AIESEC is the one in charge of bringing them. We also had the opportunity of working in the piloting in our school, with the British Council and I participated in the consolidation of that curriculum, which makes the knowledge about the implementation much more solid.

This last comment also supports the results revealed by the questionnaire about the awareness of participants on their role. Most of the supporting and cooperating teachers as well as the coordinators and principals believe they are fundamental in the process of implementation and diffusion. However, it is important to mention the special emphasis that teachers make on the role of principals and coordinators as supporters. In this respect, one of the teachers said in the follow-up interview:

> I consider that it is extremely important the administrative staff, principals and coordinators, to know about the project; but they not only need to know, they need to be able to explain the importance of the project for the students and their future.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND TRAINING

The curricular proposal and the training sessions are considered by the majority of the stakeholders strong elements of the program. Figure 3 shows that at about the 80% of the cooperating and the supporting teachers agree with the proposed methodology. This fact is also restated by the comments of the teachers during the follow up interview. For example, one of them excelled it in comparison with a regular English class:

> The curriculum is not part and it doesn't have the structure of a regular English class, and I think it is also appropriate because it makes the lessons organized…I don't agree with all the activities because some of them are tedious, but it is part of the teacher´s role and how he or she share them with the students.
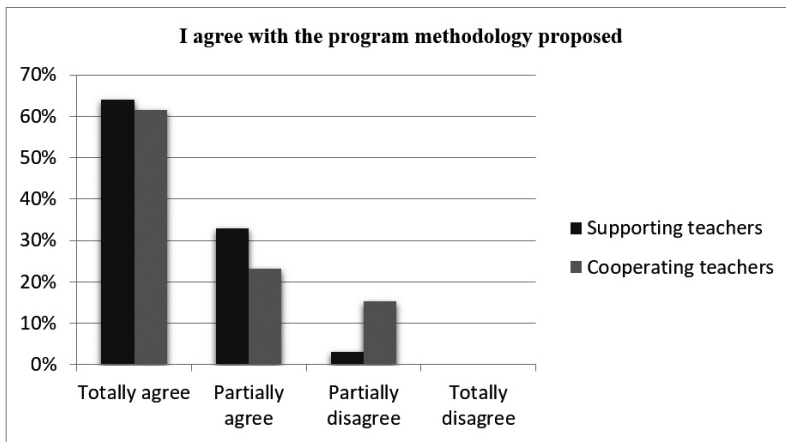
Figure 3. Beliefs of participants on the program methodology proposed

Although the high number of people who agree with the methodology, approximately 20% of them seem to have some doubts of its effectiveness. This fact is confirmed by the results of the report presented by the British Council to the Secretariat of Education about the piloting of the curriculum (May & Velasco, 2015). In this document, aspects like more input in vocabulary and grammar, the difficulty of working on interaction with the youngest students, and the need to use other materials to explain linguistic categories are mentioned by the teachers as relevant for the success of the curriculum. In the follow-up interviews the teachers commented that at the beginning it was difficult for them to understand how to handle the curriculum, as it was noted by one of them:

> It was difficult for us because we didn't know how to work with the curriculum…We just could see the structure, the dynamics and the sense of the curriculum when we started the training…At the beginning we tried to change some activities and we attempted to get away from what was planned and from the final goal because many of the children didn't understand…The cooperating teachers also said that the children didn't have the level and several situations, that's why we decided to change some things. But, through

the trainings, we saw how we should follow the development of the units and with the piloting process, we saw how to make the students understand.

About the contents of the curriculum, although most of the teachers (supporting and cooperating) answered in the questionnaire that they believe the contents are coherent in relation with the students' needs and context, there is also a good number of them who say that they do not feel the topics close to the students' reality (Figure 4).
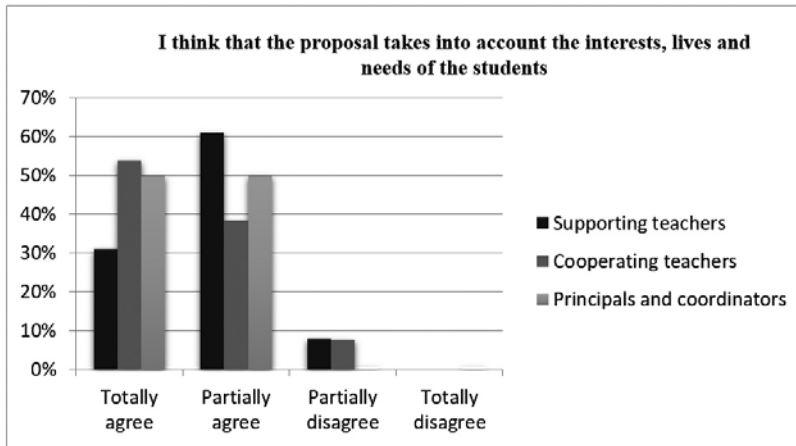
Figure 4. Perceptions about the relevance of the program to students

According to the comments given at the end of the questionnaire and the follow up interview, those surveyed perceive some parts of the curriculum above the level of language of the students, and they do not see a logical thread inside some of the units. This contrast is supported with answers in which the teachers highlight the chronological and methodological order of the topics dealt in the curriculum as a whole, but explain that there are some topics further from the students' context:

> I think that the topics are partly everyday use, there are many themes that are interested for the children, but there are others that, as my colleague said, are not attractive for them. For example, the ones about the government and topics which they are not very familiar with…The idea is to have everyday use topics for the students, but the themes have a methodological and chronological order that lead the results of the program for an appropriate road.

The report presented by the British Council (May & Velasco, 2015, p. 31) also confirms this duality:

> The data show that the materials have a high level of congruence with the cultural and social context of the students, they are made for. Additionally, the topics and activities allow them to see other cultures and realities. However, there were some themes that seem to be above the level of interest and involvement of some specific groups of students.

Training. Most of the supporting and cooperating teachers saw in the training sessions a way of solving doubts and clarifying the methodology and the reason for the structure and the contents of the curriculum. They perceived the training as a way of empowering themselves, not only about the curriculum, but also in terms of their roles and the whole process, as it was stated by the interviewees:

> Now, with the implementation that the British Council has done with us, we know how to handle the co-teaching in shareable tasks and the work is less stressful.

In contrast, the 50% of coordinators and principals seemed to question the usefulness of the training sessions (Figure 5).
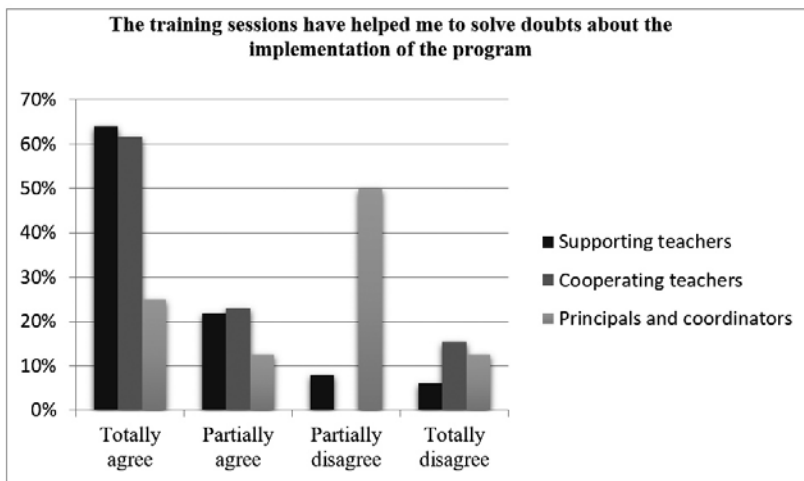
Figure 5. Participants' beliefs about the impact of training on their performance

IMPLEMENTATION AND DIFFUSION

The implementation and diffusion of the project is about moving from the ideal to the real process, which implies focusing on the stakeholders in charge of putting into practice the innovative proposal, in this case the supporting and the cooperating teachers. For this reason, these participants were asked about the way in which they participated in the creation and development of the proposal and about their level of awareness of their role and the different components of the program.

The results of the questionnaire applied revealed that few teachers, cooperating teachers, principals, or coordinators seem to have a clear idea of how the institutions or the teachers (cooperating or supporting) were selected for the program. Roughly 60% of those interviewed reported that they do not completely understand the way the institutions became part of the program. This partial knowledge of the information was confirmed during the follow-up interview by one of the teachers:

> Since the beginning we didn't have any idea on how the process was going to be, but all along the first semester, these four months, when the cooperating teachers arrived, we started working almost immediately with the materials we borrowed from the school.

Another teacher explained that they have only basic information that they were going to work with foreigners:

> To tell the truth, we didn't know much about the project…We knew that it included foreigners but we didn´t know more than that.

In general, the comments reaffirmed that the novelty for the supporting teachers were the foreigners and the use of technological devices, but they were not informed on the criteria for selecting one or another school.

Felipe Mora, one of the AIESEC leaders of the project at the beginning of the program, pointed out in his thesis that the most important function of the international participants is not being "native" nor "teacher," but catching the students' attention by means of the use of ludic activities and the constant comparison between their culture and Colombia. Supporting teachers provide pedagogical advice and assure the learning focus and environment (Mora, 2015). In contrast, and according to the follow up interviews, the cooperating and the supporting teachers believe that the presence of a foreign person motivates the students to participate in class; however, they also consider the lack of experience and the low understanding of the program's goals and strategies an obstacle in the implementation, as one of the cooperating teachers stated:

> We are talking about an educational project. It doesn't matter where the cooperating teacher is from, he or she needs to have a link with the immersion rooms and with the students. He or she also needs to have willingness to learn because there are many professionals that are just looking for a different experience, but they don't change what they bring from their professions, they close their minds and don't learn neither achieve the goals of the program. They don't feel like teachers, they don't try and the process is not going to be effective.

One of the teachers emphasized the need of having very well defined profiles because, in her opinion, many of the cooperating teachers are students who are looking for adventure in countries like Colombia:

> I believe that the selection has been one of the weaknesses because, in one or another way, many of them are students who are looking for an adventure in countries like Colombia. They come for a while, for four months, and they do what they believe is the best possible with the curriculum, but many of them are too relying on what the teacher manages…that's why it is important to have very well defined profiles in the moment of selecting them.

Stakeholders' participation in implementation and diffusion. In spite of this lack of knowledge at the beginning, Figure 6 evidences that the teachers, principals, and coordinators feel they have been included in the planning and organization of the curriculum and that they

have been taken into account in the decision-making process through different means: training sessions, surveys, piloting project with the British Council and class observations.
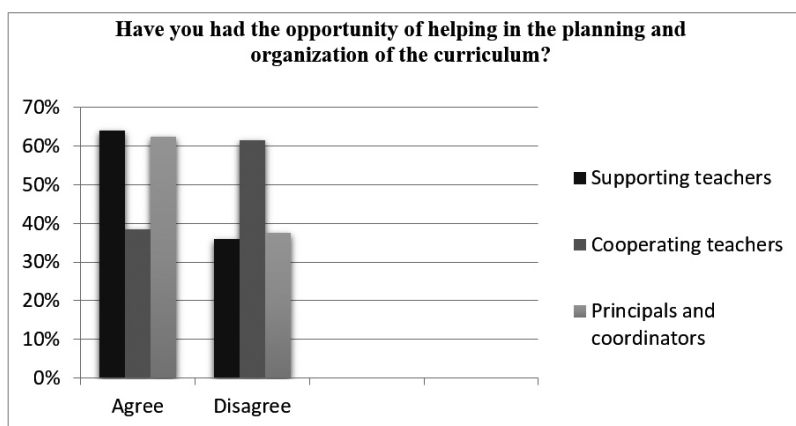
Figure 6. Participation in curriculum planning and organization

On the other hand, the results revealed that the 60% of the cooperating teachers disagreed with the idea of having been involved in the planning and organization, but the percentage increases when they were asked if they felt that they had been taken into consideration when making adjustments to the curricular proposal (Figure 7).
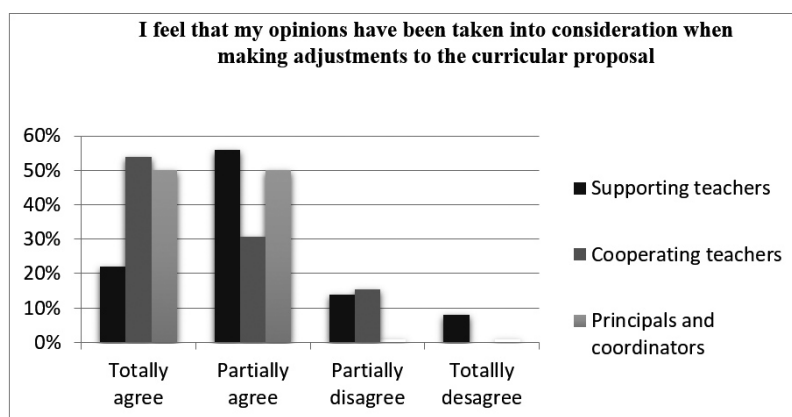
Figure 7. Involvement in the construction of the curricular proposal.

This sensation of being part of the process increases the level of confidence and belonging in the participants about the program, which transforms the teachers in fundamental diffusion tools, as it was pointed out by the teachers when they were asked about their participation in the creation of the curriculum during the follow-up interview:

> We have participating in the validation of the project. This validation was done by means of piloting activities…in that moment the people who created the program realized what

is useful and what it is not, and what corrections were needed…that is very good and we learned a lot…I felt I was taken into consideration.

Another teacher focused his attention on his role as change agents, in terms of Markee (1997):

I have served as a change agent, I'm in charge of making the people who go to the school to know what we do, and another thing that is important for me is the first tour for the cooperating teachers when they arrive. It is important to introduce them to the people who are part of the academic community.

Execution of the proposal. As mentioned before, one central point of the Immersion Rooms is the curricular proposal. It is considered by the participants in general one of the strengths of the program because it is perceived as an innovative and useful way of helping students to develop their communicative skills, their life projects and their behavior. However, the report of the piloting process of the curriculum and the follow-up interview revealed that the supporting and the cooperating teachers made changes in the activities, in the methodology or in the topics due to different reasons. They did this particularly when they perceived the topics boring or not according to the student' reality, or because they believed that the language level of the proposal was above that of the students. In the report, there are comments that suggest the need to make changes in some cycles (groups of grades):

Some data suggest that it would be needed to introduce some slight changes in some topics to get more relevance in some cycles…It is the case of topics like searching for a job and the use of certain technologies.

Another fundamental aspect of the curricular proposal is the methodological approach, student-centered, which implies the development of activities where the students are almost all the time interacting and working. Nonetheless the report of the piloting process stated that the teachers follow the strategies suggested in the lesson plans and led the students to work on the projects at the end of the units, as it is planned, it also described lessons observed by the consultants from the British Council, where the students turned to Spanish to communicate among themselves and where they do not interact or use the target language:

The activities proposed in the planner are communicative and promoted diverse patterns of interaction in the classroom. However, among the students, the reality is different, interaction among themselves in English is fulfilled…just in a very reduced number of children. In 80% of the cases, that interaction is in Spanish, not in English.

Factors affecting the diffusion and implementation process. About the diffusion process, the questionnaires showed that the most number of the respondents seemed to agree with the strategies of the curricular proposal; they perceived the communication between the teachers and the cooperating teachers extremely important, as well as the continuous help and support from the SED. On this point one of the teachers interviewed said:

The communication strategies between the schools and the Secretariat of Education are very good…First, because there is a direct communication with the coordinators of the different schools…They visit the schools frequently, and they pay attention to the needs of the institutions.

Nonetheless, there is considerable number of the surveyed people who expressed hesitation on the usefulness of some of the strategies and on how they change the perception and the goal of the program. This idea is supported by some of the comments in the follow-up interview. One of the teachers affirmed:

This makes that the communicational triad between SED – AIESEC – School doesn't work as a team and that the problems not to be solved…this shows elements of the traditional school we don't want to show in the immersion room.

At last, it is relevant to mention that although the program was initially thought with a specific infrastructure and resources (human and material), there have been several administrative changes which have affected the process of implementation: cooperating teachers are not since the beginning of the school year, supporting teachers are not always provided to the schools, the technological elements or internet do not work and the basic supplies to use in a classroom are not given to the teachers. According to the teachers, this lack of correspondence between the ideal and the reality delays the process and demotivate the participants, which generates negative diffusion reactions, as it is exemplified with the comments of one of the cooperating teachers who said:

It's been disappointing in the second opportunity, in the school in Fontibón because there were tablets, but the licenses were expired and didn´t work, the video beam but we couldn´t do anything different than projecting.

He also added:

Let's say that the lack of communication between the school, the Secretariat and AIESEC is too remarkable to arrange the maintenance of the devices.

CONCLUSIONS

The main focus of this study was to understand the relationship between the process of innovation and the attitudes of the stakeholders participating in the implementation of the Language Immersion Rooms program in Bogotá, especially the level of influence of teachers' beliefs and perceptions on its development, implementation and diffusion. Besides, the research also intended to identify other factors that affect the whole process.

The findings of the study permitted to observe the different perceptions of the participants towards the implementation of the project in terms of what they believe is positive or negative. The data analysis also helped to identify other factors that affected the implementation and diffusion of the program. In general, all the stakeholders believe that the program contributes to strengthen the students and the teachers' level of English as well as their intercultural competence, citizenship competence, and teachers' methodological strategies. However, they saw the lack of support from the administrative staff in the schools and the continuous logistical changes from the SED as elements that delay the implementation and the diffusion process.

The surveys and the interviews also showed that the cooperating and the supporting teachers agreed in affirming some basic issues that positively influence the implementation of the program. These include the following: a) clear criteria in the process of selection of end users, especially the foreigners who are recruited, b) participation in the program for a longer period of time, c) constant training sessions for teachers and cooperating teachers and d) teaching experience.

Comparing the literature review and the results of this study, there are some common aspects to mention. This research, as well as Jeffers (2008), found that the participants' attitudes and perceptions towards innovation varied depending on their role and their degree of involvement. The more time teachers participated in the implementation of the curricular proposal, the better their understanding of its fundamentals, goals and methodology, and consequently, their participation as difussionists showed more commitment and apprehension. In this respect, Jeffers (2008), O'Donahue (2012), and Rahimi and Naderi (2014) found that when teachers are more involved and start to reflect on their own practices, they become part of the change process. This research also found that the teachers who were part of more training sessions, observations and piloting activities started to be more positive, implemented and diffused the proposal with parents, other teachers and the administrative staff.

About teachers' attitudes and beliefs and its influence in the sustainability of the innovative proposal, this study also found similar results with Owston (2006), who stated that there must be a correlation between the teachers' feelings, thoughts and perceptions and the innovation itself. Teachers need to feel that the proposal is going to enrich them as professionals and the students´ learning processes, they need to recognize the correspondence between the proposal and their immediate context. In this sense, this research, as well as Orafi (2008) and Fouzi (2014), found that some teachers expressed not to totally agree with the initiative because some topics were far from students' realities or because the level of language was beyond students' level and understanding. This issue generated a certain degree of rejection towards the proposal at the beginning and as a result some of the teachers made the decision to change topics, to include new ones, or to go back to their own methodologies.

Another aspect in common with the literature review has to do with the importance teachers give to the external factors that become support or obstacle in the implementation of the innovation. As well as Webster, et al.. (2013), Ofsted (2008) and Mata and Suciu (2011), the data collected for this research showed that teachers perceived the school environment as one of the most relevant issues for the success of the proposal. They frequently mention factors like communication with the staff and the other teachers, resources, technological support, training, and clear guidelines from the SED as key tools in the success of an innovation.

The results of this research show that teachers continuously referred to the support from the administrative staff and from the SED as well as communication as the basis for the implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, the literature reviewed also points to support from diverse leaders as one of the factors that can generate positive or negative effects throughout the entire process of innovation. Wardford (2005), for example emphasized the need to provide conceptual clarity and to show how useful a proposal could be for the context, and Ofsted (2008) argues that successful initiative needs to focus on understanding the reasons for the proposal, and on the creation of a team in charge of heading and leading the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the process.

In terms of observing the teachers as change agents, the data gathered in this research confirmed some of the ideas presented by Hardley (2006) and McGee (2006), who said that teachers are relevant for planning, management, communication and reflection on any new practice to be implemented. In this respect, this study also coincides with Longkai and Chee-Kit (2014) and McGee (2006), who point out the idea of involving the teachers and helping them to understand the proposal since the beginning in such a way that they create a sense of ownership of the innovation and become leaders of the process inside their schools.

 Some of the limitations found along this research included the fact that data collection took longer than expected. Further, the evidence could have been stronger if all the selected participants had answered the electronic surveys more quickly. As participants did not answer online, it was necessary to print the surveys and apply them directly visiting the schools. Secondly, it could have been interesting to include all the 100 immersion rooms in order to widen the research and to have more information and maybe new variables. Third, it could have been useful to observe some classes and contrast the results with the findings provided by the British Council in its report about the piloting stage of the curriculum. This could have given data about the apprehension and understanding of the proposal along the implementation process. Fourth, interviewing some students and parents could have provided information about all the participants´ perceptions and attitudes towards the innovation, its implementation and the diffusion strategies.

In terms of further research, it would be extremely useful to continue working on research studies to analyze in detail the administrative reasons that become a support or an obstacle in all innovation processes. This could provide relevant tools to the creators,   leaders and administrative staff in charge of making decisions related to the aspects to keep in mind when launching, making follow up and assessing proposals' continuity. It would have also been helpful to think of studies centered in those innovations that emerge from the teachers or from collaborative teams to see their impact and its duration in time. This could help to contrast the level of success and sustainability of centralized and decentralized diffusion systems. In this respect, it would also be greatly supportive to deepen on studies related to the effectiveness of communication strategies used to diffuse innovative proposals.

ACTION PLAN

Innovation and change in terms of curricular proposals imply time to observe the process itself as well as the role of the participants involved in it. In order to see the real impact of innovation in future investigations about bilingualism in the context of Bogotá, it is important to keep in mind some of the findings of this study.

- Communication among all the participants of the implementation since the beginning is a fundamental requirement for the success of the proposal. It would be greatly useful to study the strategies of communication the SED is using to interact with the final users of the proposals launched from the central branch and on how the implementers are being helped in the contexts.

- The leaders of the process (government staff and other institutions participating) need to establish clear guidelines since the beginning. In this case, future investigations should deepen into the protocols used to present and to follow-up the understanding of the proposals in the schools.

- Teachers need to feel that they are part of the process as creators, not only as final implementers. To observe this aspect, further research should focus its attention on those proposals which emerge from the teachers and on how they are supported and diffused. Besides, it would be interesting to observe how the teams are conformed and how teachers and the particular contexts are taken into account in the creation and implementation of the proposals.

- Innovation requires assessment and observation. Future studies should analyze the way in which the impact of the proposals has been assessed and supported before being changed for other innovations.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Cooperating teachers, Supporting teachers and Administrative staff

Dear teachers:

First of all, thank you in advance for your contribution by participating in this research about the processes of curricular innovation, I will really appreciate your help.

I also want to remind you that the information taking from this questionnaire is confidential, so you can feel free to express your opinion.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This information will help the researcher in the description of the stakeholders.

1.　　Gender:
　　　☐ Male　　　☐ Female

2.　　Nationality _____

3.　　 Have you had any prior teaching experience?
　　　☐ Yes　　　☐ No

4.　　Did you study Education or a related field in university?
　　　☐ Yes　　　☐ No

IMPLEMENTATION AND DIFFUSION

This set of questions will contribute in the identification of the general perception of the participants towards the implementation and the diffusion of the program. Select the option which you agree the most with.

How long have you been part of the Immersion rooms program?

☐ Three months

☐ One year

☐ More than one year

Criteria	Totally agree	Partially agree	Partially disagree	Totally disagree
I have had the opportunity of helping in the planning and organization of the curriculum.				
I feel confident enough to explain the curricular proposal and its objectives				
I have participated in training sessions about the Immersion Rooms program				
The training sessions have helped me to solve doubts about the implementation of the program				
I understand my role in the program				
I agree with the program methodology proposed				
I know the selection criteria for the institutions who are part of the program				
I agree with the strategies used to diffuse the curricular proposal				
In my opinion, the selection criteria for supporting teachers are clear				
The selection criteria for cooperating teachers are clear for me				

Criteria	Totally agree	Partially agree	Partially disagree	Totally disagree
I feel that my opinions have been taken into consideration when making adjustments to the curricular proposal.				
I believe that participating in the program helps me in my personal and professional growt				
I think that the proposal takes into account the interests, lives and needs of the students.				
I feel that my role is fundamental in the diffusion process of the curricular proposal				
I believe that the communication strategies used between the participants contribute to the implementation and diffusion of the program				
I feel that implementing and diffusing the Immersion Rooms Program in my institution is one of my responsibilities.				

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Answer the following questions based on your perception about the implementation and diffusion of the program. You can feel absolutely free to add any information you consider important.

In your opinion, what additional aspects have affected the implementation and diffusion of the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you had the opportunity of modifying any particular aspect of the implementation and diffusion of the proposal, what changes would you suggest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you willing to participate in a brief follow-up interview?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

APPENDIX B

Questions for the follow-up interview with Cooperating teachers and Supporting teachers (conducted in Spanish)

1. Could you, please, introduce yourself and tell us where you work and the time you have been part of the program?

2. Let's talk about the way you were recruited for the program. How were you involved, what were your reasons and motivations to be part of the program? How could the recruitment process be better?

3. What were your expectations and what did you know about the proposal when you started?

4. You have been part of the program for about one year or more. How much has your perception about the proposal changed?

5. How much does the knowledge about the proposal influence the implementation of the program?

6. Let's talk about the selection process of institutions, supporting teachers and cooperating teachers. How much do you know about it?

7. Talking about the administrative process, what aspects do you believe are basic and fundamental for the implementation and diffusion of the program?

8. In your opinion, who are the most important stakeholders in the implementation and diffusion process? Who are in charge of making this process perdurable in time?

9. What's the role of coordinators, principals and administrative staff in the implementation process?

10. Let's talk about the communication strategies used to implement and diffuse the program. How effective have they been and how could they been optimized?

11. Do you feel that you have been part of the organization and planning of the proposal? In which aspects have you participated? In which ones haven´t you been involved, but you consider your presence could have been important for the effective implementation of the program?

12. Do you feel yourself as main leaders and guides of the proposal?

13. How do you share the proposal with other people? What kind of information do you share about it?

14. About the curricular proposal itself, it is relevant to talk about time, topics, proposed methodology, cooperating teachers´ knowledge on pedagogy and students´ level. How have those aspects influenced the implementation of the program?

15. Have you got training sessions about the program and its implementation? What kind of training have you got? Who has been in charge of those training sessions? Have you had the opportunity to share your knowledge with the teachers you are working with?

16. In your opinion, what aspects would ensure the sustainability of this curricular innovation?

FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

Nubia Torres Alvarado

With over 25 years of experience teaching English to air traffic controllers and pilots at the Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science in Colombia, Nubia Torres Alvarado noticed that often times the issue for these aviation professionals is not only learning of English, but maintaining one's level of English. She asked herself how the motivation of air traffic controllers towards the language might affect their willingness to engage in activities outside the formal English classes and practice offered by the Center. She also was interested in knowing more about the possible types of independent practice controllers routinely engage in, and to what extent the language has become a part of their everyday lives. Her hope was that the information gathered from air traffic controllers might inform the development of a language maintenance program for controllers at the Center.

ABSTRACT

The present research project was carried out with the purpose of discovering which factors affect air traffic controllers' English language learning and language maintenance processes, and to establish the best strategies that can be used to develop an English maintenance program for them. The study was conducted with a group of 100 air traffic controllers from different airports in Colombia, ages, and levels of English. The techniques for the data collection included a questionnaire, interviews with the air traffic controllers currently receiving training at the Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science (CEA), and document analysis to understand the context of controllers' English language learning process. It was found that the air traffic controllers possess a general awareness of the importance of learning and maintaining proficiency in English, for personal and professional reasons. In terms of the best way to maintain their English level, however, older generation controllers, who were hired without English, tend to believe in more traditional methods for achieving and maintaining their level, such as face-to-face classes. Younger generation controllers, who were hired with the necessary level of English, think it is necessary to develop different strategies to develop the English maintenance program, such as exchanges, scholarships, conversation clubs, English days, specialized courses in English and teaching air traffic control subjects in English.

Key words: Air traffic controllers, Aviation English, Language maintenance, Age and language learning, Motivation, English for specific purposes

RESUMEN

El presente proyecto se llevó a cabo con el propósito de encontrar los factores que afectan el aprendizaje del idioma inglés de los controladores de tránsito aéreo, su proceso de mantenimiento y las mejores estrategias para desarrollar un programa de mantenimiento para ellos. El estudio fue realizado con 100 controladores de tránsito aéreo de todos los aeropuertos de Colombia, con diferentes edades y niveles de inglés. Para la recolección de datos se utilizaron las siguientes técnicas: un cuestionario, entrevistas a los controladores que participaban en algún tipo de capacitación en el Centro de Estudios de Ciencias Aeronáuticas (CEA) y análisis de documentos con el fin de entender el contexto del proceso de aprendizaje del idioma inglés de los controladores. Se encontró que en general y

debido a razones personales y profesionales, los controladores son conscientes de la importancia del aprendizaje y mantenimiento de la competencia lingüística en idioma inglés; Sin embargo, en términos de la mejor forma de mantener sus niveles de inglés, la generación de los controladores antiguos, quienes ingresaron a la carrera de controlador sin requisitos de inglés, tienden a creer en métodos más tradicionales para adquirir y mantener su nivel de inglés a través de clases presenciales. La generación de controladores más jóvenes, quienes ingresaron a la carrera de controlador con el nivel de inglés necesario, piensan que se debe desarrollar diferentes estrategias para el programa de mantenimiento, tales como: intercambios, becas, clubs de conversación, días de inglés, cursos especializados en inglés y la enseñanza de materias de tránsito aéreo en inglés.

INTRODUCTION

To understand adult acquisition of English as a foreign language, it is necessary to consider the factors that affect this process. Some of these factors include motivation, including the willingness to learn and use English; the affective variables, for example anxiety, attitude, self-efficacy, and future self-guides; and age, which might affect the time required and the motivation to learn a second language. In addition to factors affecting acquisition, in the case of adult learners of the language, the issue of language maintenance becomes relevant as well. Once the adult is no longer enrolled in formal classes, it may be necessary to observe the above and other factors in order to understand how adults might maintain the gains achieved in formal instruction, and identify obstacles to continued proficiency in the language.

This study explores these issues with reference to workplace English for specific purposes, in the particular case of air traffic controllers in Colombia. As controllers' English proficiency is a safety issue, the questions of language learning and language maintenance become crucial, and understanding how best to support these processes is high on the list of priorities for the Colombian Civil Aeronautics Agency (*Aeronautica Civil*) and its Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science.

Most of the air traffic controllers learn English in Colombia and use English most of the time at work for operational purposes. In light of this, it is important to balance the international English requirements and the Colombian context in which controllers acquire English. Exploring the strategies to develop an English language maintenance program for air traffic controllers is also important because language acquisition is a life learning process. Based on this idea, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) drafted a series of recommended practices for all countries whose first language is not English. Among these recommendations, the periodicity of the English exams was included:

- Controllers who are certified in ICAO English level IV (operational level) must retake English tests every three years.

- Controllers who are certified in ICAO English level V (extended level), must retake English official exams every six years (ICAO, 2011)

This study departs from the premise that it is necessary for the Aeronautica Civil to provide air traffic controllers with regular English programs to help them to maintain and improve their English levels. In the case of air traffic controllers in Colombia, the *Aeronautica* needs to develop an English maintenance program that responds to controllers' needs. The best way to obtain this information is through research. This information can then be used to develop a pedagogically sound and realistic English maintenance program.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the study of how second languages are learned and the factors that influence the process. This is mainly a subconscious process that happens while we focus on communication. It could happen in a context where the language is not spoken. SLA researchers examine communicative competence, the ability to interpret the underlying meaning of a message, understand cultural references, use strategies to keep communication from breaking down, and apply the rules of grammar in a second language (Savignon, as cited in Krashen, 1982). In addition to linguistic factors, nonlinguistic factors also influence SLA, including age, anxiety and motivation. Further, cultural knowledge and level of education may also affect learners.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION HYPOTHESIS

In order to understand how the language acquisition process occurs, Krashen (1982) describes five hypotheses. The first is the acquisition-learning distinction. According to this hypothesis, adults learn a second language through two distinct and independent ways: language acquisition, a subconscious process, and language learning, which is a conscious process or the formal knowledge. The second hypothesis is the Natural Order hypothesis, which states that the acquisition process of the second language is very similar to that of the first language; therefore, any language is learned according to standard patterns, starting with basic and then more complex structures.

The third hypothesis is the Monitor Hypothesis. According to this theory, learning functions as a monitor, or editor. Therefore, when somebody uses a language, the monitor allows for the correction of utterances after they have been produced, both in speaking or writing. We can say

that a person using a second language can use conscious rules when there are three conditions: time, focus on form, and knowledge of the rule. When the three conditions are met, we use grammar consciously, and the error pattern changes. We can say that the ideal condition to become optimal monitor users is to use the language in an appropriate way and to do self-correction when necessary.

Krashen's fourth hypothesis is the Input Hypothesis. This hypothesis helps us to answer the question: How do we acquire a language? According to this theory, we acquire language by "going for meaning," and as result, we acquire the structure (MacNamara, as cited in Krashen, 1982). This means that we acquire a language by understanding; we can do it by using structures, context, and extra-linguistic information. Based on this idea, we can say that communication is successful when the input is understood, there is enough of it, and the answer is provided automatically. As a result, the input hypothesis predicts that the classroom may be an excellent place for second language acquisition, at least up to the "intermediate" level.

The fifth hypothesis is the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which shows how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process Dulay and Burt, (as cited in Krashen, 1982) proposed the concept of the *affective filter*, which involves three categories:

- Motivation: Performers with high motivation usually do better in second language acquisition.

- Self-confidence: Students with high self-confidence and a positive self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.

- Anxiety: Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition.

The concept of the affective filter has helped establish the standard of an ideal learning environment, which should promote high levels of motivation and self-confidence and low levels of anxiety.

Other factors that should be taken into account to understand the language acquisition process include exposure variables, such as length of residence in a foreign country. It has been demonstrated that the length of residence facilitates language proficiency. This idea is based on the concept that the more language is used, the better the acquisition process. Therefore, environments other than the classroom may contribute to a better and faster acquisition process. In this context, we can say that leisure and work environments can be interpreted as providing opportunities for comprehensible input.

AGE

The influence of age has been widely considered in the language acquisition research. In order to understand how age influences second language acquisition, it is necessary to look at theories that have concluded that younger acquirers are better at second language acquisition than older acquirers. Still, even though younger individuals might be faster learners than adults, it seems that adults are faster learners at early stages. Nevertheless, we can say that to be a successful

learner of a second language, it is necessary above all to be a good acquirer, with the ability to obtain a great deal of comprehensible input with a low affective filter.

Additionally, there are other language acquisition factors that can be affected by age; among them, we can mention pronunciation, accent, vocabulary, grammar, and listening. First of all, it is necessary to understand how age affects pronunciation. It seems that adults have difficulties acquiring native pronunciation (Singleton & Ryan, 2004). However, accent may be the least important aspect of L2 proficiency, and older learners who fail to acquire a native like accent lose little. Nevertheless, it has been established that in certain situations, accent difficulties may cause miscommunication problems (Cook, as cited in Singleton & Ryan, 2004). When we study the grammar and vocabulary learning process, the situation is different. It seems that adults can learn grammar and vocabulary faster than young learners. In some ways, the experience of having already learned one language and the degree of resemblance of the two languages could facilitate this acquisition.

Another important factor that might be affected by age is the listening ability. Some researchers have shown that post-pubertal hearing is not inferior to child hearing in terms of the perception of speech sounds. Nevertheless, in some cases, older learners can lose the capacity for auditory imitation and memorizing, which can cause slow oral responses (Singleton & Ryan, 2004).

ACCULTURATION

Besides age, we have to consider acculturation in the language acquisition process. In fact, the degree to which the learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the language (Schumann, as cited in Krashen, 1982). In fact, immigrants and long-term visitors who are close to the culture and values of the group that speaks the target language can acquire the target language more quickly and easily. Furthermore, acculturation is the most effective way of lowering the affective filter and can become a motivating force.

MIND AND CONTEXT

Other factors that might influence the language acquisition process are mind and context. It is important to say that the context in which adults learn a second language is the major influence on their ability to acquire a second language. Meanwhile, mind is the cognitive skills a person has to acquire a second language. Among context and mind, we have individual differences, which means that not everyone learns at the same pace or under the same conditions. Additionally, motivation, aptitude, and attitude account for differences among learners in the same contexts (Sanz, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies about adult second language acquisition, particularly the factors affecting adult learners. Literature reviewed for this study focused on adults' motivation to learn the second language, affective variables that might affect adults' learning process, including age, and learners' length of residence in the country where the target language is spoken. Studies were also found that dealt with individual differences, including cognitive and affective factors.

MOTIVATION

Researchers have found that motivation significantly affects the process of adult language acquisition. Noels, Pelletier and Clement (2000) studied a group of students registered in English psychology classes at a French and English bilingual university. They demonstrated that the instrumental orientation and external regulation orientations were strong, and that the travel, friendship, and knowledge orientations were highly correlated with identified regulation and intrinsic motivation (Noels, et al., 2000).

We can say a learner is motivated to learn when the individual is willing to acquire the new language and there are some factors that promote the learner's motivation, for example, teachers' behavior, and whether students feel they are autonomous and competent. Noels' (2001) research with native English-speaking university students found that if the teacher is perceived as a controller students feel they are learning less.

Another important factor that should be taken into account when we study learners' motivation is *integrativeness*, or the ideal L2 self. Integrativeness can be defined as the way the learner connects the L2 to his own knowledge. The ideal L2 self is the best condition under which this integrativeness can occur. From a self-perspective, results can confirm that this instrumentally can be divided into two different constructs, associated with promotion versus prevention tendencies, depending on the extent of internalization of external incentives. This may help us understand certain crosscultural differences in different educational contexts (Taguchi, Magid & Papi, 2009). It is important also to consider in the learning acquisition process the learner's aptitude. Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) concluded that aptitude is a complex "nexus" of cognition and personality that influences a learner's success.

AFFECTIVE VARIABLES

Among the affective variables researchers have studied, anxiety is a key factor that affects adult language acquisition. Hashimoto (2002) studied undergraduate and graduate students who spoke English as their second language and Japanese as their first language. He found that perceived competence and anxiety affect students' willingness to communicate. Students who have greater motivation for language learning and who are more willing to communicate reported using the language more frequently in the classroom.

Dewaele, Pertrides and Furnhan (2008) examined multilingual individuals in five different situations (speaking with friends, colleagues, strangers, on the phone, and in public). They found that the psychological independent variable, trait Emotional Intelligence (EI), had a significant negative effect on Communicative Anxiety (CA)/ Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in all four languages known to the participants. Also, the knowledge of more languages was linked to lower levels of FLA in languages learned later in life. Participants' history of learning and current linguistic practices were also found to determine levels of CA/FLA.

Another study by Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) that looked at students in the third and fourth semesters of French classes showed that a stronger sense of self-efficacy is associated with a stronger sense of listening self-efficacy, and is negatively associated with reading anxiety and listening anxiety. Anxiety can also affect oral communication with native speakers. Woodrow (2006), in her research with advanced English for specific purposes (EAP) students prior to entering Australian universities, found that the most frequent source of anxiety was interacting with native speakers. She also found that there was a significant negative relationship between second language speaking anxiety and oral performance.

Other affective variables that can influence language learning include attitudes, self-efficacy, and future self-guides. One study looked at secondary school students, university students, and young adult second language learners, all of them Spanish speakers. The study proposed a new interactive model of language learning motivation, which consists of goal-systems, attitudes, self-efficacy, beliefs, and future self-guides. The models revealed that the most important learning goal of the surveyed students was related to the status of English as a *lingua franca*, and the wish to use English as a means of international communication, which had a strong direct relationship with students' future self-guides (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011).

In another study by Dornyei and Csizér (2002), the target population were 13-14 year-old pupils who were learning five languages. The study found that during the examined period, the learners' general language commitment showed a significant decline, with only English maintaining its position. We can say that learners might be motivated by the need of learning a language that can be used in different contexts and that have an international status.

AGE AND LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Age and Length of Residence (LOR) are factors that have been considered together in adult language acquisition processes. Flege and Liu (2001) studied groups of Chinese adults living in the United States who differed in LOR. Results suggest that adults' performance in L2 will improve measurably over time, but only if they receive a substantial amount of native speaker input.

It seems that age is also related to motivation. Ghenghesh (2010) studied heterogeneous groups of students from 35 nationalities studying English as a foreign language at an international school, and five teachers from three ethnic backgrounds: European, North American and Indian. A questionnaire on students' motivation shows that L2 motivation in the sample decreased with age. The role of the teacher was seen as fundamental in determining students'

attitude towards the language and in supplying motivation. Other external factors include aspects related to the learning context.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used in this research is based on qualitative and exploratory actions as it aimed to investigate the under-researched phenomena and develop understanding in an area that is little understood. This research could possibly generate ideas for further research and lead to the identification and/or determination of categories of meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 33). In the case of this study, the information gathered was to be re-purposed in the form of a proposal for language maintenance and instruction at the Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science of the Civil Aeronautics Agency of Colombia.

The study sought to identify the factors that affect adult foreign and second language learners, specifically Colombian air traffic controllers who are required to possess specific and high levels of English. These high levels are required due to the impact of these individuals' English language ability on the public's safety. It sought further to identify factors that that affect adult second language learners in classroom and language maintenance activities at the Center, as well as the strategies that best support adult second language learners. To do this, it was necessary to understand the controllers' understanding and perceptions of their English acquisition and the context (English classroom training, autonomous English practices, and the use of English in their job) in which they acquire English as a second language.

> Behavior and, thereby data are socially situated, context related, context dependent and context reach. To understand a situation, it is necessary to understand the context because situations affect behavior and perspectives and vice versa. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.167)

CONTEXT

The Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science (CEA) is the training school of the Colombian Civil Aeronautics Agency or *Aeronautica Civil*, located in Bogotá, Colombia. The CEA provides both theoretical and practical training for air traffic controllers. Controllers' training is divided into three basic courses: aerodrome, non-radar, and radar. Additionally, the CEA offers procedure and supervisor courses. As air traffic controllers in Colombia must take recurrent air traffic control courses every three years, the CEA has developed these courses, using a blended methodology: online courses for the theoretical part and face-to-face courses for the practical simulator-based training. Controllers trained at the CEA are ready to start the on-the-job training at any air traffic control (ATC) facility in Colombia.

The CEA has modern facilities to teach air traffic control courses, with 360 degree simulators. Using the simulators, it is possible to recreate the air traffic control operations at airports Category I (Bogotá) and Category II (Barranquilla, Cali, and Medellín-Rionegro). The simulator exercises include complex and operationally realistic exercises. The CEA's instructors are experienced controllers, and some of them remain operationally valid. The CEA's ATC courses comply with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulations and recommended practices.

At the CEA, ATC courses also include Human Factors training. In the new air traffic control environment, human factors are considered a key subject to improving air traffic controllers' performance and help them acquire the skills necessary to work in a very demanding and stressful environment.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this project were 100 air traffic controllers from different airports of Colombia. Ages ranged between 20 and 55 years old, working experience between 5 and 25 years. Control positions included clearance delivery, ground, tower, approach, and area control. The group included women and men.

The researcher has worked for 25 years as an English teacher of the interviewed population. She has had academic interaction at some point of the air traffic control training of this population. As an English teacher of the CEA, she belongs to the Academic Group and she has had the opportunity to participate in decision making committees regarding controllers' English language proficiency process. She has been able to suggest strategies to carry out this process, monitor, and assess it. She has guided two previous studies, and based on the findings, has designed programs to improve the existing ones. Additionally, the researcher has participated in three international ICAO workshops for English teachers and she periodically receives updated ICAO information related to the new findings, information and challenges of the English language proficiency process.

As such, the researcher in this context can be identified as a participant researcher or insider, according to Flick's (as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007) four roles of researchers: stranger, visitor, insider, and initiate. While this role is difficult to execute, especially in sensitive research contexts, it is valuable in its potential for interpreting local phenomena and insider knowledge.

> The issue is that one has to try to select a role that will provide access to as wide a range of people as possible, preserve neutrality (not being seen as on anybody's side), and enable confidences to be secured (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 179)

Possible drawbacks to the researcher's insider role will be discussed in the treatment of limitations of the study, in the Conclusion of this chapter.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The research aimed to gather information about controllers' perceptions of the Center's English programs designed to help them maintain and improve their English levels. To do this, a variety of techniques were used to obtain enough reliable and authentic information. Three different qualitative research techniques were applied to obtain information that could be useful to answering the proposed questions. Informed consent was obtained from the CEA's Academic Coordinator as well as the controllers who participated in the interviews.

Questionnaires. A structured questionnaire with open and closed questions was applied, related to the factors in the classroom that affect controllers' English language learning, and the strategies that have best supported them in this endeavor (See Appendix A). This information allowed for the estimation of the best techniques to develop maintenance English programs for this population. The questionnaire administered was sent via Survey Monkey, and a link was sent to the controllers' *Aeronautica* e-mails. In this way, the questionnaire was sent through official *Aeronautica* channels.

Follow up interviews/focus groups. After analyzing results from the questionnaires, the researcher conducted follow up interviews and focus groups with willing controllers in Bogotá enrolled in training at the CEA, in order to delve further into opinions, motivations, perceptions and recommendations (See Appendix B). The expectation was to gather information about the best way for controllers to practice English either in classroom or during their spare time.

Document analysis. International and national regulations were reviewed in order to better understand controllers' needs to learn the language. These regulations also affect the level of controllers' motivation to acquire English as a second language

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was collected from different instruments, questionnaires, interviews and document analysis, which suggests a qualitative data interpretation. This implies data reduction as a key element of qualitative analysis, performed in a way that attempts to respect the quality of qualitative data. Data interpretation was focused on individual and group answers. Some qualitative studies (e.g. Ball; and Bowe et al., as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007) "deliberately focus on individuals and the responses of significant players in a particular scenario, often quoting verbatim responses in the final account; others are content to summarize issues without necessarily identifying exactly from whom the specific data were derived" (p. 462).

The data from the questionnaires was collected via Survey Monkey. Once 99 responses had been obtained, the researcher split the answers in the following categories: motivation, English learning experiences, factors affecting English development and strategies to improve controllers´ English level. The researcher summarized the answers that best answered the

questions and that were given by a significant number of participants, and sometimes quoted verbatim responses to clarify some ideas.

RESULTS

The data collected in this study sought to provide information that might help to answer the questions as to the factors that affect English learning of air traffic controllers inside and outside the classroom, and the strategies that best support their English language learning, with the intention of informing future language maintenance programs at the Center for the Study of Aeronautic Science (CEA) in Bogotá. In general, it was found that all controllers report that they like to learn English and recognize the need for English in their jobs and lives. Controllers are also conscious that they must maintain this level, and also have some notion as to how to continue with this process. Although age is not a determining factor, it was found that controllers who entered the service 10 or 15 years ago, before the English entry requirement, have a markedly different opinion towards their learning. They tend to be less autonomous and rely more strongly on traditional face-to-face classes.

GENERAL FINDINGS

In terms of controllers' motivation and interest in English, it is clear that the controllers who responded to the questionnaires and interviews are interested in their English learning or maintenance process. They are conscious of the importance of this language for their job and the way their proficiency affects air safety. Beyond their jobs, controllers also believe that English is important for personal and cultural growth. They see English a lingua franca that can help them access opportunities in their lives.

In terms of the English acquisition or maintenance program, there are two different positions. The newer generation controllers have entered the system with English as a requirement (the minimum level was B2 or ICAO Level 4) (See Appendix C). This newer generation is asking for English programs that include the teaching of ATC subjects in English, international interchanges or scholarships, conversation clubs, the use of the technology to maintain and improve their language proficiency. The older generation controllers entered the ATC system without English as a requirement. They have learned English during their professional lives. These controllers are asking for face-to-face classes for English training, and they still depend on this regular English training. In addition, they ask for more opportunities to practice English, other than the classroom programs, such as English practice in the ATC facilities.

Most of the air traffic controllers said they have had positive experiences in their English learning process, which include travel to other countries, regular English training at CEA and at other institutes, and the English practice at the ATC facilities. In terms of autonomous practice, however, other air traffic controllers report that they are not willing to learn or practice English autonomously. They think that the Aeronautica should be in charge of scheduling English

practice for them. Here once again, it is possible to see a difference of opinion between older and younger controllers. Most of the younger air traffic controllers believe that they should practice English on their own, and they mentioned some tools they use to practice English, for example, aviation videos, ATC international frequencies, and aviation books. Older generation controllers who acquired the language as part of their jobs continue to argue for and rely on English courses and practice offered by the Center.

Another important topic considered in this research include the factors that affect controllers' language acquisition. Some of these factors include age. Older controllers have to take longer training to see a significant improvement in their English proficiency. Anxiety is another factor that affects controllers' English acquisition, as they feel pushed to learn English by their coworkers as well as by the company. Another factor that affects the language maintenance process is the lack of willingness to maintain the English level autonomously, and from the administrative point of view, the lack of policies regarding the controllers who have not reached the minimum English levels.

REASONS FOR STUDYING ENGLISH

In general, controllers mentioned that they learn English because it is the language of aviation. As they are involved in this field, they are conscious that speaking English is a must. In the questionnaire, most participants answered that they learn English because they need it for their job. Many controllers also reported that they learn English because they like it, and some of them said they study English because they want to receive training in an English speaking country. Additionally, some controllers mentioned that English is necessary for cultural interchanges and to communicate with people from different countries. Finally, some of them reported that they learn English because they like to travel to different countries, and if they speak English they can communicate with the people. For example, one controller said, *I study English because I like it, for my job, and when I travel I can communicate and I do not have any problem.*[4]

ENGLISH LEARNING EXPERIENCES

In order to explore controllers' experiences English learning, the researcher included these questions in the questionnaire: *Which has it been your best experience in your English learning process?* and *Have you ever had a negative experience during your English learning process?* And in the interviews, the question was included, *Which has it been your best experience during your English learning process?* These intended to explore the types of experiences controllers found most significant, both in positive and negative terms, in order to better understand the ways in which controllers want to learn and improve English. It was considered that the information

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[4] Translated from spanish.

that can be collected through controllers' answers to these questions could be very useful to design a teaching and maintenance program based on their learning preferences.

In terms of their experiences learning English, a large percentage of controllers reported that they have had many positive experiences during their English learning process. Figure 1 shows the most significant English learning experiences controllers reported.

Figure 1. Most significant experiences learning English

Figure 1 illustrates three main categories mentioned by controllers as their best English learning experiences. In this figure we can see controllers prefer to learn or practice English through regular classroom activities and also with non-regular classroom activities like traveling to English speaking countries, English practice, and technology-based practices.

Experiences abroad. Based on the questionnaire analysis, some controllers mentioned that one of the best English learning experiences has been to travel to other countries because they have the opportunity to communicate with native and non-native English speakers. For example, one controller mentioned, *When I can communicate with foreigners from different countries.* They also report how these trips help them to lower anxiety related to speaking the language. For example, one controller mentioned, *Traveling to the United States helped me a lot because I lost the fear to speak in English.* Related to travel, some controllers reported that taking aviation English courses in the United States is another good English experience. What these findings show is that some controllers have had opportunities to travel to English speaking countries sponsored by the Aeronautica or on their own. Travels have allowed controllers to practice both general English and Aviation English, and these experiences have been beneficial for their language skills improvement, their knowledge of Aviation English, and also to increase their self-confidence when speaking and communicating in English.

Regular English courses: Some air traffic controllers mentioned that their best English leaning experience has been classroom training provided by the *Aeronautica*. For example,

they mentioned the intensive English courses taught at the airports, at institutes or at the CEA. Controllers reported that this kind of training is significant for a number of reasons. First, they mentioned the fact that they do not have to work when they are enrolled in such courses. In this way, they devote all their time to studying English and can see their improvement. For example, one controller said, *To take an intensive English course was useful for me because it helped me to remove the fear of practicing every day, and to understand that the best way of learning English is through intensive English courses.* Another advantage of this kind of training mentioned by air traffic controllers is the group size, as the groups are small, with a maximum of six controllers per group.

Another positive factor of the intensive English courses provided by the *Aeronautica* is that they are content-based aviation courses. For this reason, controllers' level of motivation increases as they are learning and practicing the language they need for their job. For example, one controller said, *When the training is focused in aviation English because I learn the language I need for my job.* Older controllers particularly reported these experiences as positive, citing the intensive English courses scheduled by the *Aeronautica*, and content-based aviation courses.

English language institutes have been another tool used by *Aeronautica* to teach English to the Air Traffic Controllers. Controllers mentioned significant experiences in courses given by Berlitz, the Centro Colombo Americano, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

English practice activities: Other programs developed by the *Aeronautica Civil* include English practice in the ATC facilities. For example, participants mentioned the benefit of including both an aviation and general English teacher at the facilities to promote English practice among the air traffic controllers. Another practice mentioned was the air news program, in which controllers receive daily e-mails with three-minute English practices.

Controllers also mentioned exam preparation courses offered. This training is a twenty-hour course and consists of teaching the methodology of the official English tests approved by the *Aeronautica* to certify the official English levels of the pilots and controllers in Colombia. These tests include the TEA (Test of English for Aviation, applied by International House Institute), and the EALTS (English for Aviation Language Testing System, applied by the British Council). Controllers reported that these courses helped them improve their confidence in their aviation English skills, and led to better results on the exams. Controllers experience a certain level of anxiety when taking the official English exams, so one way to lower this level of anxiety is with training. That is why they reported the English preparation courses helped them to increase their self-confidence and obtain better results.

Negative experiences learning English. A few controllers mentioned some negative experiences in their English learning process. They said the English courses should be continuous and include aviation English, and that these aviation English courses should be taught by teachers with experience in aviation. According to controllers' answers, it is clear that they consider studying aviation English particularly interesting and quite necessary.

The results in the official English tests were also mentioned by controllers as a negative experience in their English learning process. One controller mentioned, *Despite the company*

and my own effort I could not reach my ICAO level IV. The audios were very difficult and I could not see my improvement.

Controllers mentioned that another situation that is a negative experience for them is the lack of opportunities to practice English. What controllers' answers show is that they need a continuous learning process, better preparation for their official English tests to improve their self-confidence and obtain better results in these exams, and also that the scheduled English courses should include the aviation English to increase their proficiency in context of the aviation. Finally, the Aeronautica should schedule more opportunities to practice the language.

FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH DEVELOPMENT

In this research, it was found that there are some factors mentioned by controllers that affect their English development, including the lack of autonomous learning, anxiety, self-confidence, and the lack of a company policy for English proficiency.

Controllers mentioned some factors that affect their English learning process. One of the factors mentioned by controllers is the lack of autonomous learning, for example one controller mentioned, *Controllers are not used to practicing English on their own. It is a cultural condition.* In this point, we can also see the different points of view of the newer and experienced controllers. Younger controllers think they should practice English on their own, and should use the technological resources that are available for English language maintenance. Some of the technological resources mentioned include videos in YouTube, applications, for example Duolingo, or watching TV programs about critical situations in aviation or aircraft accident investigations. Other controllers mentioned that they like to practice English speaking with people or listening audios. One controller said, *Controllers should practice English inside and outside the ATC facilities.* In this point we can see the use of technology helps controllers to learn or practice English on their own. On the other hand, during the interviews older generation controllers affirmed that they will not study English on their own; they strongly believe the company must schedule English courses or practice for them.

Anxiety is another factor that was reported by controllers as affecting their English learning process. For example one controller said, *Some controllers do not speak in English with other controllers because they feel embarrassed. Some controllers make fun of others' mistakes when they speak in English.* The researcher found that anxiety particularly affects experienced, older generation controllers. This factor was evidenced during the interview especially, in which experienced air traffic controllers mentioned that they do not feel comfortable talking in English with younger controllers as they make fun of their mistakes. It limits the chances of the English practice of this group.

Other controllers noted an increase in their self-confidence when they are successful giving air traffic control in English and have good communication in English with the crews. They mentioned this as a rewarding situation. What these answers show is that controllers consider English proficiency as not only a requirement to be able to work as controllers in international airports, but also a factor that promotes their confidence to perform their job. Other rewarding

situations mentioned by air traffic controllers are when they are promoted or transferred to international airports because they fulfilled the English requirements.

Controllers also mentioned the Administration policies is another factor that affect the English improvement process. They argued that the *Aeronautica* has to set serious policies regarding the controllers who have not reached the required English levels.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE CONTROLLERS' LEVEL OF ENGLISH

As the CEA needs to develop a maintenance English program to help controllers to maintain and improve their English levels, participants were asked about the best strategies to develop proficiency. In this point there are two clear and consistent differences of perspective: new generation controllers and older generation controllers.

The controllers who belong to the new generation, those who were required to have proficiency in English as a condition for joining the *Aeronautica*, are conscious of the need to practice English in different contexts. This can be confirmed by their answers in the questionnaires and during the interviews, in which they included classroom and non-classroom practices such as ATC subjects taught in English, more simulations in English, interchanges, scholarships, and specialized English training. According to controllers' answers we can say that this generation has a wider perspective of English practice that is not only based on the traditional methods.

On the other hand, old generation controllers, who were hired without proficiency in English, and who learned English at the *Aeronautica*, maintain that they need face-to-face training to learn English, including on-site English practice.

Controllers who belong to the newer generation suggested the following strategies for a maintenance program:

- Increase the number of English training in the non-radar and radar courses: The current training is 24 hours in each one of the mentioned courses. The content and the methodology of these courses are appropriate. For example, one controller said: *The English training during the non-radar course is good but is not enough.*

- Teach ATC subjects in English: According to controllers, some subjects that could be taught in English are procedures or aerodynamics; on the contrary, they feel that the course on regulations should not be taught in English. For example, one controller said, *I think the CEA has to design a curriculum which includes ATC subjects taught in English. The regulation subject should not be taught in English. Aerodynamics is a good subject to be taught in English.* They said that for this specific training, it is necessary to hire teachers with experience in aviation and with a high level of English.

- Increase the use of English during the simulation part of the ATC courses: Controllers reported that more simulations in English are necessary to consolidate the knowledge of aviation English as well as the ability to face emergencies or abnormal situations in English.

- Specialized training in English: They suggested contracting English training with specialized institutions, for example IATA.

- Interchanges or scholarships: They mentioned an exchange program with English speaking countries would help to improve the language proficiency of the controllers.

- Other activities for English practice: They suggested scheduled conversation groups, English days, uploading English practices in a platform, and to continue with the English practices at the ATC facilities.

Controllers who belong to the old generation suggested the use of online English courses with face to face support, and face to face courses:

- Online English courses: Older controllers mentioned SENA[5] or Open English courses with the support of face-to-face practice.

- Scheduled English courses at the CEA or other institutes using face-to-face methodologies. Older controllers overall reported that they still depend on the face-to-face learning mode.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to identify the best English training strategies for maintaining and improving the English levels of air traffic controllers in Colombia, based on the factors that affect adult second language, learners in the classroom, and the strategies that best support adult second language acquisition. Based on the findings, it was possible to draw a number of conclusions. It was possible to establish that controllers like to study English and consider English proficiency necessary for their job. Controllers also consider English as a way to communicate with people and increase opportunities in life. This coincides with Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér (2011), who found that the status of English as a lingua franca and the wish to use English as a means of international communication had a strong direct relationship with students' future self-guides.

In terms of English learning experiences, it was found that most of the controllers have had positive English learning experiences. Their best English learning experiences include regular general and aviation English courses, travels abroad, and English practices in the ATC facilities. It was also found that some controllers report the results in their official English tests as bad English learning experiences because they could not obtain the minimum required English level. In order to help controllers to overcome this difficulty, it is necessary to train them in the formats of these exams, to help them to reduce the level of anxiety.

In terms of factors affecting language learning, it was possible to identify two groups of air traffic controllers: the newer generation controllers and the older generation controllers. It could be established they have two different points of view of the factors that affect their

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[5] The *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje,* Colombia's national vocation and technical training center

English learning process. For the newer generation controllers, autonomous learning is a need for all controllers; on the other hand, for the older generation controllers, the English learning and practice must be scheduled by the *Aeronautica*.

Anxiety is another factor mentioned by older generation controllers as a factor that affect their English learning process. They mention they do not feel comfortable speaking in English in front of the controllers who have a better English level because they make fun of their mistakes. Because of this reason, they refuse to participate in the English practices with them. Hashimoto (2002) found that perceived competence and anxiety affect students' willingness to communicate. In this point it was established that age is another factor that affects the English learning process. Controllers who belong to the older generation need longer training. According to Ghenghesh (2010), L2 motivation decreases with age.

Self-confidence was found as another factor that influences controllers' English learning process. Some controllers mentioned that because they improved their English proficiency, they feel more confident when they give air traffic control in English. On the other hand, controllers found promotions and transfers to international airports particularly rewarding.

In terms of the strategies suggested by air traffic controllers to improve their English levels, two different perspectives were found. One was newer generation controllers who suggested to include activities like the teaching of ATC subjects in English, interchanges, scholarships, specialized English courses, conversation clubs, and the use of the technology to develop these programs. The older generation controllers, who did not enter the profession with English, but rather learned on the job, suggested English training through face to face or blended courses and the use of English practices.

One of the limitations in this research was that the researcher could not interview controllers from airports Categories III and IV because at the moment of the interviews, they were not taking any training at the CEA. Another limitation was the poor quality of the internet access at airports Categories III and IV; therefore, controllers could not answer the questionnaire. It is also possible that the researcher's role as insider might have influenced air traffic controllers' willingness to complete the online questionnaire as it was sent through official Aeronautica channels. This might have also influenced participants' willingness to participate in or be more forthcoming in the interviews. In general, participants' answers both in the questionnaire and interviews were specific and to the point, not elaborate.

For future research projects related to controllers' English acquisition, it would be interesting to obtain more information from controllers working at these airports. It would also be important to broaden the study to include pilots to arrive at a more complete picture of English interaction between controllers and pilots in Colombia.

ACTION PLAN

- The Civil Aeronautics Agency in Colombia needs to develop an English training plan for older generation controllers. This plan must include general and aviation English training and strategies to promote autonomous English learning.

- The Aeronautica needs to develop a plan for all controllers in Colombia, it should include different strategies to maintain and improve controllers' English levels, including teaching ATC subjects in English, interchanges, scholarships, specialized English courses, conversation clubs, and English practices in the ATC facilities.

- The Aeronautica should develop programs to promote better relationships and collaborative practices among air traffic controllers.

- Controllers need to be conscious of their responsibility to maintain and improve their English levels.

- The Colombian aviation community must increase the use of English in their current activities.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire of English Level Maintenance and Improving Program for Air Traffic Controllers (Administered in Spanish)

Dear Air Traffic Controller.

In order to develop a program to maintain and improve your English level based on your needs as an air traffic controller, please answer the following questions:

1. Age range:
    - ☐ From 20 to 30
    - ☐ From 31 to 40
    - ☐ From 41 to 50
    - ☐ Over 50

2. Your base airport is:
    - ☐ Category I
    - ☐ Category II
    - ☐ Category III
    - ☐ Category IV

3. Your official English level is:
    - ☐ I
    - ☐ II
    - ☐ III
    - ☐ IV
    - ☐ V
    - ☐ VI

4. You study or practice English because:
    - ☐ You like this language.
    - ☐ You think it is a way to have cultural exchanges.
    - ☐ You need it for your job.
    - ☐ You want to take training in English-speaking countries.
    - ☐ You would like to work as an air traffic controller in other country.

5. What has it been your best experience in your language learning process?

_____

6. Have you ever had a negative experience in your English learning process?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Describe

7. When do you feel most comfortable using English?
   ☐ When speaking
   ☐ When listening
   ☐ When reading
   ☐ When writing

8. Which strategies would you recommend to develop a program to maintain and improve controllers' levels of English?
   ☐ Conversation clubs at the airports
   ☐ Frequent English courses
   ☐ Technical sessions with aviation experts
   ☐ To study air traffic control subjects in English
   Other _____

9. You think the maintenance and improving process of your English level should be done through experiences that are:
   ☐ Face to face
   ☐ Virtual
   ☐ Face to face and Virtual (Blended)

10. Are there enough opportunities to practice and improve your English during your basic courses (aerodrome, non-radar, radar, recurrent)
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

Recommendations:

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Questions for air traffic controllers' interviews about the factors that have affected their English learning process and the best strategies to develop an English maintenance and improving program.

1. What is your official English level? Which strategies have you used to improve this English level?

2. Do you work in a national or international airport? What percentage of your operations do you complete in English at this airport? How does your English proficiency affect your job performance?

3. Which factors have affected your English learning process?

4. Why do you study English? Is it because you like it or because you need it for your job or because it is a way to know other cultures?

5. Which has it been your best English learning experience?

6. When do you feel more comfortable using English: when you listen it, when you speak it, when you read it or when you write it, Why?

7. What do you think about the regular English courses to learn English or improve controllers´ English levels?

8. Which methodology would you like to study English: face to face, virtual or blended. Which one have you used for your English learning process?

9. From your English learning experience, which recommendations would you give us to develop a maintenance and improving English program for Air Traffic Controllers?

10. Do you agree with the idea of teaching Air Traffic Control subjects in English at the CEA?

APPENDIX C

ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale, (ICAO, 2011)

Level	Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interactions
Expert 6	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.	Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and sensitive to register	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connector spontaneously.	Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.	Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and work related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/ listener relationship effectively
Operational 4	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances	Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting	Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work- related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent

EFFECTS OF INTERACTION WITH INTERNATIONAL VISITORS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Héctor Jesús Mancipe Salguero

Occasional yet meaningful interaction with international visitors to the Colegio Americano de Bogotá *has become a regular feature of the school experience. High school students have multiple opportunities to interact in English with visiting native and non-native speakers during their time at the school. Teacher Hector Mancipe began noticing students' increased positive anxiety as well as motivation towards these intercultural interactions, and asked himself how these opportunities might be affecting students' English language learning. He also became interested in understanding the degree of intercultural learning and communication as a result of these experiences. His study points to the strong role such encounters play in the development of language proficiency as well as intercultural awareness and tolerance. These aspects in turn impact the broader educational experience of these learners.*

ABSTRACT

Key words:
Intercultural
Competence, Cultural
exposure, Interaction
between non-native
(NNS) and native
speakers (NS), Second
language acquisition,
Extracurricular
activities

The present research project examined the extent to which intercultural competence is developed through interaction with native speakers. It also sought to identify which curricular and extracurricular activities favor the development of this competence. Data was collected from senior students and English as second language teachers of the *Colegio Americano de Bogotá* through the application of questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. It was found that students who are able to interact with native speakers improve in the second language. Beyond this, however, it was also found that this contact allows for the opening of students' cultural mindsets, and makes it easier for them to accept cultural diversity. Findings further demonstrate that once students finish their process in the school, they are able to adopt a more critical perception of the world due to the different academic strategies that the school has implemented. Nevertheless, not all teachers or students appear to take advantage of the possible contact with native speakers due to factors such as lack of time, motivation, or information.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:
Competencia
Intercultural,
Exposición cultural,
Interacción entre
hablantes nativos
y hablantes no
nativos, Adquisición
de segunda lengua,
Actividades
extracurriculares.

El presente Proyecto de investigación examina en qué medida el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural se logra a través de la interacción con hablantes nativos. De igual manera pretende identificar las actividades curriculares y extracurriculares que favorecen el desarrollo de esta competencia. La información fue tomada de estudiantes y docentes del Colegio Americano de Bogotá mediante cuestionarios, un grupo focal y entrevistas donde se encontró que aquellos estudiantes que son capaces de interactuar con hablantes nativos mejoran su segunda lengua. Además, se encontró que este contacto permite la apertura de la mentalidad cultural de los estudiantes, lo cual les facilita aceptar la diversidad cultural. Los hallazgos demostraron que una vez los estudiantes terminan su proceso en la institución, son capaces de adoptar una percepción más crítica del mundo debido a las diferentes estrategias académicas implementadas. Sin embargo, parece que no todos los profesores o estudiantes aprovechan los espacios de interacción con hablantes nativos debido a factores como falta de tiempo, motivación o conocimiento.

INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition is a complex process involving a range of abilities, some related to linguistic aspects of the language. However, it is also understood that language learning is broader than linguistic competence, and may be a means for developing intercultural competence as well. Intercultural competence is now considered one of the most important of human abilities in the 21st century, due to the vast opportunities for travel, work and study abroad, as well as the collateral effects of globalization on education. Some schools are concerned about providing second language learners with the tools to achieve this skill, and may even carry out concrete actions to facilitate the development of intercultural communication skills and intercultural competence in their students.

Studies on intercultural competence are not vast, but research shows important findings in terms of the way intercultural competence can be developed, particularly through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Research has also explored the extent to which language learning is directly associated with culture learning. Studies have also pointed to the important role of motivation, which allows learners to develop attitudes that enable them to be culturally competent. At the same time, literature on this matter gives insights into the impact of cultural identity and cultural diversity in second language learning, as well as the negotiation of meaning necessary for people to be able to be socially assertive and effective.

For this reason, it was seen as relevant and important to explore the extent to which intercultural competence can be developed. More specifically, this study explored how interaction with native speakers in curricular and extracurricular experiences contribute to the development of this important ability. The project focused on high school seniors in the *Colegio Americano de Bogotá in Bogotá*, Colombia. It sought to understand how these learners develop intercultural competence, and how this might contribute to the development of autonomous individuals, as stated in the school's *graduate profile*, a description of the projected student outcome, coherent with the goal statement of the school.[6] This project aimed to examine the extent to which extracurricular contact with native speakers helps to develop intercultural competence development, and what other curricular aspects may also contribute to achieve this. It is also interested in identifying particular components of intercultural competence observable in students.

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[6] The graduate profile or perfil del egresado is commonly described in many or most schools in Colombia in terms of the ideal person the school seeks to form. In both public and private schools, it is a way for schools to exercise autonomy by writing their own "graduate profile," according to each school's unique institutional education plan (PEI).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CULTURE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Language learning is a process that allows people to understand and communicate their ideas by using different linguistic codes. It is commonly thought that language learning focuses only on aspects such as vocabulary acquisition and the development of communicative skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Nevertheless, even though these are key components and show progress in language acquisition, culture also plays a significant role in order to develop total language dominance.

Culture in language learning explores the relationship which allows language learners to decenter their misconceptions about the culture a language belongs to in order to expand an intercultural identity (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). That is, language learning serves as a means by which learners can be open to new ideas and ways of perceiving the world as a social tool to explore, problematize, and erase differences among the self and the other's cultural assumptions. As described by UNESCO, "Culture forges educational content, operational modes and contexts because it shapes our frames of reference, our ways of thinking and acting, our beliefs and even our feelings" (UNESCO, 2006 p. 12).

Thus, learning a new language can be seen as a bridge which connects and structures people and meaningfulness, not only content and information (Byram, Morgan & Colleages, 1994). This means that deep language acquisition appears when learners are able to culturally interact through the correct use of language, and this is possible when learners can communicate with native target language speakers, exchanging not only language content, but their identity as well.

When learners are able to interact beyond linguistic codes, according to the social situations in which languages are framed, they are reaching cultural understanding (Byram & Grundy, 2003). This can be understood as learners' capability to accurately exchange ideas with native speakers of a different culture. Therefore, culture learning focuses more on developing tolerance, understanding, and self-awareness of other languages (Lantolf, 2003). This is how learners can adopt new ways of perceiving the world, and also modify previous assumptions.

Cultural understanding enables us to be aware of diversity, for example, because language shapes cultural features; variability, due to social changes and interpretations from one culture to another; and linguistics, because language learning involves the adoption of a new and complex communicative mindset (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). As it can be seen, culture goes beyond information in terms of practices, routines, or places because culture is the framework through which people develop meaningful interactions in their daily lives.

Thus, culture and language are closely connected. Byram, et al. (1994) argue that when learning a language, content itself is not enough for deep proficiency; a cultural encounter is also needed which sustains and creates a strong structure. In other words, learning language is not only related to information, structures, or words to be learned by heart. At the same time, information about culture is useless if there is not a planned intention in which language

learning is nurtured by the contextualization culture provides. This is how the idea of becoming intercultural relates to a language learning purpose to be fulfilled as mastering a new language shapes people's perception of the world.

On the other hand, language is seen as a daily social practice whose purpose is not only to decode language features as normally thought, but to create and interpret meanings. Ultimately, the function of language is to give speakers the possibility of taking part in life by developing social interaction and connection, expressing opinions, ideas, feelings, and perceptions of reality (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). Indeed, language acquisition without culture association becomes worthless, and it is a compulsory objective to use language in order to create universal meaning. This is because language is seen as a skill that by itself lacks intellectual value; only when learners are able to discuss abstract ideas does language become intellectually valuable (Kramsch, 1993).

The research into culture in language learning aims to explore and describe the benefits that the addition of culture brings to the language learning process. This research explores how linguistics and social processes such as decoding, acquisition, and identity are influenced by language. This is especially true when culture is included or planned in order to allow learners to be skillful users able to accept different ways of perceiving the world (Byram, et al., 1994). The research into the effects of culture inclusion in language learning explores a constructivist approach in terms of social interaction, highlighting the importance of being surrounded by the target language in cultural situations (Kirkebæk, Du & Jensen, 2013).

At the same time, factors such as student-teacher relationships, motivation, and engagement have become essential components of language learning success. For that reason, teachers' pedagogical responsibility is highlighted as one of the first conditions in the second language classroom. It is also paramount to understand that teaching and learning culture in second language acquisition does not mean forcing people to act differently or to accept changes in their ways of living. Rather, the goal is to share cultural differences in a way that allows people to accurately adopt social functions (Kramsch, 1993). This research can explain some of these phenomena, and help teachers to plan actions which allow them to explore cultural diversity more than simply information storage, as language learning has been normally taught (Deewr, as cited in Australian Government. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009).

Another aspect to be considered in culture in language learning refers to the importance of involving native speakers in second language acquisition processes. As it is known, native speakers' experiences and interactions in their own communities have given them prior cultural knowledge to be transferred (Kramsch, 1993). In other words, native speakers' inclusion in second language acquisition is a valuable support in order to create an alternative context of culture in the second language classroom. As a result, culture is created and enacted through the dialogue among students, teachers, and different stimuli such as native speakers.

Finally, research has pointed out that learners can be absolutely successful in their learning process if they are seen in a holistic way (Byram & Grundy, 2003). This means that learners are full of expectations, anxiety, desires and hope, or as Kramsch puts it, "It would be wrong to view speakers only as mouthpieces of a monolithic social environment (1993, p. 48). With this scenario, it can be seen that learning about the target language culture generates real interest

and motivation to master language and interact in an exceptional linguistic and cultural way. Furthermore, interacting with the world and culture allows learners to construct concepts and conceptual thinking (Vygotsky, as cited in Lantolf, 1999). As such, when learners are surrounded by the accurate use of language and cultural experiences, they start emulating these patterns in order to adapt social roles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between language learning and culture has been widely discussed recently, but unfortunately research on intercultural competence development through second language acquisition is still not vast. Although there are few studies in this field, it is possible to identify some interesting findings. Literature reviewed for this study focuses on intercultural competence development, the use of ICT in intercultural competence, language learning, attitudes and motivation, cultural identity, and negotiation of meaning.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Research on intercultural competence development has been implemented recently, and there are significant findings that explain the importance of being able to understand the world at a cultural level. In one study, students were encouraged to exchange e-mails as a way of getting to know people from different cultures. The purpose of the study was to explore how intercultural competence occurs in online interaction. This exchange confirmed that intercultural competence can be developed when students interact beyond their own culture (O'Dowd, 2003).

Another study aimed to identify how pre-service teachers' level of intercultural competence can be predicted from demographic variables. Taking into account the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), it was seen that the more fluent and willing to interact in a non-native language a speakers is, the more possibilities he or she has to be interculturally competent due to the use of language as a means to gather intercultural knowledge (Cui, 2016).

It is also necessary to say that intercultural competence is addressed to students as well as teachers. In one study, Sercu (2005) identified willingness as a vehicle in which intercultural competence can take place. The study examined 150 teachers of different languages in order to verify to what extent the practices of foreign language teachers develop intercultural communicative competence. After the study, it was concluded that not all teachers engage students to be interculturally skillful. It is argued that factors such as lack of time to cover both language curriculum and to teach culture, and overloaded curriculum make it difficult to achieve cultural objectives. However, some teachers were indeed found to be facilitators of intercultural competence.

Clouet (2012) analyzed how cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors influenced the development of intercultural competence. This study was implemented with students and

English as a foreign language teachers in an upper secondary school in order to understand to what extent these factors are reflected in classrooms. Findings suggest that some teachers prioritize linguistics over cultural objectives, which means that openness and tolerance is slower to develop; however, one group of teachers was found to be more aware and helped students to become skillful beyond linguistics.

Equally important is Medina's study (2013), which sought to identify the benefits that learning from different cultures brings to TESOL students. The study sought to discover how students could reflect deep understanding of themselves and others in a cultural way, put new intercultural knowledge into practice, enhance intercultural competence, and feel comfortable when speaking to people from different cultures. It was proven that intentionality is a key component in order to become culturally skillful because experiencing difference as an opportunity is a matter which requires personal effort.

Finally, it is relevant to mention research carried out by Sercu (2006), which was applied to teachers from seven different countries in order to verify to what extent and in what way teachers' current professional profiles meet the specifications formulated in the theoretical literature regarding the foreign language and intercultural competence. Findings indicate that teachers involved in the study do not yet meet current foreign language and culture teaching profiles.

USE OF ICT IN INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

One of the valuable channels to build intercultural competence is the use of the internet to erase physical and communication barriers. Internet use and social media have become allies to make it easier to interact with and get to know different cultures. Some studies demonstrate this, for example Belz (2003), who examined intercultural competence development through the use of e-mail exchanges. An American student and two Germans became e-mail partners and were asked to revise mail messages in order to learn about culture, and simultaneously improve lexico-grammatical features. In this study, telecollaborative revision was a way for students to help each other's second language acquisition. The study showed increases in the development of intercultural mediation and foreign language education. The study also claims that this was possible because of the electronic nature of the discourse or communicative protocols.

On the other hand, Bradley's study (2014) investigated multicultural peer processes in a wiki and students' reflections on this practice in a student exchange exercise. The study focused on intercultural peer reviewing and the way students gave, received, and reflected on comments in order to increase cultural awareness. This study highlighted that it is possible to use ICTs such as wikis to increase sensitivity towards intercultural aspects as well as to provide effective feedback.

In other research conducted by Clouet (2013), college students in Spain and France participated in exploring approaches and tools which allow for the assessment of intercultural competence and skills in on line transnational programs. After collecting data from blogs, e-mails, virtual

conferencing, and telephone, they were analyzed using Ruben's work on behavioral approaches to Intercultural Communicative Competence and Likert scales, but findings explained that it is difficult to assess this competence. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we should ignore the possibilities of technology. At the same time, it was found that technology was quite helpful to enable people establish strong relationships and remove misconceptions.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

Studies have also focused on identifying the way in which language learning influences intercultural competence development. Moloney (2009) analyzed students and teachers from an International Grammar School (IGS) in Sydney to verify self-awareness of their sense of change and transformation through language learning. Likewise, negotiation of cultural membership and identity was used in order to increase intercultural language learning. In this study, it was found that when students are able to recognize how language learning can transform and change people in a cultural way, they show sophisticated critical negotiation of their simultaneous memberships of different cultural groups.

In the same way, Gonzalez and Borham (2012) analyzed the relevance of literary texts for the enhancement of intercultural awareness. This study also used Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) texts in order to promote intercultural skills development. It was observed that as English second language acquisition was taking place, students could develop multicultural points of view and erase incorrect cultural stereotypes.

ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION

Intercultural competence development and second language acquisition cannot be achieved just because there is intentionality or they are included in the curriculum. Research also shows the importance of motivation and attitudes. In Magos and Simopoulos' study (2009), teachers of Greek as a second language to immigrants were observed in order to discover the ways in which they promoted effective intercultural communication in the classroom, and if they had the ability to take advantage of the cultural diversity in their classes. Findings revealed that teachers were not interculturally competent due to their poor acceptance of cultural diversity. Even though they knew their students were immigrants, the way they taught was not inclusive. Further, teachers considered ethnicity an obstacle instead of an opportunity. Findings also revealed that students are entirely aware of teachers' preconceptions and feelings of superiority, which easily led to the development of negative feelings and lack of motivation. This prevented the development of both second language acquisition as well as intercultural competence.

In contrast, Min and Kim (2013)'s study shows how foreign language learning and cross cultural attitudes can be increased through the use of correct intrinsic motivation on tourism students in South Korea. This study also sought to analyze if target languages in foreign language study have repercussions on cross cultural skills. It was found that when learners interact with native

speakers, they feel motivated and this helps them to become skillful both in language and cross-cultural competence.

Semaan and Yamazaki (2015) studied American students of Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Persian. The study analyzed the relationship between global competence and language learning motivation by involving students in communities in which the target language was spoken. Findings were significant because the greater the motivation for second language learning, the more likely students were to see themselves as being globally competent.

Olaya and Gomez' study (2013) explains perceptions and attitudes of pre-service teachers about incorporating a cultural component in English as a foreign language class. They also describe how pre-service teachers might foster intercultural communicative competence in their classes. After analyzing students of different levels, findings showed that proper training is not given in order to help future teachers build tolerance or acceptance, or to use culture as a means for real understanding of English. In the same way, pre-service teachers consider that this is a motivating challenge, and one that can prepare them for their professional life.

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Studies on how culture shapes identity and diversity have been also carried out, for instance, Basílio, Araújo, and Simões (2016) identified how self and hetero images allow the construction of identities as well as learning the other's language. Participants were from distant and unknown countries and cultures; in that way, cultural awareness played an important role for social identity construction. It was found that intercultural dialogue led participants to exchange ideas, accept differences, and understand social and cultural identity.

Moreover, how teachers conceptualize diversity in the educational contexts they work may impact intercultural competence development (Jokikokko, 2005). This study analyzed how diversity and identity were added to daily teaching practices of teachers from a Master's level international teacher education program. It was noticed that teachers with more language training are more sensitive to cultural differences in terms of identity and diversity even though it is sometimes difficult to deal with different world views, values, and ideas.

Another study conducted in Colombia by Pretel (2016) analyzed whether daily teaching and socialization of foreign culture jeopardize learners' mainstream cultural identity. Participants were fifth grade students of a bilingual school in Barranquilla, Colombia whose discourse and behavior was observed in order to identify possible changes. Findings demonstrated that intercultural exposure fosters second language acquisition development without compromising mainstream culture.

Lastly, Candel (2015) explored perceptions and attitudes towards intercultural communication in engineers of an English for Specific Purpose course in Spain. The results of the study revealed that most participants are conscious about constant cultural differences and stereotyping, and that level of the language mastering alone is not guaranteed of success in an international environment.

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

Gómez (2012) analyzed negotiation of meaning and intercultural competence through the study of authentic literary texts in an advanced university English class. This study also used a constructivist approach in order to determine which teaching practices and procedures might be useful to help EFL learners develop intercultural communicative competence. Findings demonstrated that developing inquiry-based, dialogic, transactional, and content-based strategies help students to construct cultural knowledge through social interaction.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used in this research was based on naturalistic and ethnographic research because it claims that meaning is a product of social interaction (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). On the other hand, social interaction allows for the analysis of multiple interpretations of reality, experiences and phenomena (Cohen, et al., 2007).

This research focused on examining the extent to which extracurricular contact with native speakers helps to develop intercultural competence, and how other curricular aspects contribute the development of intercultural competence as well, and to achieving the school's graduate profile of educating autonomous individuals. As such, it is paramount to describe the way this process is being developed "The intention of the research is to create as vivid a reconstruction as possible of the culture or groups being studied" (Le Compte & Preissle, as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 168).

CONTEXT

The *Colegio Americano de Bogotá* (CAB) is a private Christian school located in downtown Bogota. This school was founded in 1868 by Presbyterian Missionaries Walter Lee and his wife, who came to Colombia with the intention of promoting access to high quality education to the sons and daughters of protestant Christians whose children were denied admittance to Catholic schools at that time. Nowadays, the CAB has grown into a well-recognized institution where students receive a holistic formation based on high academic standards and Christian values in order to become autonomous citizens. The school offers all levels of Colombian education: pre-school, elementary, and high school. Each of them has an academic coordinator, counseling department, and psychological support.

Due to its Presbyterian heritage, the CAB is regularly visited by international missionaries, educators, and ministers who come to the school in order to share experiences and support the school's social programs. On the other hand, new educational agreements are being established overseas, and it is common to find people from different countries and nationalities inside and

outside classrooms interacting with students and teachers. This situation has promoted a rich cultural environment where students feel free and are encouraged to know and accept new ways of thinking.

The school's pedagogical model is based on *meaningful learning.* When students reach tenth and eleventh grade (junior and senior years), their academic year is divided into semesters to promote a university environment. Students carry out a research project in these two years as part of the requirement to obtain their high school diploma. The school has also established institutional agreements with some universities which admit the best students who start first semester free of charge. Finally, it is important to mention that for the sake of promoting a safe environment, the CAB has a chaplaincy which supports and promotes inclusive spiritual and reflective spaces for students, teachers, administrative, and management staff.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this project were 171 high school seniors from the *Colegio Americano de Bogotá* who will graduate in December 2016. They were between 15 and 19 years old at the time of the study, and belong to different sectors of the city. Participants also included one Spanish literature teacher, the Coordinator of the English Department, as well as one foreign teacher.

The researcher in this study is an English as a second language teacher who has been working in the institution with junior and senior students for four years. The teacher is involved in the immersion trips that the school has taken to Los Angeles, California in 2015 and 2016. In this way, the teacher can provide a thick description of the contextualized behavior of students, and also because of his proximity with students, he is an instrument of research (Eisner, as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007).

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The techniques used for collecting information belong to the qualitative research approach and were applied in order to identify students and teachers' perceptions about the importance of interacting with native speakers as part of the second language acquisition process, and intercultural competence development through the school years.

Questionnaires. A rating scale questionnaire related to intercultural competence development was designed in order to assess students' level of adeptness and to what extent they perceive themselves as interculturally competent. The questionnaire was designed based on a Likert Scale and contained four ordered response levels, (totally agree, agree, disagree and totally disagree). This questionnaire was answered online by 106 senior students of the school using the Google Forms platform for collecting students' answers and making graphs (See Appendix A).

Students focus group. In order to know students' perceptions, and points of view related to their experience in intercultural competence acquisition, there was a student focus group

in order to verify if students perceive themselves as intercultural competent. Based on what students answered in the questionnaire, a set of questions was created (See Appendix B) in order to have a session with five students; these students were participants of an immersion trip to Los Angeles during the previous year. The focus group was approximately 20 minutes long and was conducted in Spanish, the students' native language.

Teachers' interview. Regarding teachers' experiences in developing students' second language acquisition and intercultural competence, an informal conversational interview (Cohen, et al. 2007) was conducted. Questions for the interview were developed after the analysis of both the questionnaire and the student focus group in order to further explore issues that were raised by the analysis of these two data inputs. Two English teachers were interviewed for approximately 15 minutes. These interviews were recorded and also transcribed in teachers' native language (See Appendix C).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was collected from three instruments: *questionnaire, students' focus group*, and *teachers' interviews,* which allowed for a qualitative interpretation of the information. This process helped to identify main themes in order to examine possible relationships and to keep the importance and the veracity of the data provided by the participants. In this way, "The process is akin to funnelling from the wide to the narrow" (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 462).

Questionnaire. The data was descriptive, and bar graphs as visual techniques were constructed to see frequencies and percentages. Each question was also analyzed and interpretations of the graphs were written down in a Word document in order to create a new set of questions for the students' focus group.

Students Focus Group. Students' intervention were recorded and transcribed in order to be analyzed. During the analysis of the information provided by the students, some categories emerged and color code was used in order to create the categories listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' perceptions of interaction with native speakers

Categories	Description
Personality	This category refers to the what students have identified as a key component for being able to interact with native speakers, for example when students said aspects of personality can make it easy or complicated communication process.
Cultural Exposure	This category refers to what students have reported as one of the main advantages of speaking to people from different cultures. For instance when students say that it is necessary to leave the comfort zone in order to acquire cultural understanding
Self-motivation	This category refers to the correct inner stimuli students must develop for taking advantage of their experiences. For example when one student mentioned that becoming successful depend in students' own decisions and teachers and school cannot force students to learn.
School Activities	This category refers the activities that have been done by the school and students identify as useful during their process. For instance, some students recognized that the English Day and interdisciplinary projects have become important tools to share the things they have learnt.
World's Vision	This category refers to the changes in the perception of the world that students have become more conscious of due to their experiences interacting with people from other culture.

Teachers' interview. The teacher interviews were also transcribed and analyzed for common themes. The analysis of the information provided by the teachers help of to support one of the categories which were obtained from the students, but also some new categories came up. Categories are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions derived from experiences involving native speakers

Categories	Description
Language acquisition	This category refers to the opportunities teachers have identified students improve language features. For example when teachers said interacting with native speakers helps them to sharpen their abilities.
Cultural exchanging	This category refers to the situation when students can share their own culture and be open to new ones. For instance when teachers argued that students learn how different schools and celebrations vary from one culture to another.
Self-motivation	This category refers to what teachers identified as students' reactions to native speakers interaction, as in example when teachers expressed students feel more comfortable talking to foreigners than teachers.
Communicative Barriers	This category refers to necessities and gaps in communication students face trying to share their ideas. For instance when teachers told that sometimes students cannot be as effective as expected due to lack of cultural understanding.
Cultural Understanding	This category refers to the level of tolerance and openness teachers have identified in students as a product of their interaction with native speakers, for example when teachers said students are able to recognize the importance of being different and accepting difference.
Language as a social tool	This category refers to the moment when English goes beyond the academic. In other words, when English serves as a means to talk and discuss about real life situation, for example when students speak about things from every day.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected allowed for the answering of the research questions. In general, the findings strongly suggest that according to participants in the questionnaire, focus group and interviews, interaction with native speakers has become essential. Further, students and teachers are gradually becoming more accustomed to interacting with native speakers. Among

the most relevant discoveries, it is important to mention that when students have opportunities to interact with native speakers, it strengthens not only their communication skills in English, but also their cultural awareness. Further, students identified self-motivation and personality as the two main factors that help them feel secure and confident at the moment of speaking in another language. Finally, students recognized that the school has been paramount for the acquisition of language, social skills, and intercultural competence development.

In terms of teachers' perspectives, teachers have also realized that interaction with native speakers has been quite beneficial in terms of second language acquisition. Teachers recognize the need to create new spaces where students can have access to such interaction. Furthermore, teachers also comprehend that this interaction helps learners to master language beyond the linguistic code, learning language while being conscious about cultural issues.

Teachers and students recognize that interaction with native speakers has helped to reduce the cultural gap, and enabled learners to understand how language uses models social conventions, and protocols. Still, it is surprising that not all teachers or students are aware of the implementation of these strategies and opportunities. Some students and teachers argued that they wish they had a deeper interaction with native speakers while another group recognized the programs and opportunities the school provides.

INTERACTION WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS

Students and teachers expressed they have seen considerable advantages of interaction with native speakers. According to the information collected from the questionnaire, most of students reported that they enjoy and actually feel confident facing conversations with foreigners. When students were asked if they considered themselves able to accurately face conversation with native speakers, most expressed that they did. In another question which aimed to identify if students considered interaction with native speakers useful, answers showed that students think their English level has improved during the last years due to this.

Some students claimed that interacting with native speakers is not only a novelty, but also a way of improving language acquisition. It has also helped them become more secure because they do not feel the pressure of a regular class with their teacher. One student mentioned, *I think there is a huge difference because when you talk to native speakers they are going to teach you the meaning of words and expressions that you do not know and normally books and dictionaries do not teach you.*[7] Another student reported, *They have a different value scale; they regularly try to be polite with the person who does not speak their language correctly.*

On the other hand, teachers also agreed with the idea of their students being exposed to activities which involve interaction with native speakers. They have also identified that students react positively in terms of language and culture exchange. One teacher said, *Well it is a great opportunity because apart from exchanging culture and knowledge, they practice and acquire new expressions.*

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[7] Translated from the Spanish

CULTURAL AWARENESS

The findings suggest that the advantages of interaction with native speakers go beyond second language acquisition. Students recognized that it has helped them to interpret and understand social aspects of the language to which the native speakers belong. In some of the questions, students recognized that they have an open and tolerant view. They realize the culture they belong to can differ from that of the target language, and that it is by talking and discussing that they can erase misconceptions.

At the same time, a student who participated in the focus group reported that interacting with native speakers creates a cultural encounter in which both parties benefit. This is because it can help people have a wider cultural point of view, break down stereotypes, and become more tolerant. Teachers also recognized the importance of students realizing how large and diverse the world is, and the activities with native speakers have been key in order to help students be conscious of others' values, manners, and ways of thinking. For instance, in the student focus group, some students highlighted that is very interesting to talk to people who have seen different things and live in a different place because this influences in a positive way a person's vision and mindset.

Students were also asked if they considered that people who speak a foreign language become more tolerant in order to know their opinions about mastering a second language and openness relationship. Most students support this statement. In a general way, participants reported that people who speak a foreign language have a broader mindset. This is because language is associated with culture, and the more a person knows about a foreign language, the more this person can talk about interesting topics. One student mentioned, *People who do speak a foreign language have left their comfort zone, know new stuff and have broken boundaries. They talk about topics they never thought they were going to, so I think acquiring knowledge is powerful.*

Meanwhile, teachers said that interaction with native speakers serves to link both academic and social learning. One teacher reported, *I think it is not only important the academic learning which is obtained, it is also necessary to open our eyes and know about other cultures.* Opinions also expressed a general concern about finding new and more spaces in which students can have access to interaction with native speakers. Teachers claimed that the time the school has devoted itself to this, and the number of foreign student-teachers and international visitors who support this are not enough for the number of students.

STUDENTS' ROLE

Even if teachers and students have identified the benefits of being exposed to new cultures through interaction with native speakers, the data collected show that the effectiveness of this process depends greatly on students' own attitudes. Based on what participants said, we can highlight two key components which students related to their success at language learning: personality and self-motivation.

Personality. When students were asked if talking in a foreign language made them feel like they were modifying their personality, students' answers showed a high level of disagreement. Students do not think that speaking in a non-native language changes their character or who they are, and only a small group of students agreed with the statement. Nevertheless, students did identify personality as a crucial factor that allows or inhibits a learner to be successful. Students reflected on the way in which sometimes outgoing personalities help people communicating their ideas regardless of a high level of English proficiency. A student said, *I think it is because of personality, the attitude you have; a person cannot have all the tools, but if that person has attitude and a good personality, language is not an obstacle to express ideas.*

Self-motivation. Students also reported that even if the school is creating spaces where they can practice with native speakers like having foreign teachers, opening exchanging programs, or immersion trips, the school cannot force a student to make progress if he or she is not interested in achieving second language acquisition. One student said, *I would said that the school can open doors for a person to become bilingual, but it is also the effort and the interest each student has because the school cannot coerce students to learn.*

Students' opinions are similar to what teachers identified and reported. According to one teacher, she does not have to push her students to be involved in the activities with native speakers. Another teacher reported that even when her students are not completely fluent, they are curious, and this helps them to express ideas and communicate their feelings despite the anxiety. Teachers also said that the possibility of learning from a person who belongs to a different culture, even if it is only because of physical or mental differences, is enough to motivate students to go beyond their weaknesses.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Intercultural competence is the ability a person acquires due to the possibility of interacting, experiencing, and being immersed in a culture that is not his or her own. As a result, behavior, attitudes, and recognition of the world are affected in terms of openness and tolerance. In the questionnaire, students were asked if they think they were tolerant and if they considered themselves to be flexible about accepting different ways of thinking. Students reported that they were, and what has helped them to have an open and broad perception of the world are the activities that have been developed in the school, especially the ones who have been led by the English department such as the English Day, interdisciplinary[8] activities, and the visits of international teachers and students.

Students also recognized that they live in a globalized world full of differences and diversity, and this is another reason why interacting with people who speak a different language is paramount in order to acquire intercultural competence. Being exposed to this interaction favors students' mindsets and encourages them to be more critical and reflective about the world and people, one student stated:

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[8] The term refers to curricular long term projects which involve two or more academic subjects.

> I think that both the learner and the native speaker grow their knowledge and their ability to understand the world because people have totally different perspectives which for instance allow to face some issues from another point of view and thus, making conversations nicer.

On the other hand, teachers reported that intercultural competence is imperative, and that they expect their students to be good at it. This complements the previous idea that teachers are not looking only for academic success, but rather a more holistic student who can act responsibly according to social conventions and protocols. One of the teachers who was interviewed argued that students should develop intercultural competence because all human beings are diverse, even within the same cultural group. This teacher argued that it is necessary that students learn that differences are not for dividing people, but a way in which respect and tolerance can be taught: *The person whose culture is different is diverse, and diverse does not mean wrong, it simply means that we all are different.*

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

From the students' focus group and the teachers' interviews, it was noticeable that paradoxically, the lack of complete mastery of the foreign language in terms of vocabulary or grammar structures is not necessarily a disadvantage for interaction. However, students and teachers did identify that sometimes understanding a foreign language deals more with comprehending the context in which expressions and speech acts are framed. Students reported that the real challenge of speaking in a foreign language is to give the accurate sense to common expressions used in their mother tongue when they are translated into the other language, Students also struggle with using the precise word in terms of what is socially correct or accepted. Thus, when students can interact with native speakers, language becomes a bridge which connects words, meaning and people.

Teachers stated that when students interact with native speakers, they are able to communicate their ideas more efficiently because one of the benefits they can take from this activity is to understand what words and expressions should be used depending on the context. In this way, interaction with native speakers helps students to erase the communication barrier that leads to misconception, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation, and it also requires learner's self-effort and awareness. One teacher reported, *When you talk to a native person, there is an extra effort firstly to understand, and secondly to use another kind of language for people understanding you.*

Among the students, it is also recognized that interaction with native speakers is an experience that raises some feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and fear, and can also affect the flow in conversations. Students experience these emotions because they do not want to make mistakes while speaking. However, students claimed that once fear has been overcome, mistakes are an important source for improving and break down possible barriers. Actually, students ask for correction and appreciate when it is given. During the focus group one of the students declared:

I know that when I make a mistake I can learn from that too and it helps me to feel more confident and think: -well, it does not matter, I made a mistake and I am going to learn more when people correct my speaking.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to identify the extent to which interaction with native speakers develops intercultural competence in high school students at the *Colegio Americano de Bogotá*. In the same way, the research looked at how and which curricular and extracurricular activities can be implemented to foster this competence, and the impact of this competence on the achievement of the school's student graduation profile. In general, interaction with native speaker has been convenient for the students and the teachers of the school, who have seen in it an opportunity for leveling up second language acquisition processes as well as intercultural competence development. Teachers affirmed that students who interact with native speakers are able to speak about social issues with a more open and flexible point of view. Likewise, teachers say that their students have become more interested in learning about cultural differences, how people from other countries are, and how language can be used according to specific situations and the participants in the conversation. Interaction with native speakers has also been found to aid students' understanding of the world as a diverse and contrasting place. This in turn has led to learners reflecting about their own worldviews.

The curricular and extracurricular activities taking place in the school have helped foster students and teachers both to develop intercultural competence. Students enjoy activities like *English Day* because they have opportunities to practice and share what they have learned. It can be also said that teachers have also created strategies that allow students to use language and culture in different contexts. In addition, the school is concerned about this and is currently looking for new agreements with organizations to increase students' interaction with native speakers. The school finds this activity is helpful, but not sufficient, due to the number of students. As a result, students have acquired a wide and critical point of view, it is possible to see senior students with more mature attitudes, clear expectations and conscious about using language to connect people, communities and society.

In line with Magos and Simopoulos (2009), motivation plays a crucial role for the development of intercultural competence. Findings in the present study demonstrate that learners have an inner motivation which helps them to interact, which comes from different factors, including the novelty in contact with people who belong to diverse cultures, and students' desire to improve their second language, or overcome personal feeling like nervousness or fear. Jokikoko (2010) states that culture and diversity should be dealt with in second language curricula. In a similar, way findings illustrate that one of the most challenging situations which learners face when speaking to native second language speakers is to accept differences or explain cultural issues like traditions or manners.

The literature also suggests that negotiation of meaning is essential when people who belong to different cultural groups interact Candel (2015). Students in the study realized that words and expressions do not mean anything if cultural background is not taken into account; for

that reason, experiences like talking to native speakers or immersion trips facilitate cultural understanding. Another important finding which was made supporting Pretel (2016) is that even if students are exposed to new and divergent cultural experiences, mainstream culture, in this case Colombian culture, is not lost. In fact, students feel that interacting with native speakers from other countries is an important opportunitiy to talk proudly about their own.

Limitations of the research include the lack of time for carrying out the research tasks in a systematic fashion, even though this program was helpful to complete all things on time. Clearly, with more time data can be collected and analyzed in detail, or more instruments can be applied for collecting data. On the other hand, this moment of the year is very heavy, and teachers cannot spend quality time with the researcher collecting data because they are rushing with all the things they normally do for closing the academic year. For this reason, it was difficult to schedule interviews. In addition, students who took part in the focus group were seniors, and academic activities were already finished by the time in was applied, which means it was also a bit difficult to have them together and to find a quiet place to do the focus group.

Future research should include interviews with the school principal and the administrative direction of the school in order to identify accommodations the school has made or will make in order to keep this program alive. In the same way, it would be interesting to know international student-teachers or visitors' points of view. Future research should also include different strategies for data collection such as journals for the participants and observations to identify participants' attitudes during communication processes, not only the testimonies from the teachers' interview and the students' focus group.

ACTION PLAN

- The school should continue with activities such as immersion trips and conversation with second language speakers.

- If time during English classes is not enough, the school should create extracurricular activities where students can take advantage of native speakers such as an English Club.

- Teachers should find ways of using ICT for students to have access to intercultural exchanges. There are programs that allow it and are safe for students.

- English teachers should plan classes that include the goal of encouraging students to become familiar with other cultures, social conventions, and practices.

- Cooperative teaching should be used in order to continue the school's *interdisciplinary* projects.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Students

Querido estudiante, muchas gracias por tomar un momento para responder el siguiente cuestionario. Queremos conocer su percepción sobre la interacción con hablantes nativos de lengua extranjera.

Lea con atención el enunciado y seleccione la opción que considere conveniente, donde 1 significa estar totalmente en desacuerdo y 4 totalmente de acuerdo.

	1	2	3	4
1. Considero que soy capaz de interactuar con hablantes nativos empleando palabras y expresiones correctas.				
2. Me gusta dar a conocer a las personas que hablan un idioma diferente al mío expresiones y frases propias del context en el que vivo.				
3. Las limitaciones comunicativas que tengo en el manejo de una lengua extranjera impíden que comunique mis ideas.				
4. Cuando me comunico con otra persona en un idioma diferente a mi lengua materna siento que adquiero otra identidad.				
5. Hablar en un idioma diferente a mi lengua materna me da seguridad.				
6. Mi nivel de inglés mejora gracias a la interacción con personas nativas.				
7. Las actividades de conversación son diferentes cuando se realizan con una persona nativa.				
8. Frente a las visiones y percepciones de personas de otra cultura soy capaz de cuestionar mis puntos de vista.				
9. Las actividades que se realizan dentro de las clases de lengua extranjera me han ayudado a ser una persona más abierta y tolerante.				
10. En el colegio es posible interactuar de manera constante con personas que hablan idioma diferente al mio.				

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Students' Focus Group

1. In your opinion, why do some students feel confident to express their ideas when interacting with native speakers regarding English level lack?

2. What kind of emotions do you experience when you have to interact in a different language that is not your native one?

3. To what extent does talking in a different language affect a person's confidence?

4. How has interaction with native speakers helped you to improve your current English level?

5. Why is practicing speaking activities with non-native speakers is different than practicing with natives?

6. How do people from different culture's ideas affect your vision and perceptions of the world?

7. Why do you think people who master a foreign language consider themselves open and tolerant?

8. What kinds of activities have been implemented in your school from the English Department which try to develop these attitudes?

9. How has school supported your second language acquisition process?

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for Teachers' Interview

1. Why do our students enjoy interacting with native speakers?

2. What kind of emotions have you observed in your students when they interact with native speakers?

3. What do your students talk with native speakers about during speaking activities?

4. How do you involve students who feel overwhelmed because speaking activities are with native speakers?

5. Why is it important for students to interact with native speakers?

6. What are the main differences among speaking activities with native and non-native speakers?

7. Are your students open and tolerant? Why?

8. Do you think activities where students interact with native speakers have helped them become open and tolerant?

9. In which curricular and extracurricular spaces does interaction with native speakers occur?

10. How relevant is it for you that your students interact with native speakers?

THE IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON ORAL PROFICIENCY AND MOTIVATION OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

Germán Eduardo Huertas Mayorquín

Attaining high motivation and higher proficiency in high school students is a challenge that many teachers face. While most students often see the need for English in today's world, they may not demonstrate a keen interest in English class. Sometimes students may fail to see a connection between the class and their lives, or may feel discouraged because of their own lack of proficiency. German Huertas noticed that using certain authentic materials, especially for listening, made a difference in students' engagement, and could possibly lead to improved proficiency as a result. His action research study explores this issue under controlled conditions and points to positive outcomes using authentic materials.

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Emotional connection, Authentic materials, Authentic input, Oral proficiency, Foreign language, Listening

This study provides a contextualized understanding of a group of ninth grade foreign language learners' emotional connection towards authentic input and examines changes in their oral proficiency after instruction using authentic input in the foreign language classroom. Fifteen ninth graders from a public secondary school in Bogotá, Colombia were randomly selected, then interviewed to measure their oral proficiency. Students also answered a questionnaire about emotional connection. The group observed was instructed with authentic input, in this case short videos from news, cartoons, and TV shows over an eight-week period. The same group was interviewed to measure oral proficiency, and they answered a questionnaire again at the end of the study. The results show that the group demonstrated considerable improvement in the understanding of authentic input, and their oral proficiency improved as well over the intervention period. Additionally, the majority of students reported a positive change in their emotional connection towards authentic input. The study concludes with suggestions for using authentic input to improve English as a foreign language instruction.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave: Conexión emocional, Material auténtico, Exposición auténtica a la lengua, Habilidad oral, Lengua extranjera, Escucha

Este estudio interpreta la conexión emocional de un grupo de estudiantes de noveno grado frente al uso de material auténtico en el salón de clase y examina los cambios en su desempeño oral luego de clases de idioma extranjero que incorporan el uso de tales materiales. Para tal propósito fueron seleccionados quince estudiantes de noveno grado de un colegio público de Bogotá, quienes fueron seleccionados aleatoriamente y posteriormente entrevistados para medir su desempeño oral; estos estudiantes también respondieron un cuestionario sobre conexión emocional. El grupo observado recibió clases con material auténtico como videos cortos de noticias, dibujos animados y programas de televisión durante ocho semanas; el mismo grupo fue nuevamente entrevistado y contestó un cuestionario al final del estudio. Los resultados muestran una mejora considerable en la comprensión del material auténtico así como en su desempeño oral durante el periodo de la intervención. La mayoría de los estudiantes reportaron además un cambio positivo en su relación

con dicho material auténtico. El estudio concluye con sugerencias para el uso de material auténtico que mejora la enseñanza del inglés como idioma extranjero.

INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to observe the impact of including carefully selected authentic materials in the instruction of English as a foreign language, in relation to students' oral language proficiency and their emotional responses to these materials. The study also aimed to propose a contextualized explanation of the variables, and a description of these based on the theoretical evidence reviewed.

A detailed theoretical analysis performed in the field of the inclusion of authentic materials as part of the English as a Foreign Language Instruction (EFL) evidenced that oral language proficiency and proficiency in general terms is strongly benefited when these kinds of materials are included as part of the English class. Research demonstrates that this benefit emerges as a direct consequence of the emotional connection that instruction using authentic input is able to create between the learner and the target language. Studies have also shown that authentic materials help foster real life situations that allow for the recreation of natural communication dynamics and needs inside the EFL classroom. Further, these materials have proven to impact students' motivation, and studies have even described the input obtained through authentic materials as *high quality input* in terms of its capacity of creating emotional connection.

The study reviewed previous research on the use of authentic materials in foreign language teaching around the world, and similarities in the results of different studies were found. These findings point to three categories commonly occurring after the implementation of this kind of materials in the EFL classroom, which allowed the researcher to design an appropriate intervention based on this framework of results. Consequently, it was expected that the intervention would result in the enhancement of students' oral proficiency. In the field of motivation, it was expected to observe how a connection could be created between the students and the language instruction.

After the intervention, it was found that the inclusion of authentic materials in the EFL class elicited some benefits in most of the students regarding oral proficiency development and emotional connection, which were the focus of analysis of this study. Improvement in listening skills was also observed, an unexpected finding considering that this particularity was not expected to be observed by this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

AUTHENTICITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Referring to authenticity, Kramch (as cited in Gilmore, 2007) points out that "authenticity relates to culture, and the ability to behave or think like a target language group in order to be recognized and validated by them" (p. 3). Meanwhile Porter and Roberts (as cited in Gilmore, 2007) relate authenticity to the language produced by a native speaker for another native speaker in a determined language context. This definition fits with the kind of materials applied in the implementation proposed by this action research, namely news and cartoons.

Morrow (as cited in Gilmore, 2007) explains that "an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (p. 4). In terms of authentic materials Gilmore (2007) explains:

> Even if we limit our description to real language from a real speaker/writer for a real audience with a real message, this still encompasses a huge amount of language variety. Graded teacher-talk in the classroom, motherese, international business negotiations between non-native speakers and scripted television soap operas would all be classified as authentic. (p. 5)

Further, Singleton (as cited in Stefánsson, 2013) explains that older learners are successful in formal instruction when it involves a recreation of authentic communicative conditions, and when a relation between authentic materials and the learner is established.

Stefánsson (2013) further argues that exposure to the target language is the most important factor affecting second language learning, in addition to age. When analyzing exposure, variables including the quality of the exposure and the different kinds of input must be considered. Stefánsson (2013) points out that exposure must represent an opportunity for the learner to use language for communicative purposes. He also states that the quality of the exposure is directly proportional to the authenticity of the input received. He defines input as the stimuli received by learners that awakens in them the need to communicate.

Baker (2006) explains that it is possible that exposure to inadequate input could lead the learner to fail in the acquisition process as a consequence of the disconnection between the language and the communication needs. Referring to traditional practices in language instruction, he states, "The emphasis on reading and writing rather than on authentic communication" (p. 120) is the first and most crucial reason for failing in acquiring the language. This is because there is also an affective factor involved in the dynamics of language acquisition closely related to the need to communicate, which could be considered as a basic social need.

Analyzing motivation, Montrul (2008) explains that in natural acquisition of the first language, stimulating affective connection and motivation is not necessary in order to acquire the language because the mother language is acquired as a response to the child's need to communicate basic needs. As such, creating these emotional connections with the language

in older learners is a priority in order to guarantee an appropriate disposition towards the exposure, and consequently an accurate and contextualized input.

Context and exposure are closely related because they determine the quality and quantity of input required for different kinds of learners; nevertheless, these variables can fluctuate depending on the context, and this could help determine the kinds of material best suited to certain kinds of learners. In the discussion of contexts, Stefánsson (2013) highlights the differences between the learning processes in monolingual or multilingual environments. He cites multiple studies explaining that the place where students receive input plays a crucial role in language acquisition. For him, exposure depending on the environment plays a more important role than age or the quantity or frequency of instruction.

AUTHENTIC INPUT

In his argument on the need for exposure to the foreign language, Stefánsson (2013) explains that acquiring a foreign language involves in general terms a wide set of factors including age, exposure, environment, and emotional factors such as motivation. However, in the specific scenario of acquiring a foreign language in a completely monolingual context, exposure becomes the most important factor, even more than age. This is a consequence of the absence of authentic opportunities to acquire language in a natural way in this context due to the predominance of the mother tongue. For this reason, formal instruction must offer real spaces where the students may be exposed to communicative situations with authentic input, and in this way stimulate their innate social need to communicate (Baker, 2006; Stefánsson, 2013).

Stefánsson distinguishes between the places where the language is presented in a formal way, for example, as part of an academic program where the language is acquired artificially, and informal environments, which occur when the student is "culturally active participant of the society" (Stefánsson, 2013, p. 5). In the latter, the language can be acquired in a natural way. Montrul (as cited in Stefánsson, 2013) explains that great differences emerge between first language and foreign language acquisition, depending on different linguistic environments or contexts in which the input is received. Consequently, these variables must be taken into account at the moment of selecting the most appropriate input to stimulate learner involvement in an interaction.

The inquiry that arises at this point is how to plan for instruction that creates a connection between acquisition and the communicative purposes, in an environment where contact with the target language is limited by context. Further, instruction may often be based generally on writing and listening exercises where the production in terms of communicative means is limited. Related to this, Doughty, et al. (as cited in Montrul, 2008) state, "The exposure to positive evidence (naturally occurring speech or written text) is not sufficient for the foreign language learner to take notice and incorporate specific features of the target language" (p. 27). Moreover, none of these kinds of grammar corrections or practices happen when children are acquiring the mother tongue before they go to school in a real language speaking context.

In terms of materials, Swaffar and Vlatten (as cited in Montrul, 2008) explain that appropriate input is received when the learners are exposed to authentic material, allowing them to interact with voices, dialects, and registers from people other than teachers; additionally, it is important to recreate a cultural context for the foreign language. In terms of input, Montrul explains the existence of five interrelated dimensions composing pertinent input and consequently offering accurate exposure to learners. These dimensions include *timing, setting, mode, amount* (how much input or the frequency of input the learner is exposed to), and quality (the contextual and structural variety and accuracy of input) (Montrul, 2008).

MOTIVATION

In terms of motivation, Shirbagi (as cited in Stefánsson, 2013. p. 15) explains how integrated motivation is observed in those students with the desire to engage in intercultural interaction with members of other communities. This kind of motivation also explains that most of the time students are willing to participate as members of the community where the target language is present. In other terms, integrated motivation allows for student involvement in the use of language for social interaction purposes and the creation of communication needs. The present study was primarily interested observing this specific kind of motivation and its variations throughout its application.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The inclusion of authentic materials in the instruction of English as a foreign language has been widely observed and analyzed in different studies in multiple parts of the world, and has demonstrated strong congruence between the materials used and positive learner outcomes. This literature review analyzed studies from research projects around the world. Despite differences in the contexts and participants, it was possible to observe marked tendencies with high levels of coincidence. Research on the inclusion of authentic materials in the instruction of English as a foreign language points to common coincidences in some variables, but especially in three general variables: 1) the impact of authentic materials in students' language acquisition and comprehension, 2) its impact on general student attitude and motivation, and 3) the suitability of materials depending on the objectives and features of the input.

THE IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON STUDENTS' LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The results in terms of the way in which acquisition and comprehension are influenced by the exposure of students to authentic materials shows marked coincidence, highlighting a positive impact in the development of proficiency and general comprehension of language in most of the participants involved in all of the studies reviewed. Bahrani and Tam (2012) discovered

a generous improvement of students' language proficiency after comparing three groups of learners who were exposed to two different kinds of authentic materials: cartoons and news. In a posterior study, Bahrani, Tam and Zuraidah (2014) also concluded that including authentic materials in the instruction of English as a foreign language had in general terms a substantial and beneficial impact, especially in upper-intermediate level students.

Another experimental study conducted by Chen (1998) included authentic video materials extracted from situation comedies. The study demonstrated a close relationship between the exposure to authentic materials and the positive development of students' oral proficiency, and the consequent development of the four language skills due to the emotional relation created between the materials and the students.

In relation to vocabulary, Huang and Eskey (2000) reported a study in which students were exposed to authentic material using closed caption tools as support for scenes from television in order to observe the variations in the language acquisition rates and their characteristics. After analyzing the information collected, they concluded that this exercise not only enhanced vocabulary acquisition, but also increased student proficiency in listening comprehension of simple utterances. Closely related to the results of this study are those obtained by Pinsonneault (2008), which explain that in terms of lexical acquisition, there is a great influence of the transference from the first language to the second or foreign language. It is argued that this phenomenon is based on the inclusion of authentic materials in language instruction.

In terms of comprehension abilities, Lahuerta (2004) found that after exposing Spanish-speaking students of English as a foreign language to oral and written authentic materials, they acquired more global strategies to decode input instead of mechanical decoding skills. This fact is conceived as highly beneficial by the researcher because of the degree to which this enhances general comprehension of language. In a second study, Lahuerta (2008) showed the existence of a direct relationship between the amount of exposure to authentic materials and the development of students' language competences. In the latter study, Lahuerta also highlights the strong relationship between the enhancement of language proficiency and the development of reading comprehension. Lahuerta (2008) explains, "The more students are exposed to authentic input the higher their competence in English" (p. 1).

Additionally, in terms of listening comprehension, Beltran and Morales (2006) explain that listening competence can be strongly developed with the correct selection and inclusion of authentic materials as part of a coherent plan, taking into consideration students' traits such as their own cultural and personal background in order to reinforce emotional connection to target language instruction.

THE IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION

Despite clear differences in the contexts where the studies were carried out and the characteristics of the participants, these results point to the highly beneficial effects of including authentic materials in foreign language instruction in terms of general comprehension of the language.

There is also evidence in specific fields, such as the acquisition of vocabulary and lexical decoding skills, which were benefitted from the emotional connection created between the student and the authentic material, impacting directly the students' attitudes towards the target language.

According to Bahrani and Tam (2012), the inclusion of authentic materials in EFL instruction can create a strong connection between the student and the target language, and consequently can increase students' motivation. Furthermore, in the analysis of the instruction based on authentic materials, specifically cartoons and news, Al azri and Al-rashdi (2014) discovered that these materials are able to potentially improve general interest in the English class. These results are supported by Chen (1998), who reports that over the 70% of the participants expressed a much stronger interest in understanding American culture and language.

In contrast to the previous results, Kim (2000) found in his study that students manifested low levels of confidence in their understanding of the authentic materials. However, he also highlighted that students' attitudes towards the acquisition of English as a foreign language were positively modified, mainly because students were able to develop a strong relationships with the target language. Similar results were found by Peacock (1997), who observed a group of beginning-level students of English, and reported an increment of motivation and interest in learning the foreign language in the short term. Contrasting findings in terms of motivation and interest in relation to the authentic materials were reported by Peacock (1997), who analyzed a sample of questionnaires in which Korean students expressed that authentic materials were significantly less interesting than artificial materials.

In terms of curriculum design, Varmış and Genç (2015) analyzed the effects of authentic materials in 12th grade students' attitudes in an EFL class. This study compared an experimental group with a control group and found that those students who were trained with authentic materials maintained positive attitudes more than those who did not receive similar training.

In their study, Raman and Vijaya (2016) focused in the impact of instruction using films as authentic material for teaching English pronunciation, intonation variations, discourse markers, and vocabulary. The study found that after exposing learners to the films with this focus, they began to pay more attention to those aspects of language.

In an experimental study, Pinsonneault (2008) explored the influence of authentic input on early second language learning, observing seventeen kindergarteners, first, and second grade students who had not previously learned a second language. This study concluded that participants learned a large quantity of lexical chunks in the target language after being introduced to the foreign language using these authentic materials, presenting in this way concrete evidence of the benefits offered by this type of instruction in students that have never been exposed to the second language.

THE QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND EXPOSURE

The analysis of the studies showed a strong tendency in terms of the way in which the inclusion of different kinds of authentic materials resulted in the increment of interest, and

positively affected the general attitude of the learners towards English class. Nevertheless, one study contrasted this tendency, explaining that despite the strong affective relationship created between the student and the target language, the confidence of learners when using the materials was described as low. This may be due to the suitability of the input provided. The review of the literature points to the relationship between the features of the materials used and the requirements demanded by input. In general terms, different kinds of materials affect different aspects of language acquisition.

Bahrani and Tam (2012) analyzed the impact of audiovisual news, cartoons, and films as sources of authentic language input for language proficiency improvement. After exposing three groups of students to different authentic materials, the students exposed to cartoons were able to create a "low affective filter atmosphere" (p. 3). This indicates that when selecting authentic materials for low-level learners, highly visual materials such as cartoons are the most appropriate. Similarly, when examining the differentiation of materials according to student's' level, Bahrani, Tam and Zuraidah (2014) found that the low-level participants of their study preferred cartoons while upper intermediate participants preferred to watch the news. Additionally, this study indicates that the quality of the language input is more important than the amount of exposure. In a similar study, Raman and Vijaya (2016) observed the effects of using authentic audiovisual text as material to teach English with of a group of Indian high school students. The study demonstrated that watching movies contributed specifically to vocabulary learning.

The variables of materials and input suitability are also related to motivation in most of the studies reviewed. Al azri & Al-rashdi (2014) found that using authentic materials in EFL instruction increased learners' motivation. According to the study, these kinds of materials encouraged students to learn the language used in real life, and in this way allowed for the acquisition of more communicative functions.

Lahuerta (2004) conducted an experimental study with Spanish-speaking EFL students, aiming to analyze learners' beliefs associated with motivation, interest in foreign affairs, language learning orientation, and disposition when exposed to instruction based on authentic materials. The study concluded that most of the students evidenced a positive response to oral and written input. Additionally, they showed willingness to face authentic input. Four years after, Lahuerta (2008) conducted a second study with a similar population, analyzing this time the impact of authentic materials on second language proficiency and reading performance. The study concluded that exposure to authentic input appears to be a discriminating factor in the acquisition of competences in the foreign language, and also highlighted that the quality of exposure is more important than its quantity.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The questions of this study implied implementing authentic materials as input for posteriorly measuring students' oral proficiency and emotional engagement as a result. As such, the study followed an action research design. The focus of the project was to explore the inclusion of authentic materials in the instruction of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which implied observing these materials in the real teaching practice. In this way, the study followed Holly and Whitehead's (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007 p. 297) definition of action research, in that it continuously aims to improve the teachers' professional development. In other terms, action research must improve teaching skills or develop new methods of learning. Cohen and Manion (as cited in Cohen et al, 2007) define action research as "a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention" (p. 297). This study observed a reduced sample of students and their responses to the intervention.

The analysis of the inclusion of authentic materials in EFL instruction includes intangible dimensions such as emotional aspects, and their relationship to the student and the language. The study also examined the impact of authentic materials on students' oral proficiency by comparing an initial and final moment, to control the variation and describe its improvement or decrease. This research additionally presented naturalistic characteristics as it allowed for the constant interaction between the researcher and the participants, in a dynamic denominated by Lincon and Guba as the "mutual shaping and interaction" (as cited in Cohen et al, 2007, p.170).

CONTEXT

Colombian EFL instruction in the public context represents very fertile soil for action research, taking into account the special and diverse requirements and demands of the population and context. This study took place in the *Colegio Argelia*, a public school in the south of Bogotá, Colombia with a total population of roughly 1,300 students from diverse social and economic backgrounds.

The school is a *colegio de concesión* or "concession school" which means that it is a public school not directly administered by the Bogotá school district, rather by a private agency: the *Asociación Alianza Educativa*. This association has administered public schools in concession for 15 years and is characterized by its focus on innovation, and a pedagogic model based on Teaching for Understanding. The general guidelines of the association administering the *Colegio Argelia* explain that education must be oriented towards comprehensive self-actualization, i.e. the individual's intellectual, social, aesthetic, and ethical education. The main objective of the school's institutional education project (PEI) is teaching students how to learn for understanding, through an eclectic constructivist model.

PARTICIPANTS

The population observed in this study consisted of a group of 15 ninth graders from the school, aged 13 and 14 years old. The group included students with A1 and below A1 proficiency levels taking as reference the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001. p. 24). Nevertheless, some students were able to express complete ideas in English. A predominant characteristic of this population was their reluctance when attempting to produce oral responses to the teacher's input.

The researcher. The specific nature of this study defined the role of the researcher as participant-as-observer. In addition, some methodological resources fostered this choice as well. As Cohen (2007) explains, "Participant-as-observer, as its name suggests, is part of the social life of the participants and documents and records what is happening for research purposes" (p. 423). In relation to the previous consideration, the researcher of this study was the ninth graders' English language teacher, who at the moment of designing the study had shared about one year and a half with the mentioned group. As such, the contact they had had when beginning the first stage of the study was relatively extended. This fact was important throughout the research. In fact, the group and the researcher had already developed a high level of familiarity and trust, so that the observed group did not realized they were being observed.

The objective of the teacher in this study was not only to observe and test the impact of a certain kind of materials, but also to understand the processes and events present in his classroom from a rigorous methodological framework, and protected from of any inference. It stands to reason that this kind of observation can lead the study to present bias due to the subjectivity explained by the teacher's experiences with the group. As such, the validity of the study relies on the nature of the instruments and the quantitative data collected which could lead to rigorous patterns of interpretation.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

As this study contemplates an intervention, data was be collected in two stages. A pre-test and a post-test worked as control points to measure the development of the variables analyzed.

Pre-test of oral proficiency. With the purpose of creating a benchmark to subsequently compare the development of students' oral proficiency, an interview in English was performed in an initial point of the intervention. All of the students participating in the study answered six questions orally, based on general information about their daily lives. These questions were designed according to the classification by the Common European Framework and its scale of common reference levels, specifically the A1 level (Council of Europe, 2001. p. 24). According to the CEFR, the participants of this study were previously classified as basic users, or level A1 according to the teacher-researcher's existing knowledge of and experience with the class. This estimation allowed for the determination of the range of items to be included on the pre-test. The A1 users' competence is characterized by the CEFR as follows:

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. (Council of Europe, 2001. p. 24)

Oral interview. The oral interview of the pre-test featured five questions derived from the lower end of the A1 description. These questions were expected to be answered with complete expressions, and students' answers were rated according to a pre-established scale (See Appendix A) which describes the features of the oral production and the kind of information provided by the students. The questions in the interview started with simple short questions and the difficulty of the questions increased progressively. The sixth question asked students for a simple description.

1. *What is your name?*

2. *How old are you?*

3. *How is your family?*

4. *What is your favorite sport?*

5. *What is your favorite TV program?*

6. *Can you describe this room? (Students are given a picture of a room.)*

In order to rate the students' oral production and create a reliable benchmark, the teacher-researcher designed a rubric (see Appendix A). This rubric contained a scale describing the oral production of the students into five levels, from the lowest, indicating no *response obtained/ not able to respond*, to the highest level, *answered using complete structures.*

Post-test of oral proficiency. For the post-test, the same population was interviewed and asked to answer the same questions. In this way, the variation in oral proficiency was measured. The new answers to the questions were rated using the same rubric scale used in the pre-test in order to obtain a numerical reference that could show the variation. The post-test results worked as a characterizing instrument, able to describe the study's implementation in two of its stages. These features contributed to a more detailed description in the analysis of the variable of oral proficiency.

Pre-questionnaire for emotional factors/attitude. Using a questionnaire helped the study to obtain evidence not only about students' attitudes towards the authentic materials in the EFL class, but also students' expectations about the implementation of these kinds of materials in the classroom.

The collection of data using this instrument inquired as to students' emotional perceptions about the inclusion of authentic materials in EFL classroom. The pre-questionnaire also asked about students' perceptions of and emotional response to the materials they were using at that moment. The questionnaire used a Likert scale in which participants indicated their degree of agreement with statements relating to emotional connection (See Appendix B). According to

Cohen, et al., (2007), questionnaires allow us to gather large-scale data to subsequently make generalizations about the variables observed. This approach is also characterized for generating statistically manipulable data. It also gathers context-free data, a feature that contributed to collect perceptions and attitudes of students which was the second variable to control in relation to the inclusion of authentic materials in the EFL instruction.

Post-questionnaire for emotional factors/attitude. In the post-questionnaire, similar statements were provided to the same students in order to obtain students' perceptions after the implementation of the authentic materials in the English class. The values of the rating scales used in the questionnaires for each question are also represented a tangible measure to control the fluctuations in the variable dealing with students' emotional connection. Cohen, et al. (2007) explain that questionnaires using rating scales will present reliable data and additionally are useful for "catching articulated, exposed, enacted and visible aspects of organizational culture" (p. 97), which describes a complete and integral description of the dimension observed.

INTERVENTION

The intervention proposed by this study was designed to be applied during an eight-week period in which authentic materials were included as the central activity of the English class. Along these eight weeks, students were exposed to two different kinds of materials: news and clips, most of them extracted from BBC News, and cartoons, in this case *Adventure Time,* written by Pendleton Ward from the Cartoon Network channel. Both were presented using short videos (clips). One of the most important criterion at the time of selecting the material to be presented to the class was to select non-episodic programs which do not require prior knowledge of the story, so the difficulty for the student was reduced.

The intervention with the material had two different stages. In the first stage, the teacher asked students to identify the more general structure of the material. For this purpose, the teacher asked a question directly focused in the purpose of the video in terms of its communicative intention: "What is the video trying to communicate?" After the teacher was sure that the question was clear enough, students watched the video and tried to identify the required information. After this initial moment, a more detailed analysis of the video was performed. For this, the teacher had previously selected a piece of information contained in the video. This piece of information needed to show complete structure and sense.

Before watching the video, the teacher asked some guiding questions to lead students to the desired structure. The students watched the video the times required, so they were able to extract bits of information to posteriorly create a structure with complete sense.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected in this study was analyzed following the recommendations of the exploratory data analysis for pre- and post-test as is explained by Cohen, et al. (2007).

Pre- and post-stages for oral proficiency. The variable mentioned was observed in two stages: an initial stage before the intervention and a later stage after the intervention, which was applied for approximately eight weeks. The students who participated in this study were randomly selected, and the interview was aimed to arrange the students within a range of proficiency.

The numerical data collected in the pre- and post-interview was tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft Excel, and graphs were generated to aid the perceptual representation of the information; these representations information allowed the researcher to observe the variation of the scores describing students' oral proficiency in either scenario.

Analysis of the emotional connection questionnaire. This questionnaire asked students simple questions about their English class and their relation with the authentic material in their daily life. The instrument was also applied in a pre- and post-stage. A Google Forms questionnaire was used to collect data for this variable. The results obtained were presented graphically, with percentages. The percentages obtained in the post- questionnaire were compared to the ones obtained in the pre questionnaire.

The data collected in the pre- and post-questionnaire was also represented in a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. This procedure was performed in order to express the results numerically, and to obtain a single graphic containing the entire set of data collected. A narrative description was written to explain the results for each question. A descriptive analysis was also done with the contrast of all of the questions and exploratory data analysis was performed based on the graphics and percentage representation of the information following the recommendations of Cohen, et al. (2007).

RESULTS

This study intended to discover how the implementation of authentic listening materials with English as a foreign language high school students contributed to an improvement in students' oral proficiency. It also inquired as to any enhanced emotional connection with the materials used. In terms of results, it was observed that after the intervention, students' oral production increased from the pre- to the post-test interviews. In addition, it was possible to observe that students' listening skills improved as well. The data also suggest that students' motivation increased from the pre- to the post-questionnaire. In relation to this, it was also evidenced that students established an affective connection with certain kind of materials, such as cartoons, and that this emotional connection is closely related to their desire to explore cultural features presented with the authentic material.

THE IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Oral proficiency was one of the variables controlled in this study. At the beginning, the focus of the study was only oral proficiency, but after the intervention, an unexpected finding emerged

related to the development of students' listening skills, which showed improvement from the pre- to the post-test interview as well.

Oral proficiency. In general, students' oral production improved from the pre- to the post-test interview after the implementation of activities with authentic materials. Students' performance on the post-test demonstrated an increase in the level of response for most of the questions. These levels correspond to a scale of 1-5, ranging from *No response obtained/ not able to answer* (Level 1) to *Answered using complete structures. Complete sense* (Level 5) (See Appendix A). The contrast between the pre- and post- test interviews is described in Figure 1.

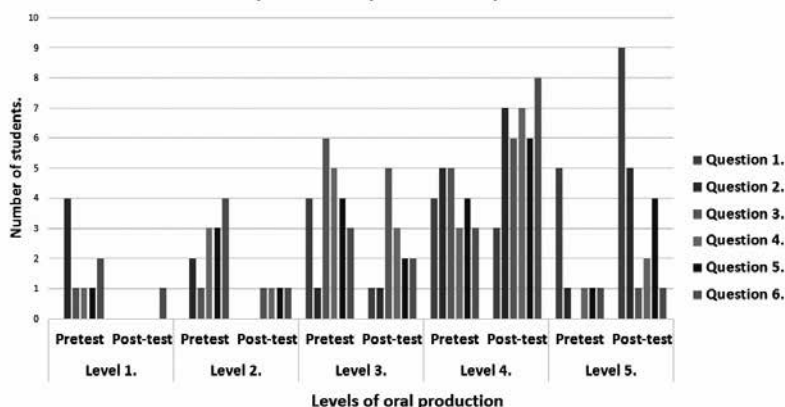**Oral production pre-test and pos-test.**

Figure 1. Oral production pre- and post-test interview by level

Figure 1 shows that the number of answers rated at Level 1 in the pre-test decreased when compared to the post- test, whereas answers rated in Level 5 increased from the pre- to the post-test. It was also possible to observe that there were many answers rated in Level 4, both in the pre- and the post- test, however with more in the post- test. In general, it is possible to observe a "migration" of the answers from lower to higher levels.

Listening skills. In general, it was observed that the students' listening skills also improved after the intervention using authentic materials despite the fact that this variable was not controlled explicitly in the pre- or post-test. Still, it was possible to observe a lack of listening comprehension during the pre-test interview, and that in the post-test interview, the comprehension level of the questions increased. It is possible that this improvement is due to the similarity in the interview questions from pre- to post. However, students also evidenced improvement in daily interaction in class as well.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO AUTHENTIC MATERIALS.

In terms of students' emotional connection with the authentic materials, most of the responses increased in their "agreement level" from the pre- to the post- questionnaire, evidencing the impact of the intervention. Nonetheless, students' motivational levels were already moderately high on the outset of the study.

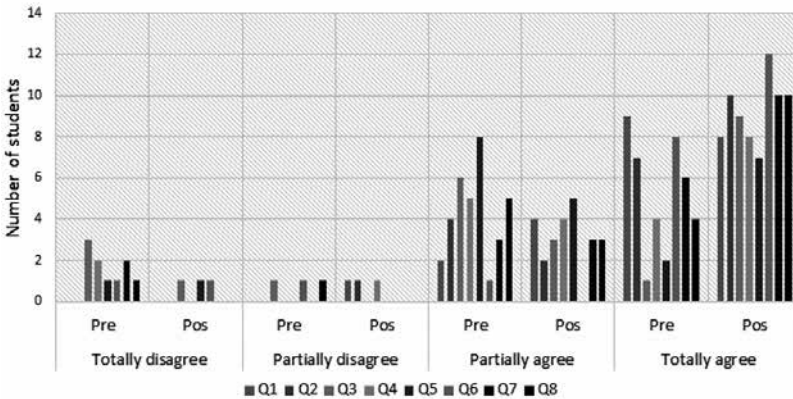**Emotional Connection Pre-test ans Post-test.**

Figure 2. Emotional connection questionnaire (pre-post contrast)

Figure 2 shows the variation before and after the intervention. Most of the students increased their "agreement" with all of the statements describing emotional factors such as motivation, the interest aroused by the authentic materials, and their willingness to look for such materials on their own. It also shows a general decrease in "partial agreement" and a tendency to increase in "total agreement," which describes a stronger emotional connection between the students and the authentic materials. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that students' initial emotional connection was not low.

Some questions in the post- questionnaire presented variations, increasing the percentage of participants answering with the option "totally agreement;" for example, in Statement 2 "I enjoy the listening activities in the English class," the number of participants in total agreement increased from the pre- questionnaire, presented in the following detail.
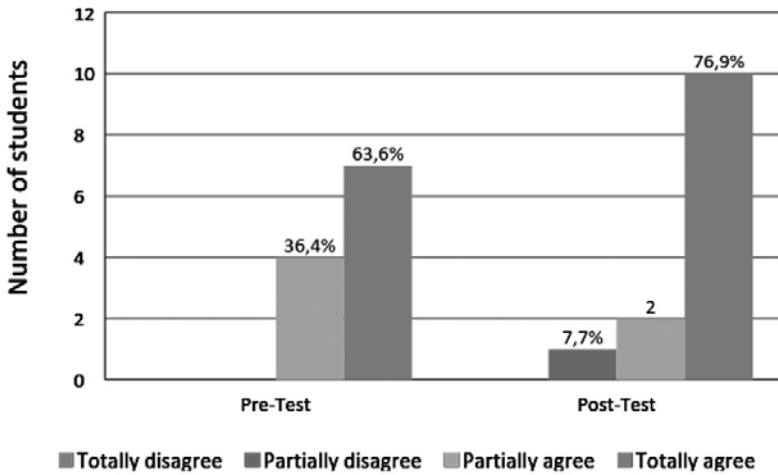
Figure 3: Students' enjoyment of the listening activities in class

The comparison of the pre- and post- questionnaire indicate a strong migration towards more agreement, showing more enjoyment of the listening activities in class implementing the lessons with authentic materials.

In Statement 3, "I would like to do more activities using television clips," it is possible to observe an even stronger migration towards total agreement after the intervention **(Figure 4). It is also observed that the use of the option "partially agree" decreased from the pre- questionnaire.**

I would like to do more activities usig TV clips.
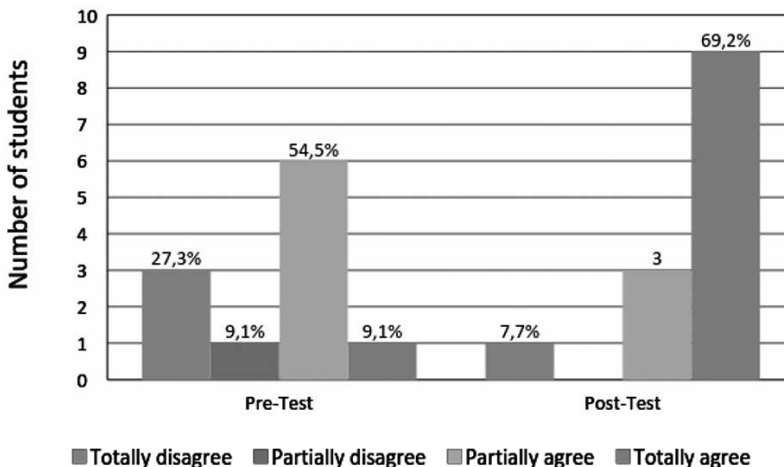
Figure 4. Students' interest in doing more activities with TV clips

Interest in cultural features of authentic materials. In addition to positive connection with the materials, students showed a sincere desire to explore cultural features presented, especially in cartoons, during the intervention. This phenomenon was mentioned in this study's theoretical framework as integrated motivation, and is supported by the values obtained in students' answers to Statement 5, "After watching videos of series or news in English, I feel the desire to look for more information about the topic." (Figure 5)

I feel like looking for more information.
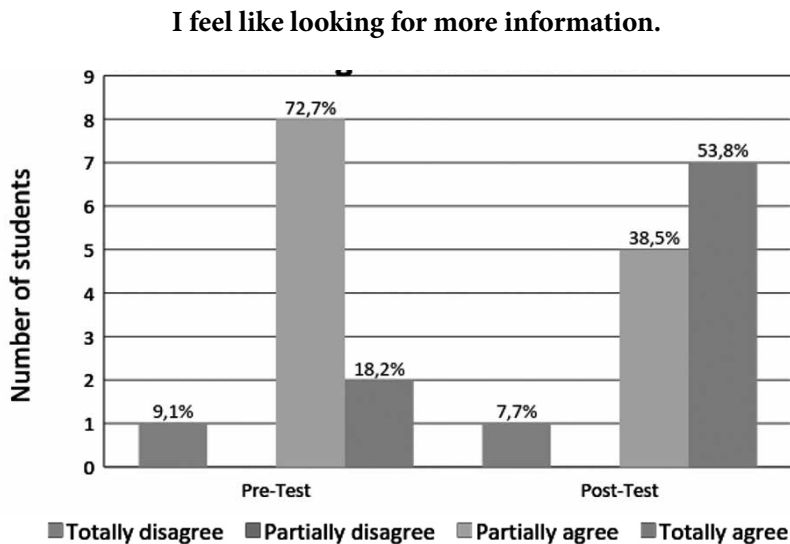
Figure 5: Students' interest in looking for further information

In detail, another strong migration can be seen after the implementation. It is possible to observe an increase in participants' willingness to look for additional information about the materials used in class. The result for this category is also supported by Statement 7, in relation to culture: "I regularly look for content in English (videos, TV, music, comics or news) outside class." Similarly, there was an increase in the percentage of participants who expressed total agreement. (Figure 6)

I look content regulary in English.

Figure 6: Students' looking for information regularly

CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of authentic materials as part of the English class and its impact on students' oral proficiency and motivation was the main focus of this study. Along an intervention of eight weeks, the teacher, as a participant-researcher, observed a group of ninth graders while they received English class using authentic materials including cartoons, and news and clips from TV. This observation was conducted with the objective of testing the research hypothesis, which proposed that after using authentic materials as part of the English class the students' motivation and oral proficiency would benefit strongly. In general terms, the intervention demonstrated that benefits were obtained in both of the variables 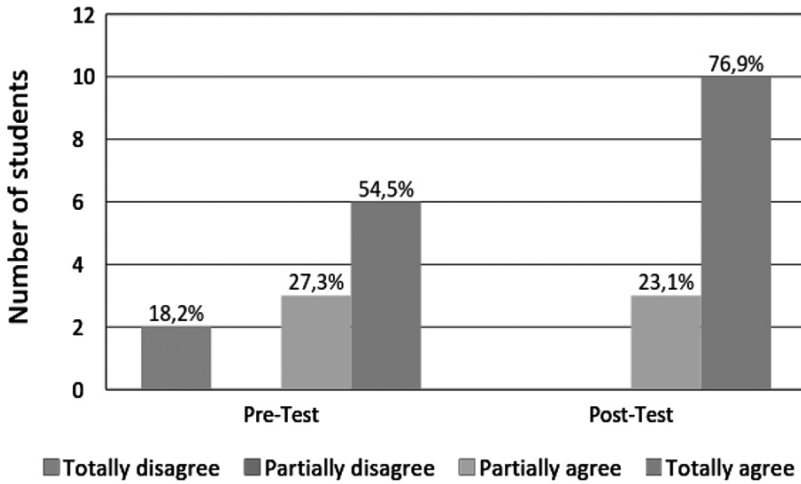controlled: oral proficiency and motivation, due to the inclusion of authentic materials as part of the English class. Additionally, a completely unexpected finding related to the development of listening skill aroused along the intervention.

It was expected from the beginning of this study to observe a positive impact in students' oral proficiency. After the intervention, the results confirmed this hypothesis, coinciding with the results obtained by Chen (1998), who included authentic video materials extracted from situation comedy programs, and showed a close relationship between the exposure to those materials and the positive development of students' oral proficiency, as well as the consequent development of the four language skills. All of these results were framed and supported by the emotional relation created between the materials and the students.

In terms of emotional connection, this study identified strong similarities to the proposals of Montrul (2008) in relation to the benefits obtained in students thanks to the affective connection established between the learner and the material used in class; furthermore, it

was also observed that most of the students were already familiar with the cartoons that were used for the classes. Consequently, the emotional connection was already present when the students watched the cartoon in class, and the desire to understand what they were watching was evident.

The naturalistic process of learning obtained through the use of authentic materials was also evidenced during the intervention, as described by Stefánsson (2013), who explained that in a monolingual context, authentic materials offer spaces where the language can be used if the innate social need of communication is stimulated. This social need of communication in the student is able to enhance the oral production, which is reflected in the results of the present study that showed a considerable increase in the level of oral production in different answers in the post interview.

After the intervention, it was concluded that students' listening skills also benefitted, regardless of the fact that this skill was not conceived of as a variable to be measured by the study. This conclusion can be associated with the proposals of Swaffar and Vlatten (as cited in Montrul, 2008), which show how authentic materials have the capability of allowing students to interact with different voices, dialects, and registers from people other than the teacher, in turn highly benefitting both comprehension and input processing. This unexpected finding is also associated to the findings of Lahuerta (2004), who explains that after exposing Spanish-speaking students of English as a foreign language to oral and written authentic materials, they acquired more global strategies to decode input instead of only mechanical decoding skills, thus supporting easier comprehension of language. This phenomenon could be also evidenced in the students involved in the present study, but in a reduced scale.

In terms of the integrated motivation mentioned in this study's theoretical framework and attributed to Shirbagi (as cited in Stefánsson, 2013), the desire of the students to culturally interact with the materials was clear, as well as the possibility of learning about the culture featured in the cartoons. Moreover, students enjoyed being involved in the culture in which the language is spoken.

In general, the use of authentic materials motivated students to learn the language because they noticed they were facing the language as it is spoken in real life. A marked preference was observed for the cartoons; nevertheless, it does not mean that students rejected the other materials such as news or documentaries.

As this study was focused on low level language students, its results and conclusions are limited to populations with the same language proficiency level. Hence, different results may be expected if the study is carried out with intermediate or high level language students. Additionally, another limitation is that this study was conducted in a formal setting in which the use of authentic materials was conditioned to the curriculum's time requirements, so the use of authentic materials was applied simultaneously with the regular textbook classes. Different results may be expected with a higher intensity of the application of the materials within the class.

It is also important to highlight that the set of authentic materials goes beyond the materials used in this study, so it is recommended that further research analyze different kinds of authentic materials such as advertisements, printed news, or films. It would also be necessary

to research how to select suitable material according to different purposes, taking into account the massive quantity of material available today.

ACTION PLAN

Public education represents fertile soil for researching about the impact of certain materials in students. This study established facts and reached important conclusions about that field; nevertheless, in order to reach a better understanding of the impact of authentic materials in students in future research, here we have some recommendation for researchers.

- Identify the resources available in the school where the intervention would take place.

- Step aside from the preconceptions of "what to do" in terms of the instruction of English as a Foreign Language.

- Give a chance to other kinds of authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, podcasts or films.

- Allow students to establish a genuine relation with the material involved in the intervention, stimulating this way the natural need of communication.

- Avoid frustration in the students during their initial interactions with the authentic material, supporting their comprehension with visuals and other elements presented by the material itself.

- Explain to students how to properly interact with the material in order to learn from it.

- Agree with the school and the students on a special kind of assessment that analyzes their global skills to understanding language more than chunks of disconnected contents.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Rating Rubric

Interviewer:		Name:	
Oral Production Matrix			
Fill in front of each question using one value from the scale below (1 to 5)			
Question		**Pre-test Value**	**Post-test Value**
What is your name?			
How old are you?			
How is your family?			
What is your favorite TV program?			
What is your favorite sport?			
Can you describe this picture? (picture provided)			
Scale Of Values			
1. No response obtained/ not able answer.			
2. Provided disconnected words, not accurate pronunciation.			
3. Provided partially connected words completing the structure with the first language.			
4. Provided short structure in English, but its sense is not complete.			
5. Answered using complete structures. Complete sense.			

APPENDIX B

Emotional Connection Questionnaire

Possible answers:

1. Totally agree

2. Partially agree

3. Partially disagree

4. Totally disagree

Statement 1	*My English class is fun and dynamic.*
Statement 2	*I enjoy the listening activities in English class.*
Statement 3	*I would like to do more activities using television clips.*
Statement 4	*I remember what the last listening activity we did in class talked about.*
Statement 5	*After watching videos of TV series or news in English, I feel the desire to look for more information about the topic.*
Statement 6	*I would like to do more listening activities per week.*
Statement 7	*I regularly look for content in English (videos, TV, news, cartoons) outside of the classroom.*
Statement 8	*When I watch content in English, I feel comfortable and able to understand the general purpose of what I am watching.*

CHAPTER 5

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOTHER TONGUE STRATEGIES ON LEARNING MATH IN ENGLISH

Liliana Astroza Jaime

Like many schools in Bogotá, the Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino *has recently embarked on a project to convert the elementary curriculum into a bilingual program, employing a 50-50 model of content taught in English and Spanish. With core academic subjects now taught in English, homeroom teacher Liliana Astroza became concerned about ways to improve her second grader's understanding and performance in math. This action research project shares how she used instructional and collaborative strategies in Spanish, students' first language, as support for solving math problems in English.*

ABSTRACT

Key words:

CLIL, Bilingual
math instruction,
Math instruction in
English, Role of the
first language, Mother
tongue strategies

The following action research study presents the effectiveness and impact of the use of mother tongue strategies when teaching mathematics in English in a second grade class at the *Colegio Santo Tomas de Aquino*. Students solved math problems in groups using reflective talk and glossaries in the first language during five sessions. Data on math ability was collected via benchmarks of math problems in English at the beginning and end of the intervention. Data on students' perceptions of the strategies and the use of the mother tongue was collected via pre- and post-questionnaires. Results show the positive impact of mother tongue strategies on both math ability and students' attitudes towards learning math. Furthermore, students strongly affirmed that they felt effective and comfortable using strategies to solve math problems in which they were allowed use their first language.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:
AICLE, Instrucción
bilingüe en
matemática,
Instrucción
matemática en inglés,
Rol de la lengua
materna, Estrategias
de la lengua materna

La siguiente investigación expone la efectividad e impacto del uso de estrategias usando la lengua materna en la instrucción matemática en inglés, en uno de los grados segundo bilingüe del *Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino*. Los estudiantes resolvieron problemas matemáticos en inglés, a través del uso de glosarios y la discusión reflexiva en lengua materna durante cinco sesiones. La información para comprobar la habilidad matemática fue recogida a través de evaluaciones de problemas matemáticos tanto al comienzo, como al final de la intervención. Por otro lado, las percepciones de los estudiantes frente a las estrategias y el uso de la lengua materna fueron recolectados a través de un pre y un pos cuestionario. Los resultados muestran el impacto positivo tanto de las estrategias en lengua materna como en la habilidad matemática y en la actitud de los estudiantes hacia la asignatura. Igualmente, los estudiantes afirmaron enfáticamente el sentirse efectivos y cómodos usando las estrategias para resolver problemas matemáticos, en los cuales se les permitió usar la lengua materna.

INTRODUCTION

Many recent studies have focused on bilingual learning processes and content-based instruction. Even though bilingualism is not a new field in education, there is still a great deal of discussion regarding many of the issues involved, particularly the role of the first language when teaching academic content in a second or foreign language, especially in contexts in which the language of instruction is not the language of the community outside the school.

In such bilingual contexts, the teaching of math in a second language has been a particular focus of study. In this regard, research points to the benefits of using the mother tongue to achieve better results and performance by students. Many strategies have been proposed, including support by the first language as a constant in the implementation of such strategies.

The reasons for this renewed interest in the use of L1 in second language math instruction are many. Among these, difficulties teaching mathematics in a foreign language have appeared because bilingual teachers often have enough proficiency in the target language, but not in the teaching of math, neither in the first nor the second language. It is worth mentioning this aspect in particular as many schools recruit teachers for bilingual instruction without the experience or knowledge required to be effective in these contexts. The current study emerged from the necessity of discovering the effectiveness of the use of mother tongue in math instruction.

The purpose of this project was to discover the degree to which the mother tongue can be useful for the teaching and learning of math. At the same time, it aimed to show the impact of this strategy on students' performance and attitudes towards math instruction. It was hoped that the data collected might shed light on strategies teachers and schools might implement when attempting to teach core academic content such as mathematics in a second or foreign language.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The teaching of academic core content subjects in a second or foreign language is discussed in the literature within several different contexts, largely depending on the relationship and role between the first and second (or foreign) language within and without the educational setting. While some bilingual, content-based, or immersion programs exist in countries in which the language of instruction is the same spoken outside the classroom, in many contexts this relationship is reversed. In the case of Colombia, bilingual, immersion, and content-based schools and curricula most commonly feature English as the language of instruction even though English is not spoken outside the school. For this reason, the approaches most relevant for this study include dual language programs and content-based instruction.

DUAL LANGUAGE

In dual language programs, students are taught some subjects in their native language and others in a foreign language, using the first as a bridge in order to develop understanding. The dual language approach starts in early grades, and its implementation varies according to school policies and populations. Dual language instruction usually promotes both cultural characteristics without giving less importance to the native language. According to Baker and Prys (1993) and Torres-Guzmán (2002), the aims of the dual language approach are bilingualism and biliteracy for all children. In order to reach these goals, there are different ways to apply it, in terms of percentages, as Torres-Guzmán (2002) describes:

> Although studies have not addressed the minimal level of English necessary, a minimum of 10% English instruction initially is important to promote English language development for the non-native speakers of English. Also, to develop a high level of academic English language skills among the language minority students, by the late elementary school years (grades 4-6), the amount of content instruction in English should be about 50%. (p. 69)

There are several implications regardless of the particular application of dual language. Torres-Guzmán (2002) suggests that schools develop linguistic, sociocultural and pedagogical policies. In terms of linguistic policies, she advocates a strict separation of the languages and equality in their distribution. She also recommends that language be taught through content, with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy. She further advocates avoiding simultaneous translation and argues that it tends to be less effective educationally. Strategies to avoid simultaneous translation should aim at developing language consciousness among students. It is important to have this point clear as dual language programs and applications tend to be mistaken with simultaneous translation.

Even though the native language is used as a bridge in dual language programs, its use and function must be tackled carefully. UNESCO (2011) advocates a strong role for the first language, especially in early grades, "Students with greater amounts of native language instruction achieve at higher levels than students with lesser amounts of native language instruction, at least in the early years of schooling" (p. 69).

Apart from linguistic policies, the elements to bear in mind regarding sociocultural policies include appreciation of cultural diversity and culturally relevant teaching. The development of self-esteem, cooperative group learning structures, parental involvement and school/community support are also seen as important (Torres-Guzmán, 2002). These characteristics are in concordance with what Lindholm (2001) calls effective schools, with a high level of commitment to achievement and an environment that prioritizes teaching and learning. Equally important, these schools focus on positive performance and mastering of academic content while there is also high parental involvement and expectations for students.

In reference to pedagogical policies, Torres-Guzmán (2002) discusses the issue of academic achievement for all children and distinct linguistic policies for subjects like math and literature. Likewise, she advocates team teaching structures, thematic organization of units of study, and ongoing staff development. After considering the linguistic, sociocultural and pedagogical

implications of dual language programs, it is important to mention that these programs are sensitive to changes through their creation and implementation. All policies need to be carefully designed and addressed, and elements such as population and school objectives should be considered in order to respond to expectations.

Lastly, staff in dual language programs should receive enough training before and during the process. Lindholm (2001) states, "There must be pre-service and in-service training in: the dual language education model, including bilingual and immersion research and theory; second language development; instructional strategies in second language development; multicultural and educational equity training and cooperative learning" (p. 65). Such training is included through creation and application of pedagogical, cultural and sociocultural, as well as linguistic policies.

CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION

Content-based instruction is known geographically according to different names. "In the U.S. this is sometimes called content-based second language instruction. In Europe, it is increasingly referred to as CLIL (Content Language Integrated Language)" (Baker, 2011, p. 284). Despite the differences among such programs, it is important to highlight the potential of content-based programs. According to Lyster (2007), content-based programs are characterized by development of both language and content learning through significant practices. At its best, both language and content are developed in a relationship in which each enriches the other. Lyster (2007) adds that content-based programs are also characterized by flexibility towards community needs regarding the target language, the implications involved in academic subjects, and grade-level entry.

Additionally, Martínez (2012) describes the discussion and debate about the use of two languages in the same classroom in which it is important to bear in mind that both languages are more alike instead of incompatible. On the contrary, Martínez also explains that there are divided opinions regarding the use L1 and L2. Some teachers think that L1 should not be used, standing on the belief that this has not been proved to be helpful in an L2 learning process; others think it can be used in certain conditions.

Hence, in terms of the many perspectives about content and language in the same classroom, De Mejía (2002) states:

> The basic idea underlying immersion, a notion borrowed from communicative language learning theory, is that by using the target language as a language of communication in authentic situations, such as subject-matter instruction or any other form of teacher-student or student-student communication outside strictly instructional contexts, students' acquisition of the target language will be improved (p. 79)

In the development of different bilingual programs, a methodology called preview-review emerges, giving support to the advantages of the mother tongue in content based instruction.

De Mejía (2002) explains how "preview-review" proposes a relationship between two languages in order to enhance content and second language advancement. There are three phases in the development of classes. In the first stage, the instructor gives the main concepts in the student's first language. In the second, the second instructor or the same develops and expands these contexts, and develops activities without repeating what was taught. In the third, reinforcement is carried out in either language according to the objectives of the class.

Regarding evaluation, there are also considerations to be examined. Brinton (as cited in De Mejía, 2002) describes some considerations for this area.

> (1) the selection of appropriate content matter in relation to the cultural and general background of the students in the design of tasks to assess language skills; (2) the adjustment of language demands in the evaluation of content knowledge, according to the present level of student linguistic proficiency; (3) the modification of scoring criteria depending whether the objective of the evaluation is primarily to assess content development, language development, or both; and (4) informed expectations as to the rate of acquisition of measurable language gains in specific skill areas (p. 82).

Soussa (2011) explains content and language learning as such: "The ELL'S brain is processing two mental lexicons, one for their native language and one for English" (p. 108). In addition, students' social lexicon would be larger according to age and English exposure. Hence, a very important aspect is that transference is influenced by similarity between two languages regarding grammar and writing. Finally, as Soussa (2011) argues, the student needs to learn and understand the academic English that they will need to translate the existing knowledge they have, and gain new information or data which can be expressed in the target language.

Even when there are some variations in programs which promote bilingual education, all of them strive towards the same objective. According to Hinkel (2011), all the conditions are similar; in each one, students face the challenge of learning through a language that is not their first, and advance in the linguistic performance of the target language. For this, Hinkel (2011) argues the importance of continuing with research processes in order to explore how learners can learn effectively while they engage effectively and systematically with language in the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bilingual contexts have been a direct object of study through many and recent years. It is important to point out that many contexts are called bilingual but others can be considered multilingual. The following provides a general review of issues related to bilingual and multilingual mathematics classrooms in terms of the use of the first language, language difficulties and issues, interaction among students, policies and decisions and teaching strategies.

THE ROLE AND USE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE

Many studies have focused on the role of the first language when acquiring mathematics. Latu (2005) and Webb and Webb (2008) affirm that when the mother tongue is allowed in the classroom, students' performance increases and improves. In addition, Matthews (2010) argues that in subjects like math, conversations should be allowed in the mother tongue, considering the amount of talk that is involved in this area. Furthermore, this practice leads students to be more participative since they do not see language as a barrier.

Further, the benefits of code mixing and code switching are apparent and research supports their use. According to Bose and Choudhury (2010), code mixing and switching benefits students in different ways, such as simultaneous and mathematical learning, promoting solidarity among peers, and making students' mother tongue a resource for learning. It also eases the connection between visual aids and verbal language. At the same time, code mixing and switching help to improve social as well as mathematics practices in the classroom, leading students towards a better understanding of the language of instruction and consequently, a better comprehension of the subject.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind Setati's (2001) point that code switching is the result of what is required in different educational backgrounds. For this, it is important that every school have in depth knowledge of its population when considering which methodology best fits its needs. However, it is undeniable that code mixing and switching as well as the use of the mother tongue in the classroom are becoming more prevalent in studies on bilingual education due to the results which seem to benefit in a high proportion the students learning academic content in a second language.

Language issues and difficulties. Related to the role of the first language and the relationship between the first and second language in content-based instruction, research indicates that insisting on teaching academic content, especially mathematics, in a language other than the student's first may bring more issues and difficulties than benefits. In Gorgorio and Planas (2001), Halai (2007), Latu (2005), Matthews (2010), and Sistla and Feng (2014), teachers and students perceived the use of the target language (in many cases English) as a barrier that brings more struggle and difficulties in the understanding of mathematics. Often, students must deal with the challenge of trying to understand not only the language they are expected to learn, but also the content itself, both at the same time. In addition, if discussions in math need to be conducted, children must constantly move from their mother tongue to the target language, creating fragmented conversations and affecting fluency.

In addition, Gorgorio and Planas (2001) argue that the language of doing mathematics is not universal. This means that even if some operations and procedures can be considered as global, one of the most important practices in math, which is dialogue in problem solving, is not the same for every single population. In this regard, Janzen (2008) argues that non-effective communication can lead students towards a lack of deep understanding. In addition, Kiplinger, Haud and Abedi (2000) argue the relationship between reading proficiency in the target language and results in math. If students are knowledgeable enough at reading problems in math, their results will be better.

In order to remedy these issues, Gorgorio and Planas (2001) argue that teachers' classroom strategies and approaches provide an important piece in helping learners to perform effectively. It is the teacher's task to discover and understand what benefits and encourages student learning. Despite the use of the language, teachers need to contribute in order to help students express their ideas in a way that will not create obstacles to important understanding.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

In many of the studies found, research points to the importance of using different strategies in bilingual and multilingual mathematics classrooms in order to counteract the potential difficulties of trying to teach and learn math in a second or foreign language. According to Sistla and Feng (2014), test results for math can improve significantly if visual aids are used (more specifically, in statements for problems). This makes it less complex for students to understand and helps lower anxiety towards assessment in math.

Another important finding relates to the use of specific mathematical vocabulary in different activities. Many times, students are not familiar with the vocabulary they will have to face in math classes. In this regard, Matthews (2010), Janzen (2008), and Kiplinger, et al. (2000) suggest clarifying specific vocabulary for math. It is clear that students will need a deep understanding of vocabulary not only in their mother tongue but also in the target language. For this, the use of this strategy aims to reduce complexity for students to interpret math problems and constantly increase the academic language required in academic contexts.

Additionally, the use of resources, particularly manipulatives, plays an important role in bilingual math classrooms to facilitate exemplification and procedures (Matthews, 2010). These can be used in order to assist students in mathematical procedures, helping them to extend comprehension, even if they are going to express it at some point in their mother tongue.

Domínguez (2011) discusses the benefit of using students' everyday experiences of to help them to solve math problems as this increases their need to understand mathematical language. At the same time, this can be used as a strategy to help students become more familiar with the subject, develop confidence towards their learning, and improve in math competences. Finally, it is essential to include among all of these strategies the scaffolding activities. For Perez and Pugalee (2009), scaffolding is considered even as a cognitive principle for learners of English language. With this in mind, a deep research about scaffolding and its benefits for bilingual and multilingual contexts could be considered for future inquiries.

Interaction among students. Math is a subject which promotes not only individual tasks. It has been noticed through recent studies that interaction among students is especially relevant in regards to problem solving specifically. For this reason, research has addressed the continued practice of interaction as a strategy and the possibilities for its use. Domínguez (2011) and Webb and Webb (2013) share their thoughts on the role of dialogue and interaction in math classrooms. For them, when students discuss, debate and share ideas, many aspects of understanding can improve, such as reasoning, meaning, and problem solving. Furthermore, it can also point to an increase in students' target language skills and competences.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The proposed methodology for this study was action research. Action research allows the researcher to plan, implement and evaluate during an intervention constructed with a particular purpose. At the same time, action research allows the teacher to work individually or with other teachers. For this study, the participant researcher was also the home room teacher and worked with her second grade class. Applicability in action research is very wide since, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the areas can include teaching methods and professional development, learning strategies, evaluative procedures, attitudes and values, management and, control and administration. Regarding the area of this study, the focus was on the effectiveness of learning strategies for math carried out using Spanish, the students' mother tongue.

CONTEXT

The *Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino* is a private Catholic institution located in Bogotá. It is directed by the Dominican community and was founded in 1573. The school aims to educate people for life, faith, scholarship and community. It is highly recognized because of its development of students' values and high academic achievement. In 2014, the school embarked on the process of becoming a bilingual and co-educational institution since it was traditionally an all-boys school. Currently, grades *Transición*[9] to second grades are bilingual English and Spanish, and students receive math, science, and social studies in English. Along with the English class, this represents 50% of the total of academic hours in the foreign language. The school currently works with a socio-critical pedagogical model, and started its implementation in 2014. This model promotes a critical citizen and individual who is constantly aiming to face and change his or her reality. In addition, the bilingual process and the pedagogical model are currently under examination and transformation through research and training of the school community.

In relation to math instruction, the math program at *Santo Tomás de Aquino* adheres to the Colombian National Standards. Hence, it is supported by the socio-critical model established in the school's Institutional Educational Project. Math processes are currently followed and evaluated through the use of a rubric that establishes performance, strategies, and activities. During classes, students are supposed to receive introduction to topics in Spanish and develop different activities in English. Because of the pedagogical model, students do not use textbooks or an over-structured or non-flexible program. In contrast, they use teacher-made materials, situations, and simulations, and activities are typically characterized by the use and analysis of situations and problems from students' everyday lives.

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[9] Transición is a grade between kindergarten and first grade in Colombia.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study were second grade students. Their age was 7 to 9 years old. Since this was an action research study, all the actions and procedures were conducted by the home room teacher.

The teacher-researcher was in charge of teaching the basic content areas such as math, science, social studies, and English. This allowed her to proceed with the group with certain liberty during the intervention. For the teacher-researcher, the relevance of the intervention was always clear, bearing in mind the purpose and advantages of action research. As stated by Cohen, et al. (2007), an aim of action research is to bring participants a better understanding of their practices which also includes a more systematic, collaborative, and rigorous reflection about their everyday practices.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Pre-test math benchmark. As a pre-intervention benchmark, students took a short test, with four written math problems in English (See Appendix A). This test provided evidence of students' level of understanding of math problems in English. Tests were particularly relevant for the purpose of this study since they allow researchers to obtain results in more than a verbal way (Cohen, et al., 2007). It is important to keep in mind that for all the instruments used, Spanish numerical conventions were used since children are contextualized with Colombian pesos rather than dollars or any other convention.

Pre-questionnaire. A pre-intervention questionnaire was also applied to students in order to explore their perceptions and feelings after completing the benchmark (See Appendix B). Since this was a study with children, a structured questionnaire was designed and applied, in order to reach the objective. According to Cohen, at al (2007), structured questionnaires allow the researcher to observe patterns and make comparisons.

Intervention. After applying the pre-test benchmark and pre-questionnaire, the teacher-researcher used mother tongue strategies with students in five different sessions. Students were organized in groups and received a math problem in English with a glossary. Since the teacher-researcher had noticed students struggling when reading math problems, the glossary was intended as a strategy to give them support and confidence in the analysis of the problems. Students were also given a space for what has been called reflective talk. Children were allowed to discuss the math problem and its possible solution in Spanish. These strategies were intended to give students the opportunity to share different points of view and ways of analyzing the problem. Learners could state their positions and learn from each other, as everyone may analyze the problem in a different way.

After solving the problem, students would share their results in front of the class and explain how they figured out the way to solve the problem, and the corresponding operation. If possible, students also wrote the answer on the board in English.

Post-test math benchmark. At the end of the study, a test was applied again in order to verify the results of the implementation of the strategies applied during the study (See Appendix C).

Post-questionnaire. In addition to the post-benchmark, a post-questionnaire of the study was also carried out to identify and compare results with the pre-questionnaire applied before. The post-questionnaire was the final step in data collection. The questionnaire used was the same as in the pre-phase (See Appendix D).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Pre- and post-test math benchmarks. At the beginning and at the end of the investigation, an individual pre- and post-benchmark was applied to every student. Every one of these had four math problems in English to be solved, analyzed and answered. At the end of the intervention, two different graphs were generated in order to compare the results obtained in the pre- and post-test benchmarks. The four categories that were used to analyze such results in both benchmarks were: *result, operation, answer,* and *English*. In the *result* category, the number was checked to see if the numerical result was correct. In the *operation* criteria, the teacher checked if the procedure carried out was correct. In the *answer* category, students were evaluated as to whether they wrote the result of the operation correctly. In the *English* category, students' use of English was checked as well when they wrote a statement expressing the solution in words.

Pre- and post-questionnaires. After every student answered the pre- and post-benchmark, an individual questionnaire with opened and closed questions in Spanish was applied. The closed questions were designed with images expressing feelings so students could relate their selection with such image. The open questions related to their perceptions regarding English language for math problems. At the end of the intervention, the closed questions of both questionnaires were tabulated in graphs. Then, graphs from the pre- and post-questionnaires were compared and analyzed. Students' responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed to identify similar tendencies in their responses.

Problems' results during intervention. During the intervention, groups of four or five students solved, analyzed and answered an addition or subtraction word problem in English (See an example in Appendix D). These problems were evaluated using the same criteria as the pre- and post-benchmark: *result, operation, answer,* and *English*. The analysis was made through a graph in which results from all five sessions were tabulated in order to identify variations and results in the whole process.

Teacher's reflective journal. During the application of the pre- and post-test benchmarks and questionnaires, and during the sessions in which group problems were applied and solved, the researcher took notes about what was happening in the classroom, especially regarding students' statements, opinions, or even feelings. At the same time, while students were discussing and solving the problems using the strategies, the teacher/researcher asked spontaneous questions and registered students' responses in the reflective journal.

RESULTS

After analyzing the data, there is strong evidence of a positive impact on student learning implementing strategies using the mother tongue in English language math lessons. Students favored the use of Spanish in the classroom, and their attitudes towards math instruction became more positive. In terms of math ability, when examining results of the pre- and post-test math benchmarks, students showed marked improvement.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE

One of the main findings of this research was students' preference for the use of the mother tongue when understanding and solving math problems. In general, the pre- and post-questionnaires revealed that students preferred to use Spanish as a strategy to understand math problems in English. In response to the question, "Would it be useful for you to use Spanish in math problems?" students were mainly positive towards the use of Spanish. The following are some of the students' responses:

> Yes, because I understand Spanish better. / Because I understand more in Spanish than in English. / Because I already learned Spanish but in English I don't understand all the words.[10]

They also reported that Spanish helped them in the process of understanding and analyzing problems in English:

> Because it helps me to understand more. / Because in Spanish it is easier to analyze the problems and we don't get confused. / Because I understand more and I can know if the operation is addition, subtraction or multiplication.

The particular strategies implemented in Spanish that impacted student learning and attitudes most were the *glossary* and *reflective talk.* Through these two strategies, students had not only the opportunity to look at the glossary for possible unknown vocabulary, but also to talk with their classmates in order to discuss the meaning of the problem and the possible solution (See Appendix E).

In the intervention, students were given problems to solve in five separate sessions. Students were asked to solve the problems in groups of four or five, and were encouraged to carry out reflective talk in the mother tongue. In addition, they were provided with a glossary with the unknown vocabulary of the problem to support analysis and comprehension. In this way, students not only shared their knowledge, but became familiar with English vocabulary commonly used in math problems. Some sporadic questions during the sessions were made in order to discover how comfortable students were with the use of this strategy, and they clearly stated that the glossary was an extremely useful tool for them.

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[10] Translated from the Spanish.

When the individual pre- and post-test math benchmarks were applied, students' attitudes were of continuous concern. In the reflective journal, the researcher reported how students continuously approached her to ask about different words they did not understand. They kept trying to answer in silence, but it was quite clear how anxious they were about problems in English without any kind of help. In contrast, when the strategies of glossary and reflective talk were proposed and applied, the classroom environment was completely different. The teacher's reflective journal recorded that students no longer approached her with questions. Rather, the entire class was involved in dynamic discussion, which was carried out in Spanish.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MATH

Another aspect that was analyzed in this study was students' attitudes towards math. In this matter, it is essential to say that in general, the impact of the use of Spanish on students' attitudes towards math instruction was positive. At the beginning and the end of this study, a benchmark of math problems in English was applied individually and without any kind of support. Directly after each set of problems, students answered a questionnaire in Spanish in order to explore their perceptions about the strategies implemented to help them solve math problems in English.

As illustrated in Figure 1, when students were asked in the questionnaires about their difficulty understanding the math problems in the benchmark, the majority of the students answered in the pre-questionnaire they were difficult for them to understand. In contrast, in the post-questionnaire, the majority of the students considered that math problems in English were easy for them to understand.
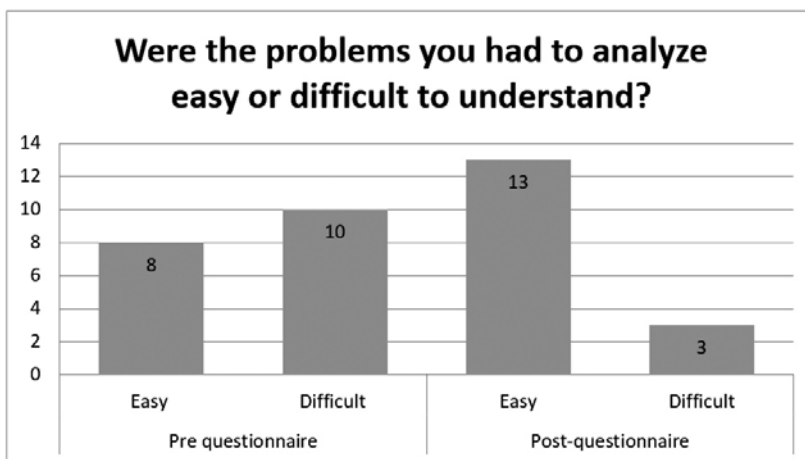

Figure 1. Students' perceptions of difficulty (pre- vs. post-questionnaire)

In addition, as observed in Figure 2, students were asked if math problems English were easy or difficult for them to understand in general. In the pre-questionnaire, most of the students stated that English problems were difficult for them to understand. However, in the post-questionnaire, more than the half of the students responded that math problems were not difficult for them.
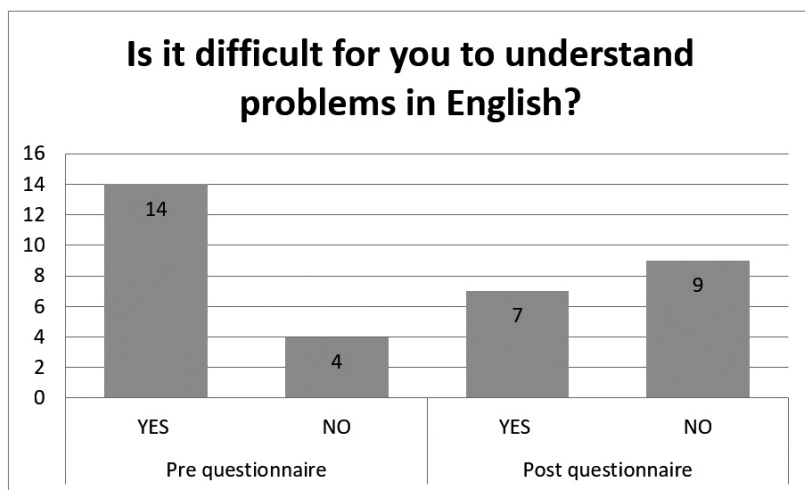
Figure 2. Difficulty of math problems in English in general.

Furthermore, in general, student's attitudes towards problem solving in English improved during and after the use of the strategies implemented. Apart from this, students' reactions towards the use of the strategies and even the post-test math benchmark were positive in terms of how they solved them and how they felt during the development of problems in every session. In addition, a surprising element occurred, which was that students felt confident enough to write a possible answer in English, perhaps because they could use the glossary as a support,.

MATH ABILITY

In general, students' ability to understand math problems in English improved as a result of the strategies of the glossary and reflective talk, as evidenced by their performance on the math problems. In order to understand better this finding, it is important to see and contrast the benchmarks and the categories evaluated in the problems.

Each math problem benchmark was evaluated according to different criteria as observed in Figure 3: *result, operation, answer* and *English*. In the result category, the number was checked to see if the numerical result was correct. In the *operation* criteria, it was evaluated whether the procedure carried out was correct. In the *answer* category, it was evaluated whether students

wrote the result of the operation correctly. In the *English* category, students' use of English was evaluated.
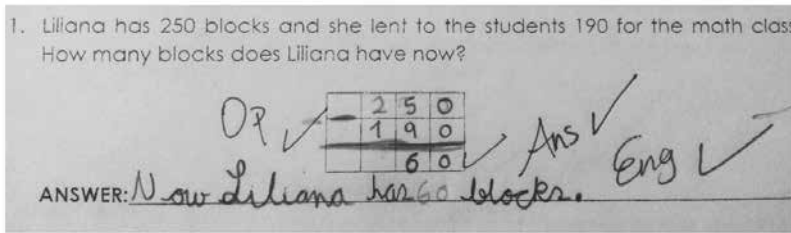
Figure 3. Categories evaluated in benchmarks

In terms of students' performance on the math problem benchmarks, it was found that students improved to some degree their capacity to analyze and understand problems in English in the post-benchmark compared to the pre- benchmark.
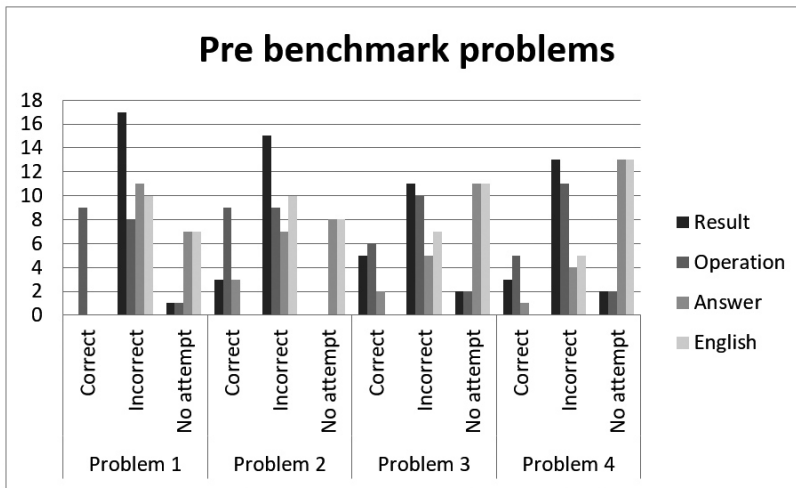
Figure 4. Student performance on pre-benchmark problems

As observed in Figure 4, the results were mainly incorrect as it is shown by the darkest bar. In this category, it was kept in mind just if numerical procedure was correct. On the other hand, the *operation* criteria tell us whether the operation selected was accurate in order to solve the problem. According to the bars, half the students show incorrect results in the majority of the problems, and few of them proceed correctly. In terms of the *use of English*, students' English was mainly incorrect as well, with an important variation towards no attempt by students. In this point, it was checked if students had a correct use of English language per se. Finally, as it is shown in the figure, in terms of *answers*, which means whether students gave a correct answer to the problem, responses were mainly incorrect or no attempt.
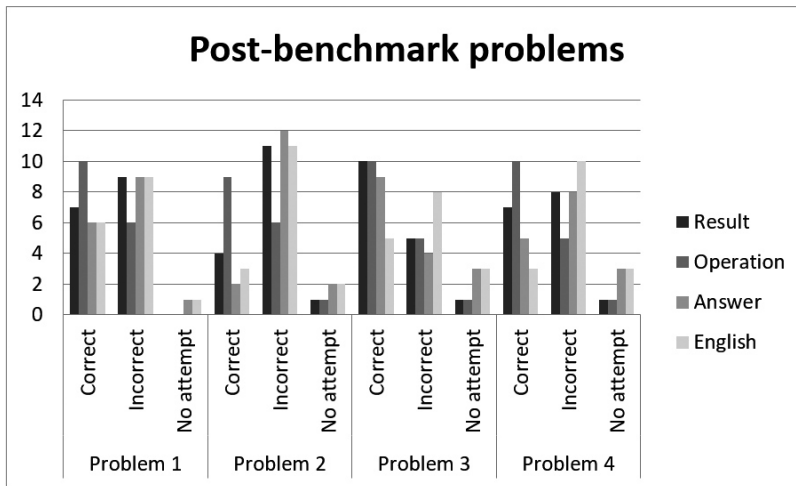
Figure 5. Student performance on post-benchmark problems

By contrast, in Figure 5, it is observed that even when results are still low in all the categories, there is slight evidence of improvement. It is observed through this figure that results and operations turned to be somewhat higher. Regarding English, there is still a high percentage of inaccuracy; however, it is important to notice that only a few students did not attempt to answer, in contrast with the pre-benchmark problem.
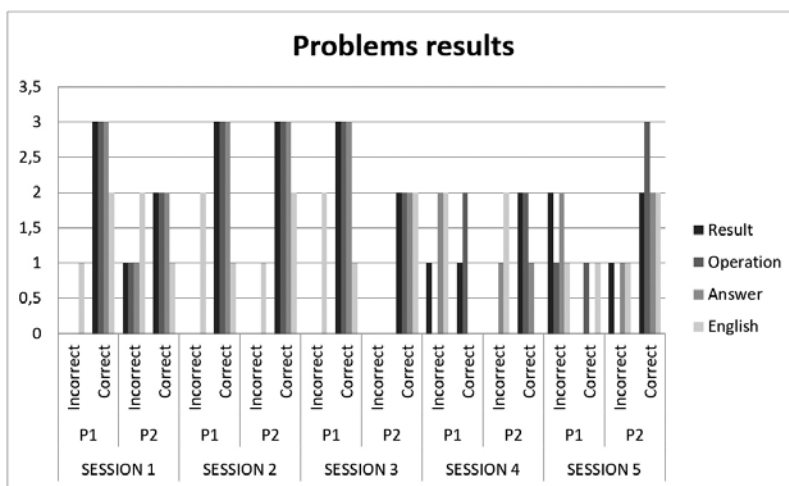
Figure 6. Results of problem solving in mother tongue sessions

In Figure 6, the results of the problems solved during the class sessions using the strategy are shown. According to the figure, the categories to analyze and check the problems were the same as in the benchmarks: result operation, answer and English. In the first session, operation and answer have the most significant turn and optimal findings. In the last two, the results are

divided and there is evidence of an important grade of inaccuracy. However, it is important to notice that this variation may appear because in the last session, problems of multiplication were applied, which could have caused confusion among students since the four previous sessions were about addition and subtraction. Finally, it is important to state that there was not difference between problems 1 and 2 in terms of difficulty. The problems were distributed randomly among the groups.

In general terms, it can be said that even when there was a percentage of error during the entire study, students' results showed a significant improvement in general terms. It needs to be considered that in terms of operations, results and answers, these outcomes give evidence of a successful practice. However, English language use in terms of responses needs to be considered as an aspect to keep focusing on in order to improve general results.

CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to discover the effectiveness of different strategies in math instruction mediated by the use of the mother tongue in second grade students at the *Colegio Santo Tomas de Aquino.* The results found provide evidence of reliable effectiveness in the use of the strategies used and in the use of mother tongue in order to help students to understand, analyze and solve math problems in English. At the same time, there is evidence of improvement in student's attitudes and abilities towards math instruction as a result of this intervention.

The findings point to the importance and effectiveness of the use of Spanish in English language math classes, and more specifically in math problems. There has recently been a constant and high debate about the use of mother tongue in bilingual contexts in the academic field since some state that its use should not be allowed in classrooms. In contrast, some others have strongly stated that been the use of the mother tongue is one of the strategies that has been proven to be effective in terms of results, particularly in math instruction. As Latu (2005) and Webb and Webb (2008) argue, when the mother tongue is allowed in classes, students' performance increases and improves.

Furthermore, it was important for this study to keep in mind the importance of talk in regard of math procedures. As Matthews (2010) states, in subjects like math, conversations should be allowed in the mother tongue, considering the amount of talk that is involved in this area. It was the possibility of carrying out conversations in mother tongue that led to better results and more confidence for students when analyzing and solving math problems. The previous finding confirms and supports in the role of the mother tongue as a bridge for learning processes in which content and foreign language are together.

In addition, an important percentage of the students gave evidence of a positive attitude towards the strategies suggested. It was relevant at the beginning of this study to find not only strategies that could help students to improve their proficiency in math, but their attitude and interest towards the subject as well. According to Gorgorio and Planas (2001), it is a task for teachers to discover and understand what benefits and encourages student learning. Despite the use of the language, teachers need to contribute in order to help students to express in a way they will not create obstacles to important understanding.

Subsequently, one of the limitations of this study was the level of noise that exercises like talking imply. Even when the objective was to keep students in a constant dialogue, analyzing and discussing, and even when the exercise was positive in terms of results, it can be said that such levels of noise were challenging for the environment of the classroom in general. At the same time, time management was another aspect that was somehow a limitation. Due to many scheduled activities by the school (not related with the subject) and accomplishment with curriculum and activities, the strategies were applied totally but not consistently.

This study has opened the possibility for further studies especially in terms of bilingual processes. The *Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino* has recently started a process to become an English immersion institution and there are many ways in which research can support and help this process. This study suggests the need for continued research on the implications of bilingual processes, especially in content areas such as math, and the implications for students in terms of the debate of language versus content. At the same time, another aspect to keep in mind is the impact of the use and support that the mother tongue brings to bilingual processes. There are many ways in which further studies can support this idea, and can lead to successful processes into bilingual classrooms.

ACTION PLAN

Bilingual education and processes have many branches to be investigated which could offer a better understanding of such processes. For researchers and for schools, there are many ways in which further studies can be conducted. Some of the aspects to bear in mind would be:

- Teachers should bear in mind the importance of mother tongue in bilingual processes and use it as a bridge continuously.

- Objectives need to be well defined. Objectives for language proficiency are completely different from objectives of the subject matter.

- Bilingual teaching has many different ways that have been proved to be successful. It is important to give an opportunity to different ways of teaching.

- It is important to listen or read students' perceptions towards their bilingual processes.

- It is necessary to keep in mind that the fact that students do not use English all the time does not mean that they are not engaged in bilingual learning.

Suggestions for the school:

- Provide opportunities to teachers to learn about bilingual processes.

- Demand results from teachers for results, but provide them with preparation and support.

- Involve the whole community in the bilingual process and help teachers to make parents aware of how bilingual processes do not give results in a short time.

- Bear in mind the difference between English language teaching and bilingual teaching. It is mentioned since a highest percentage of the bilingual teachers are not specialized or have enough knowledge of bilingual processes.

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APPENDIX A

Pre-math Benchmark

Name: _____ Date: _____

Addition And Substraction Test

Read the problem. Then, make the operation necessary to answer the question.

1. Sofia read 528 pages of her book. If there are 975 total pages, how many more pages does she have left to read?

   Answer: _____

2. There are 874 trees in the park near your house, but 179 of them were cut down. How many trees there are now in the park?

   Answer: _____

3. My mother goes to the supermarket and buys a watermelon that costs $8.790, a bottle of milk that costs $4.500[11] and bunch of bananas that costs $3.500. How much money does my mother spend at the supermarket?

   Answer: _____

---

[11] Prices are in Colombia pesos, with numbers written using Spanish numerical conventions (commas for hundred divisions and periods for decimal points are reversed). In this case, it would be four thousand five hundred pesos (about $1.50 USD).

4. If there are 345 students playing in the playground and there are 80 playing in the courts. How many students are playing during the break?

Answer: _____

APPENDIX B

Pre- and post-Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear student, please answer the following questions whether selecting the face or writing the answer on the lines.

1.   How did you feel doing math problems?

Calm   **Nervous**   **Calm but with many questions**

2.   Were the problems you had to analyze difficult to understand?

Easy   **Nervous**

3.   Is it difficult for you to understand math problems in English?

Yes   **No**

4. Do you think using Spanish will make it easier for you to understand math problems? Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How would it be easier for you to understand and solve math problems?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

Post-math Benchmark

Name: _____ Date: _____

Addition And Substraction Test

Read the problem. Then, make the operation necessary to answer the question.

1. Liliana has 250 blocks and she lent 190 to the students for the math class. How many blocks does Liliana have now?

Answer: _____

2. There are 750 books in the Santo Tomás de Aquino library, and students had borrowed 180. How many books does the library have now?

Answer: _____

3. Javier bought lego cards in the toy store that cost $6.700, a ball that cost $2.500 and a car that cost $4.500. How much money did Javier spend in the toy store?

Answer: _____

4. Antonia bought a sandwich in the cafeteria that cost $ 2.500 and she bought Don Luis a fruit salad that cost $1.500. How much money did Antonia spend in total?

Answer: _____

APPENDIX D

Problems Session 2

Problem 1

Maria Jose goes to Divercity and gets $ 8.500 for her bank account. She spent $3.700 at the hairdresser's. How much money does Maria Jose have in her bank account now?

_____

Problem 1

Juan Diego has $ 6.800 that his mother gave him. His grandfather gives him $ 7.500 more. How much money does Juan Diego have now?

_____

APPENDIX E

Glossary Session 2

Glossary and Problems 2

A/an= un/una

Account= cuenta

Bought=compró

Cost= cuesta

Goes= va (él o ella)

Gave= dio

Gives: da (él o ella)

Had=tuvo

Has=tiene

Have= tiene

Her=su (de ella)

His=su (de él)

How many more?= ¿Cuántas más?

How many?= ¿Cuántas? o ¿Cuántos?

How much?= ¿Cuánto? (se refiere por ejemplo a dinero)

If= Si

Lend= Prestar

Less= menos

Lost=perdió

More= mas

Now=ahora

Spent: gastó

Than=que

The= el, la, los,las

There are = hay (cuando se refiere a dos y más)

There is= hay (cuando se refiere a uno)

CHAPTER 6

FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CLIL MATH CURRICULUM

Lady Alvarado Santis

Claudia Bareño Rodríguez

Lucía Mendoza Medina

Many schools in Colombia, and especially in Bogotá, are developing bilingual programs in which they propose the teaching of academic core subjects such as math, science and social studies in English. Some schools even seek outside consultancy in order to develop these programs, but curricula developed by outsiders must still be transmitted to classroom teachers in order for these new ideas to take hold and translate into effective teaching strategies. Lady Alvarado, Claudia Bareño and Lucia Mendoza were curious as to how teachers are implementing the bilingual CLIL curriculum at the Colegio Jordán de Sajonia. *They were particularly interested in identifying issues that might be critical factors affecting successful implementation of the CLIL approach in their setting.*

ABSTRACT

Key words: Bilingual education, CLIL, Content-based instruction, Teacher training, Curricular innovation

The present research study was conducted with the purpose of examining the bilingual project at the *Colegio Jordán de Sajonia* and how the CLIL approach adopted by the school can be effectively implemented. It was also aimed at analyzing the factors that affect its execution, such as teachers' knowledge about CLIL and the necessary resources to meet the project's needs. The study was carried out with a group of teachers and administrators from the school who contributed to questionnaires, class observations, and interviews. It was found that most of the participants lack knowledge about the approach proposed, as well as the principles and basis of CLIL to teach content in a second language. Findings also demonstrated that, despite teachers' professional background, most of them have a low level of English language proficiency, which directly affects students' learning. Although the school has provided some training sessions, these have not accomplished teachers' needs in terms of awareness of the school's bilingualism project, knowledge of CLIL, the school teaching context, and timely execution of this training.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave: Educación Bilingüe, AICLE, Enseñanza de Lengua basada en Contenidos, Capacitación docente, Innovación curricular

El presente estudio de investigación se realizó con el propósito de evaluar el proyecto bilingüe en el Colegio Jordán de Sajonia y cómo el método de enseñanza CLIL adoptado por el colegio puede ser implementado efectivamente. También tuvo como objetivo analizar los factores que afectan su ejecución, tales como la falta de conocimiento de los docentes sobre CLIL y los recursos necesarios para satisfacer las necesidades del proyecto. El estudio se llevó a cabo con un grupo de maestros y administradores del colegio que contribuyeron a través de cuestionarios, observaciones de clase y entrevistas. Se encontró que la mayoría de los participantes carece de conocimiento sobre la metodología propuesta, así como los principios de CLIL para la enseñanza de contenidos a través de una segunda lengua. Los hallazgos también demostraron que, a pesar de los antecedentes profesionales de los profesores, la mayoría de ellos tienen un bajo nivel de competencia lingüística, lo que afecta directamente al proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Aunque el colegio ha impartido algunas sesiones de formación pedagógica,

éstas no han satisfecho las necesidades de los profesores en términos de conocimiento del proyecto de bilingüismo, entendimiento de la metodología CLIL, consideración del contexto de enseñanza del colegio y la ejecución oportuna de las sesiones de capacitación.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the importance of preparing bilingual, biliterate students capable of using languages in academic, social, and working environments, the Colegio Jordán de Sajonia has begun implementing a bilingual program based on a CLIL approach. This program aims to have a positive impact on students' academic achievement, language acquisition, and engagement.

Most of the recent research studies have shown that CLIL is beneficial to students' educational process in general and language learning in particular. It promotes deeper learning of language, comprehension of the content, and enrichment and improvement in student outcomes, including their positive attitude and active participation. However, other studies have also revealed that the effectiveness of the program may be affected by teachers' lack of awareness of the approach, including difficulties in creating authentic and real settings in the classroom. Further difficulties include the lack of curricular modifications, and challenges integrating language and content.

For this reason, this study sought to examine the bilingual program at the *Colegio Jordán de Sajonia,* analyzing the effectiveness of its CLIL approach, particularly as it is tied to teaching practices, and exploring what factors may affect its implementation. The aim was then to provide teachers and administrators precise insights to address the school's needs and enable the project's improvement.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingualism is a broad term that has been seen in the literature for several decades, and refers to the use of two or more languages for teaching and learning in several types of programs. As Abello-Contesse (2013) states, "Bilingual education (BE) is one of the fastest growing disciplines in applied linguistics at present" (p. 24). However, the term has different connotations depending on the cultural and educational context. Other terms have also been used to refer to specific types of bilingual education programs, such as *immersion education*, mainly in the Canadian context; *dual language/two-way programs* in the US, and more recently

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in the European context (Abello-Contesse, 2013, p. 39).

Related terminology may be associated with different connotations and may not be considered bilingual education per se. This is the case of the term *education for bilingualism* (Ordóñez, as cited in Abello-Contesse 2013), which implies that bilingualism is the long-term educational goal, but it is not necessarily achieved through the application in practice of bilingual education. Further, the expression *docencia bilingue* (bilingual teaching) is used to make reference to the electives or courses taught in English and provided by some universities, addressed to national and international students. Such is the case, for example, of some universities in Spain *(Universidad de Barcelona, Universidad de Granada)* and Latin American countries like Brazil *(Universidad Católica de Paraná)*, Argentina *(Universidad de Palermo)* y Colombia *(Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Universidad de Los Andes)* (Abello-Contesse, 2013).

These types of English courses, however, do not normally belong to a structured program that might be defined as bilingual education. The situation is similar with the expressions *bilingual/ multilingual classrooms, bilingual/multilingual students or bilingualism in schools*, which refer to educational environments where bilingual individuals are present permanently (mainly students, but also teachers and administrators), and are part of the school system. The term *bilingual schooling* can also be ambiguous as it refers to small communities where some people are socially bilingual or multilingual, but only one language is officially used in the school system at the national, regional, or local level. Moreover, no foreign language is available in the curriculum, which is the case for example of Belgium and Gibraltar (Abello-Contesse, 2013).

It may be difficult, then, to define what exactly bilingual education is; nevertheless, it is also important to have clear what it is not, and the difference among the variety of concepts and connotations allowed in current literature. As Abello-Contesse (2013) explains:

> It is useful, then, to draw a distinction between educational environments where two or more languages co-exist in student's minds in spite of the monolingual school system they are in, and educational environments where two or more languages co-exist in the student's minds thanks to the bilingual/multilingual school system they are in. (p. 40)

For the purpose of clarifying this broad concept, research has summarized some fundamental principles which determine the basis for bilingual education programs at schools and institutions. According to Baker (1998), the following principles allow education to implement the most suitable system based on their projections and needs:

- The use of two languages (student's L1 and L2) as media of instruction in designated content areas or school subjects that are usually part of the curriculum at the grade levels involved

- The progressive development of these languages in school programs (additive bilingualism)

- The implementation of educational approaches from Content-based Instruction (CBI)

- The overall academic achievement of students and their cognitive development, regardless the language used in the classroom. (p. 38)

In addition to these distinctions and discussions, it is also important to point out the contribution of the social and cultural traditions that determine bilingualism in education. Since each individual has different bilingual characteristics depending on their cultural background or birthplace, it is important to clarify the role of the mother language, which means the first acquired language or dominant language that is used permanently to communicate (Baker, 1998). For example, in the case of some ethnic groups, their dominant speech is mainly in an indigenous language. In the case of disabled individuals who have auditory or oral difficulties, their dominant way to communicate is sign language. In these cases, teachers' and administrators' efforts may be necessary to save equality in monolingual/special students and preserve minority languages by keeping their cultural significance and background. Such is the case of regional or national indigenous/aboriginal languages and sign language for deaf population.

In this sense, *bilingualism* (the way) can be broadly defined as the ability to use both the mother and second language to communicate in different levels of proficiency. *Bilingual education* (the means) refers to long-term goals and established teaching programs to which learners are exposed in order to develop literacy and academic achievement in L1 and L2. However, the degree of bilingualism may vary from one individual to another depending on the exposure to a second language or specific learning programs.

Bilingual education in Colombia. *Minority languages.* Colombia, a geographical doorway between Central and South America, is a pluricultural nation which has had a long bilingual and multilingual background in indigenous, creole and sign languages, dating from before the arrival of Columbus and the Catholic missionaries in the 15th to the 19th century. These missionaries had the responsibility of converting indigenous tribes to the Roman Catholic doctrine, as well as spreading the use of Spanish as the language of education *(castellanización)* (de Mejía, 2004). Throughout this process, important indigenous students established religious boarding schools, which used Spanish as the language of teaching and learning. Consequently, Spanish became a language of education and prestige within native communities.

In spite of these important advances in education, minority languages reduced their status and level of significance among native communities, who were also concerned about their traditions and cultural heritage. However, in 1978 an important change occurred in the emphasis of education for the entire native population across the country. According to de Mejía (2004), for the first time legislation recognized the need and relevance to design a *bilingual* curricula which took into account the educational experiences of these communities. This program aimed at respecting the cultural heritage and tradition by establishing a policy of *ethnoeducation* for minority communities in Colombia in order to preserve the 65 different Amerindian and Creole languages. In addition, bilingual education was recognized as the form of education to be implemented in these territories (de Mejía, 2004).

Despite this long language background, it was not until 1991 that Colombia was officially recognized as a multi-ethnic and pluricultural nation in the Colombian Political Constitution (Article 10). All Amerindian and Creole languages were given co-official status with the dominant Spanish language in the geographical areas where these minority languages are spoken (de Mejía, 2013). Currently, a variety of Colombian universities in the south of the country, such as the *Universidad de la Amazonía* (Florencia, Caquetá) and *Universidad del Cauca* (Popayán,

Cauca) have designed distance learning programs intended to train indigenous teachers who come from different communities in order to work in bilingual projects and bicultural schools (de Mejía, 2004).

Majority languages. The historical development of majority language contexts is similar to the indigenous communities because the Catholic missionaries were also in charge of providing education for the descendants of Spanish settlers in Colombia. At this time, the languages taught at these schools were Greek, Latin and Spanish. After the independence from Spain in 1810, the ruling class sent their children to study in France and England with the purpose of bringing back books to be translated, thus preparing for the teaching of these languages (de Mejía, 2004).

After the Second World War, English became the most important foreign language in Colombia and many other South American countries due to "economic expansion, political and economic influence and the technological development of the United States" (Zuluaga, as cited in de Mejía, 2004, p. 54). Then, with Colombia's General Education Law of 1994, foreign languages were included for the first time at the primary school level, continuing with a series of different bilingual programs and initiatives throughout the years. Today, English language teaching has become more prominent in the country and is the priority of the Ministry of Education for the entire nation.

Currently, bilingual education in Colombia is associated principally with private bilingual schools, established to provide education for middle and upper-middle classes, mainly in the most important cities, such as Bogotá, Cali, Cartagena, and Barranquilla (de Mejía, 2004). These schools have increased greatly over the last decade and most of them offer English-Spanish bilingualism. For the purpose of classifying the types of private bilingual schools established in the country, a study was carried out in order to better understand their role in the Colombian educational context. The research identified three main categories, international bilingual schools, national bilingual schools, and schools with intensified foreign language (English/EFL) programs (de Mejía, 2004). Subsequently, this classification was used on a nationwide basis by the Ministry of Education (MEN) as a referent for the scale of payments permitted to be charged by these types of institutions. The study showed the characteristics of each group, explained as follows.

- *International bilingual schools.* These institutions are certified or in process of certification by an international body which endorses their foreign origin, such as the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges in the United States or the International Baccalaureate Organization (de Mejía, 2013). These schools are mostly founded by non-Colombians and are permanently in contact with their origin country. More than 50% of the curriculum is provided in L2, as well as the textbooks and materials, which are imported from abroad. Both languages (L1 and L2) are used for teaching and learning, but a content-based instructional approach sensitizes students to a bicultural orientation (de Mejía, 2013).

- *National bilingual schools.* People who found, manage, and teach at these schools are Colombians, but they have also a permanent contact with different countries. More than 50% of the academic program is taught in L2, and students are exposed to large amounts of the foreign language for learning. Most of these institutions adopt early partial immersion programs intended to acquire the language through content-based instruction, and students

need to present an international examination in order to demonstrate their proficiency level in the foreign language. Besides, these schools foster an intercultural orientation, which allows students to have a critical comparison from the context and culture of both languages (L1 and L2) (de Mejía, 2013, p. 99).

- *Schools with an intensified foreign language (FLE) program.* Most of the schools belonging to this group are founded by Colombians, including also their staff, (teachers, principals and coordinators), who are monolingual speakers of Spanish, except for the English teachers. The curriculum includes 10 to 15 hours a week of exposure to the foreign language as a subject, which is taught through a communicative approach (de Mejía, 2013). According to de Mejía, a great number of these schools are in transition towards becoming bilingual, but some of them opt for an intensive English program due to "cultural, educational or ideological reasons" (p. 99).

According to this characterization, principals and administrators of private schools generally understand the importance of teaching children and young citizens to develop the skills necessary for interacting with other cultures in a globalized world, while respecting their cultural heritage and identity (de Mejía, 2013, p. 105). Further, it is equally important that these bilingual schools pave the way for monolingual or public institutions towards bilingualism, as they can provide effective guidance for teaching and learning in this area. De Mejía (2013) states, "It can be seen that private bilingual schools play an important role in the Colombian educational context and, in fact, are often seen as referents for more recent initiatives promoting bilingualism and bilingual education in the public sector" (p. 96).

IMMERSION EDUCATION

Immersion education is a broad field in bilingual education, which leads to literacy development in the first and second language (L1 and L2). In view of this, the L2 is not taught as a subject, but as a means of instruction in which subjects are taught through a foreign language. This approach initially became popular in Canada during the 1960s to promote the use of the two official languages and the importance of bilingualism for the country. These programs were implemented at the kindergarten level - age 5 – called *early total immersion* programs, and progressively were executed in grades 4 and 5 - *middle immersion*, and 7 or 8 grades - *late immersion* (Johnson & Swain, 1997).

In order to clarify the main practices of immersion education programs, research has determined some core features:

- *The Immersion Language (IL)* is a means of instruction to teach subject matter for at least 50% of the program from elementary through the end of secondary school.

- The use of the additive bi- or multilingualism and bi- or multilingual literacy development through instruction in IL with no detriment of learners' L1.

- Exposure to the L2 is provided in the classroom, and support for the L1 in the community and at home.

- Teachers are fully proficient in both languages, and there is a clear separation of teacher use of both languages during the instruction (Fortune & Tedick, 2008, p. 9)

Dual language immersion is a variation whose predominant objectives are for students to develop fluency in listening, reading, writing and speaking in their native language and the immersion language (IL), and develop multicultural skills. Fortune and Tedick (2008) describe four main types of dual immersion programs, principally different in their population.

- *One-way foreign language.* This type of program was established in the 1960s and   targets students who are prevalent in the majority language, native speakers of the country, and have no or minimal immersion language (IL) proficiency (language minority learners). They are taught regular school curriculum.

- *Two-way (bilingual) immersion programs* began in 1960, and are found principally in the United States. There are native speakers of both languages (language minority and language majority learners). In other words, part of the class is immersed in L2, and the other takes instruction in L1. In addition, students have the opportunity communicate with native speakers and support each other.

- *Developmental / maintenance bilingual education* is similar to one-way foreign language immersion since its intention is to target learners with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

- *Indigenous language immersion programs* were originated to strengthen and encourage language and cultural development, in the cases in which the indigenous languages are no longer taught to the younger generations and are dying out. These programs are two-way or one-way depending on their population (Fortune & Tedick, 2008; Tedick, Christian, & Fortune, 2011).

The aims of these dual language immersion programs are similar in multiple aspects. In all of them, students are exposed to the target language through content-based instruction, in which they acquire the L2 learning new concepts, usually in subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies (Day & Shapson, 1996). Therefore, the new language is not seen as an isolated part of the learning process, but is used in a natural context with a meaningful function. In addition, dual language programs support the improvement of L2 without detriment to the first language - *additive bilingualism.* While learning a second language, students continue developing skills and culture in their L1 and improve their literacy, cognitive, and linguistic proficiency in both languages (Cummins, 2000).

Academic achievement, the most studied topic referring to the success of immersion programs, especially in *two-way immersion programs (TWI),* has shown that students do not experience a loss in academic accomplishment while immersed in one-way or two-way immersion programs. Moreover, according to Lindholm-Leary (2011), students of different ethnicities, language backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and diverse cognitive and linguistic abilities (special education) score similarly or above in reading and writing, and develop proficiencies in content areas as mathematics skills in the two languages, compared with English speaking students not enrolled in immersion programs.

Research has also found that native Spanish speakers in such programs develop greater levels of competence in Spanish than English speakers, and immersion students who begin the program as English speakers achieve native-like skills in listening and reading in their second language. Furthermore, native Spanish speakers and native English speakers develop intermediate to high levels of oral proficiency in Spanish (de Jong & Bearse, 2011). There are some differences in the outcomes depending on the type of immersion program implemented. *Early total one-way* and nearly total *(90:10) two-way immersion programs* exhibit more advanced levels of minority language proficiency in reading, language, and math in comparison to middle or late immersion students. In partial or *50:50 programs*, Spanish achievement declines, resulting in inferior scores in Spanish reading. The primary reason for these outcomes is the lack of continuity of elementary-level programs throughout middle and high school (de Jong & Bearse, 2011; Lyster, 2007).

Additional advantages found in immersion programs include success in literacy, language, and cognitive development, in addition to beneficial perspectives of the cross-cultural competence at schools. Minority language students in two-way immersion programs develop high self-esteem and want to complete secondary school, unlike their minority language peers in English-only programs. Moreover, research has revealed that most of the students seem comfortable interacting with diverse groups; in other words, students have the aptitudes and assurance to engage in cross-cultural interactions. In addition, *one-way immersion programs* have evidenced their capability to support students' academic development in a more effective way than other programs (de Jong & Bearse, 2011; Lyster, 2007).

According to Cummins (2000), outcomes of any bilingual program depend on multiple factors, but linguistic minority and linguistic majority students in quality immersion programs will have linguistic and academic benefits of having instruction in both languages. Even though immersion programs seem to be effective for students in different socioeconomic backgrounds, there are challenges that these programs have to face. Primarily, students' grammatical structures and vocabulary are not proficient enough to achieve a native level, and students do not develop productive skills after being in an immersion program. Secondly, to produce long conversation or discussion, students struggle and tend to mix the languages frequently (de Jong & Bearse, 2011).

Other challenges faced by immersion programs include the lack of qualified teachers and the difficulties designing and implementing these programs. Inadequate teacher preparation and insufficient professional development in oral and written proficiency in the immersion language greatly affects the achievement of program aims. On the other hand, teachers in some immersion programs do not have sufficient or adequate resources to provide support to the learners, and as mentioned before, there is no articulation between elementary immersion programs and middle and high school (de Jong & Bearse, 2011).

Immersion education programs have spread throughout the world because of the imperative need to succeed in a globalized world, be competent in more than one language, and meet the needs and expectations of the community. Due to global integration, migration and easy access to channels of communication, the goals for immersion education have expanded to include biculturalism, and most recently, multilingualism and multiculturalism (Tedick, et al., 2011). The proliferation of immersion programs is also due to constant research that has

recently shed light on the achievement and benefits of immersion. For this reason, according to Fortune and Tedick (2008), schools play an important role in the acquisition of language skills in their community by approaching these programs responsibly, planning according its features, and expending time researching about the best practices to implement according to the characteristic of the community.

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning CLIL is an educational approach that promotes the balanced teaching and learning of both content and foreign language. CLIL is based on the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and the methodologies adopted by each subject content. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) state, "The language that is being taught could be used to present subject matter, and the students would learn the language as a by-product of learning about learning-world content" (p. 117).

Content and language integrated learning was adopted in Europe in the 1990s in order to outline and accurately design teaching practices in different types of school environments in which teaching and learning take place in a second language. Thus, Coyle, Hood and Marsh explain, "CLIL is not exclusive to the promotion of English as a world language, but is embedded in the socio-economic, political, and cultural traditions of different nations" (2010, p. 9). Equally important, "CLIL was, therefore, introduced as a generic "umbrella" term to describe those features of operational practice common to a wide range of variants of bilingual education" (Marsh, 2009, p. vii).

This dual-focused methodology adopts Coyle's 4 Cs framework (2010), which integrates *content, cognition, communication,* and *culture.* Content relates to the learning of subject matter, such as science or math. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) state, content provides the basis for activating both the cognitive and interactional processes are the starting point for second language learning. *Cognition* is related to the development of learning and thinking in the subject matter in order to link new knowledge and skills to previous understanding. *Communication* enhances the development of language through its permanent use in the classroom. *Culture* implies the socialization of the learning experience in terms of the subject knowledge basis, and the cultural aspects of using more than one language. CLIL, thus, is a pedagogy which takes the integration of subject and language development as central (Coyle, 2010).

According to Coyle (2010), the 4Cs framework highlights the language of learning, for learning and through learning. *Language of learning* promotes the understanding of content through the required knowledge. *Language for learning* includes the awareness of proper strategies that students need to communicate and learn in a second language environment, as well as grammar and rule-based knowledge. Language through learning enhances learners' active engagement. Coyle argues that through the 4Cs, content, cognition, communication and culture, students build up their own knowledge and skills, and can develop as global citizens (2010).

THE ROLE OF L1 IN L2 ACQUISITION

In light of the fact that most bilingual programs offer some role for the first language, it is relevant to review theory and research on this relationship. Some theories consider L1 as a negative influence in the acquisition of second language, but others regard it as a positive influence since the use of L1 facilitates rather than impedes progress. In brief, dissenters of the use of L1 defend the idea of exclusive use of L2 in order to improve proficiency in a second language (Cummins, 2000). By contrast, proponents defend the idea that L1 facilitates acquisition process; therefore, L1 becomes an essential component to encourage academic content understanding and successful learning experiences (Cummins, 2000).

Cummins proposes several powerful principles about the positive role of L1 in L2 acquisition He theorizes that teaching and learning a second language has diverse implications. In a broad sense, Cummins (as cited in Baker, 2006) makes a distinction between the acquisition of conversational language and academic language. *Conversational language or basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)* refer to the language and skills necessary to communicate in everyday situations (Baker, 2006). This kind of language includes basic level of grammar and daily or high frequency vocabulary that is used repeatedly; thus, conversational language skills are easier for learners (Cummins, 2000). Academic language or *cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)* is the language needed to gain understanding of subject areas in the classroom (Baker, 2006). This language is less familiar for learners, and involves specific vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, analysis of content, and higher cognitive process (Cummins, 2000).

Cummins also argues the benefits of *additive bilingualism.* He claims that it is likely to establish a "positive association between additive bilingualism and students' linguistic, cognitive or academic growth" (2000, p. 37). Acquiring proficiency in L2 while maintaining L1 may benefit second language learners since the primary language provides support and encourages improvement in learners' academic level and cognitive outcomes (Cummins, 2000). In a broad sense, Cummins (2000) theorizes that the competence in L2 depends partially on the competence in L1; therefore, "the more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop the second language" (as cited in Baker, 2006, p. 137). Hence, a lack on the development of L1 causes personal and academic issues (Cummins, 2000).

In the context of interdependence of L1 and L2, Cummins proposes two theories: the *Common Underlying Proficiency Theory* and the *Threshold Theory* (Baker 2006). The Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) refers to "the cognitive/academic proficiency that underlies academic performance in both languages" (Cummins, 2000, p. 38). This theory envisions language proficiency as a dual iceberg connected at the base, which is located underwater. The icebergs above the water surface symbolize the two languages L1 and L2 with their own features and skills. The connection underwater represents a common central operating system (CUP) that acts as a shared bank of concepts and skills that support the first and the second languages (Baker, 2006). Based on this theory, Cummins claims that it is possible to transfer concepts and skills that have been learned in one language to the other (as cited in Baker, 2006).

The Threshold Theory explains the relationship between developing competence in language and academic success, and suggests cognitive advantages in terms of increasing competence

in L1 and L2 (Baker, 2006). The Threshold Theory consists of two thresholds and three levels; these levels describe the competence in L1 and in L2. The first threshold corresponds to the lowest development of L1 needed to be successful in the acquisition of L2. In other words, it is the minimum level of primary language necessary to avoid the negative effects in second language acquisition process (Baker, 2006). Students below this threshold achieve insufficient competence in both languages (L1 and l2). In concordance with this theory, learners in the middle level reach adequate competence in one of the languages; therefore, if the development in L1 is high, the development in L2 turns into an easier process. The third level shows students with adequate competence in two or more languages; thus, students who develop high competence and skills in both languages are students with remarkable cognitive advantages (Baker, 2006).

EMPOWERMENT OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUIRERS

Throughout history, education has tended to reproduce coercive relations of power that have influenced not only the role of educators, but also the types of structures established in educational systems. Some of those coercive relations are materialized in different educational structures including submersion programs that suppress students' first language and cultural identity, education programs that prepare teachers for monolingual and monocultural students, and exclusion of culturally diverse parents in schooling (Cummins, 2000). These educational structures limit the kinds of interactions between educators and students. In this context, Cummins points out that students who are learning a language often suffer devaluation of identity and disempowerment during the schooling experience (Baker, 2011). Nevertheless, significant changes can arise by the kinds of interactions between students and teachers in which students feel empowered instead of disabled (Cummins, 2000).

Empowerment, in the words of Cummins, is "the collaborative creation of power" (as cited in Baker, 2000, p. 88) through which students develop confidence and motivation to succeed academically; therefore, empowerment can be considered an essential component to transform L2 acquirers' reality. In a broad sense, empowerment of second language acquirers is possible by establishing schooling situations including shared power between teachers and students, collaborative relationships among students, listening to the students' voices, and honoring home language, culture and identity (Baker, 2000).

Cummins illustrates the way in which schools and teachers can empower or disable L2 learners through classroom interactions and instructional strategies (Cummins, 2000). With this in mind, it is possible to consider four dimensions or characteristics in schooling process to empower or disable L2 learners: *language and culture incorporation, community participation, pedagogy*, and *assessment*. These four major characteristics of schools will influence not only the students' reality during the schooling experience, but also the educators' roles and mindsets (Baker, 2011).

The first characteristic of schools that empowers or disables students has to do with "the extent to which L2 learners' home language and culture are incorporated into the school curriculum" (Cummins, as cited in Baker, 2011, p. 406). When L2 learners' cultural identity and home

language are incorporated and valued in the classroom, they are empowered towards academic progress. In contrast, "when their home language and culture are excluded, minimized or quickly reduced in school, L2 acquirers may become academically disable" (Baker, 2011, p. 406). Besides the positive or negative cognitive effects, the inclusion of L2 learners' language and culture may have other effects on their personality, attitudes, and social and emotional welfare. Cummins states that educators are likely to empower L2 learners when they add a second language instead of replacing or subtracting students' primary language and culture (as cited in Baker, 2011). Consequently, it is essential to create supportive environments at school that value the first language of the students, include diversity, and respect students' home culture (Cummins, 2000).

The second characteristic that may empower or disable students is "the extent to which minority communities are encouraged to participate in their children's education" (Cummins, as cited in Baker, 2011, p. 406). When schools give parents of L2 learners the possibility to be active participants in their children's schooling, they and their children feel empowered; thus, learners' progress can improve. By contrast, when parents and L2 learners are kept powerless and have a lack in schooling, learners may not progress (Baker, 2011). In this context, teachers can play a collaborative or exclusionary role. If teachers are collaborative and encourage parents to participate through home or classroom activities, they contribute to children's academic growth. However, if teachers are exclusionary, they limit parents' participation, generating a barrier between teachers and parents. Therefore, they do not contribute to children's academic progress (Baker, 2011).

The third characteristic that can contribute to the empowerment of L2 learners is "the extent to which education promotes the inner desire for children to become active seekers of knowledge and not just passive receptacles" (Baker, 2011, p. 407). The learning process can be addressed from two different and contrasting perspectives. On the one hand, learning can be an active, independent and motivated process, or it can be a passive and dependent process that requires external pushes and pulls (Baker, 2011). Based on these perspectives, there are two models of teaching: the *transmission* model and the *transformative* model. The transmission model considers children as containers to be filled with knowledge; in this model, teachers are those who control and students are those kept under control. The transmission model symbolizes the powerlessness of L2 learners; therefore, this model disables L2 learners. In contrast, the transformative model features reciprocal interaction as the main component. Reciprocal interaction involves dialogue between teachers and students, guidance, and facilitation of learning in collaborative contexts. This model empowers L2 learners (Baker, 2011) by fostering them to develop high-level cognitive skills instead of recalling information; it also promotes students' intrinsic motivation to use language and generate their own knowledge (Cummins, 2000).

The fourth characteristic that may enrich empowerment of L2 learners is "the extent to which the assessment of minority language students avoids locating problems in the student and seeks to find the root of the problem in the social and educational system or curriculum wherever possible" (Baker, 2011, p. 407). Most of the time educational problems tend to be located in the students. However, beyond focusing on the students as the source, Cummins argues that the root of the problem can be found in the social, economic or educational system (Baker, 2011). The real origin of L2 learners' problems can be linked to the subtractive structure of

bilingual education, the transmission model, and the exclusionary orientation of the teacher toward parents (Baker, 2011). In other words, L2 learners' academic difficulty can be related to the interaction within the school context (Cummins, 2000).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bilingual education is a broad term that refers to the presence of two languages in instructional settings. However, the term is "a simple label for a complex phenomenon" (Baker, 2000) that depends on many variables, including the native language of the students, the language of instruction, and the linguistic goal of the program, to determine which type of bilingual education is used. For this reason, there is increasing interest in research on bilingual education as means of learning academic content material while becoming proficient in two languages.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Research on bilingual programs points to the needed institutional support for programs to succeed. When these conditions exist, learning outcomes tend to be positive. Drozdowicz (2012) revealed the main elements that contribute to the development of a successful bilingual school program for young children, specifically the importance of relationships between teachers and students in order to create sustainable environments and achieving learning and teaching goals. Further, the implementation of bilingualism programs needs to be managed with academic rigor, and by different participants in order to be successful, which depends directly on the school. Other conditions identified in the study included quality professional development and a committed teaching staff to support the school mission, which in this case is ultimately to graduate bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural students.

In addition to institutional support, the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders in bilingualism programs can affect their effectiveness and success. One study with students, teachers, language assistants, and administrators of primary and secondary schools investigated their attitudes and perceptions towards bilingual education. Key findings emerged about effective pedagogy in bilingual schools. The results were connected to practices not frequently encountered, such as activation of prior knowledge, use of higher order thinking questions and activities, student-centered instruction, group or partner work, and hands-on interactive activities (Gerena & Ramírez-Verdugo, 2014). In addition, participants felt much better when faced with the challenge of learning, in comparison with previous programs.

The pedagogical benefits of bilingual programs have been demonstrated repeatedly, pointing to effective models and methods. Such is the case of García (2012), in which the SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) was implemented with third graders in ESL and science classes, taking into account state standards as well. This curricular design

was implemented according to the linguistic and academic needs, and to observe the main characteristics applied during the lessons.

Another study in Bolivia and Mozambique showed the benefits of bilingual schooling, which, according to the researcher, offers developing countries a way to improve delivery of quality basic education to linguistically diverse populations (Benson, 2005). The study pointed out several pedagogical benefits, including comprehensible content area instruction, mother tongue language and literacy competence upon which to build L2 skills. Findings are consistent, even in economically limited contexts. According to the review, other benefits have been documented in many cases, such as increased pride in the home language and culture, higher self-esteem, improved learners' participation and greater classroom interaction.

Research on students' outcomes in immersion programs, especially in one-way and two-way programs, and with linguistic minority and majority students, has demonstrated a positive impact on academic achievement in content areas, as well as first and second language competence. Most of these studies have focused on academic achievement, specifically on students' ability to succeed in standardized tests. Therefore, few studies of oral language, literacy development, or cross-cultural attitudes have been done (Lindholm-Leary, 2011).

BILINGUALISM IN COLOMBIA

Several studies report positive results of bilingual education programs in Colombia. Such is the case of Ordóñez (2011), whose research aimed to evaluate the impact of a bilingual curriculum on teaching and learning in school. The results proved positive as during the first year, both teachers and students used communicative skills to support the development of their practices. Particularly, the use of both Spanish and English helped participants contribute and go beyond in communicative performances. Motivation, autonomy, and responsibility were also important factors that enabled students to complement their learning, as well as the awareness of the need for work, initiative, and mutual help.

Similarly, Montería, Romero and Pájaro (2016) found that the creation of bilingual scenarios facilitated the promotion of English language learning, and the students felt the need to use the target language in different contexts. These scenarios also maximized learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom. As a result, the performance of eleventh graders on national standardized tests improved considerably. Students' motivation also increased.

In terms of the broader school community, Aljure, et al. (2010) looked at teachers, parents, students, ex-students, and administrators in seven private schools. The study sought to discover what parents know about bilingualism, as well as their expectations and conceptions about the purpose of being in a bilingual program. The findings show that parents agree with bilingual education for their children and the necessity of exposing them to different contents in classes.

Another study in Cali inquired into the necessary support for student achievement in a bilingual program (Miranda & Echeverry, 2010). The study analyzed and described the infrastructure and resources of a group of private schools from different socioeconomic levels, and how these two variables are directly connected to the implementation of Colombia's National

Bilingualism Program. The study found that these resources are necessary to implement a successful bilingualism program, and that some school infrastructures do not support effective learning or teaching due to inadequate conditions.

In a further study, the same researchers explored classroom methodologies and actions taken to implement bilingual programs, as well as the attitudes and expectations of the school community. Results pointed out the importance of integration among teachers, students, and parents in terms of the school's Institutional Educational Project, which sometimes does not follow national standards (Miranda & Echeverry, 2011).

In terms of teachers' attitudes, Trujillo (2015) looked at the bilingualism project in Bogotá, and the ways in which teachers have faced the transition towards bilingualism. Further, the study sought to come up with a proposal that could address the needs and concerns of the school. Findings identified different needs at the school that directly affect teachers' attitudes. These needs must be met in order to guarantee students' language and content acquisition and L2 proficiency level, including the following:

- Implementation of clear short and long-term goals

- More investment in resources according to school needs

- Training in L2 for teachers

- Curriculum accommodations

- Teachers' knowledge and expertise

- Specialized consulting to focus the project properly

- Training in CLIL or CBI methodologies

At the end of the study, teachers argued that despite their interest in participating actively, there are many issues that they cannot address due to the lack of governmental support as well as and administrative responsibilities. In consequence, the research came up with a proposal that explains in detail how teachers' attitudes would change if the needs mentioned above were completely covered. The proposal includes aspects like the language learning approach (CLIL), teacher training and participation strategies, materials development, cultural and intercultural competences, and development of teachers' L2 language skills.

Following this, another study concerning the Bogotá bilingualism project sought to identify conceptions of principals, administrators, and teachers in public school communities and the extent to which bilingualism has been implemented so far. Bermúdez, Fandiño and Ramírez (2014) designed and applied a descriptive study that showed significant outcomes as follows:

- A four-year bilingualism implementation has been developed from preschool to second grade in these public schools.

- English is seen as means to access better academic opportunities and improve living standard within the school.

- At least 50% of interviewed population considered the program as favorable and beneficial for public education and for the city.

- Science is the subject that most of the schools have used to implement the CLIL approach.

- Most of interviewed population argued lack of knowledge and information on the stages of bilingualism at the school, which after four years indicates serious weaknesses in the implementation of the project.

- Teacher qualifications must be permanent and include further training in bilingualism theory and methodology, intercultural competence, and the CLIL approach.

- The main difficulty reported by teachers is their language skills and lack of methodological expertise to develop bilingual processes accurately.

Private schools in Colombia are often associated with bilingual education. Most of them provide at least intensive foreign language programs or are long-established bilingual schools (de Mejía, 2002). However, since all schools need to follow the government directives, these schools need to change their curricula in order to comply with national and international standards when offering bilingual education. Consequently, private schools have also conducted different studies about the implementation of bilingualism in terms of incorporating the teaching of at least one core area – content learning in English or increasing the hours of exposure to L2 in through cross curricular projects.

Such is the case of a study recently made in a private school from Bogotá (García, 2016), in which language teachers were asked to participate in the bilingual project for teaching math without professional background in the subject. The research explored teachers' concerns and opinions regarding the methodological strategy proposed, whose main purpose was to provide pedagogical support in math teaching for bilingual and language educators. The findings among teachers were very beneficial for the school since they contributed to the design of theoretical and practical workshops for teaching math in foreign language. However, the study also reviewed a list of needs that the school must address in order to succeed in the bilingual project, such as designing and applying effective strategies to integrate those core areas within a process of language acquisition, teacher training in the CLIL approach, as well as addressing the lack of a pedagogical model for instruction in math. There is also a need to display appropriate academic content related to learners' cultural environment, and use graded language and activities that include differentiation in order to facilitate learning. The study found that it is also important to state clear outcomes in terms of language and concepts.

A study performed in another private school in Bogotá exhibited very similar outcomes when including social studies content in foreign language classes, which created a disruptive attitude among teachers. The research (Arango, 2010) intended to identify English teachers' responses towards the transition and the relationship between teaching-learning in foreign language and academic content. Findings show that although teachers agree that including social studies content in L2 classes enhances language acquisition and thinking, they did not support the

proposal of inclusion, nor did they change their negative ideas about the project due to their lack of consensus and the lack of a direct relationship among topics. Teachers explained that providing this content in English classes does not allow thorough explanation of some concepts related directly with the Colombian context. Therefore, teachers remained opposed because they had minimal information about the CBI approach adopted. Consequently, school administrators redefined the project, analyzing the influential factors in the transition towards bilingualism in order to guarantee social and academic success along the learning process.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIL AND CBI

Considerable studies have evaluated the impact of CLIL and CBI in diverse contexts to view the effectiveness and challenges of these programs. In general, these studies once again point to possible positive outcomes of such programs; however, institutional support for teachers becomes an important variable in achieving positive gains for students. In general, CLIL and CBI have been found to boost English language learning processes by providing challenging and interesting content; nevertheless, CLIL and CBI have not fared so well in terms of replacing the first language as the primary vehicle for learning academic core content.

One exploratory study examined the implementation of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) from three different perspectives: the teachers' profile, the methodology used in the classes, and the sources of knowledge (Cano Blandón, 2015). Teachers were found not to have training in CBI. For this reason, they lacked the ability to use materials and visual aids to integrate content and language, or to develop higher order thinking skills. Moreover, the majority of the classes examined were teacher-centered, focused on students' understanding of concepts, disregarding the acquisition of the language.

Another study focused on school teachers (Griva, Chostelidou, & Panteli, 2016) asked participants about their views in relation to CLIL in the context of Greek primary education. Questions focused on teachers' experience with CLIL, the characteristics of CLIL, competences needed by CLIL teachers, integration of CLIL into the curriculum, and training. The data shows that teachers acknowledge the challenge of integrating CLIL and its favorable role in upgrading both the foreign language and content. The participants agreed on the necessity of being trained in CLIL in order to develop the skills required, such as identifying students' needs, introducing formative and summative assessment, cooperating with colleagues, and using a variety of learning approaches.

Related findings emerge from Lancaster (2016), who analyzed the perspectives of students and teachers about CLIL in eight secondary schools. Results show that most students strongly believe they have improved their English as a result of their participation in bilingual education. However, both students and teachers believe that the connection between L1 and L2 should be emphasized more. Nevertheless, students' attitudes improved as a result of the incorporation of authentic, interesting, and innovative materials and new methodologies. In another study, Kovács (2012) found that CLIL contributes to linguistic communication, content competence and interaction, use of the information and communication technology, learning to learn skills, social skills, self-government, and individual initiative.

Núñez (2015) reported the perceptions of students in a BA program: their emotions, struggles, benefits, and opinions related to taking content and language integrated learning classes. According to the findings, students perceive the benefits of taking CLIL classes by being able to use the language in a different context and improving their academic skills. Additionally, they had positive perceptions of the CLIL classes in relation to how the teachers (Spanish speakers) spoke the language of instruction and the class in general.

Conversely, some studies have focused on the perspective of experienced teachers who have extended experience with the CLIL approach. In their study with primary school teachers analyzing the effects of one-year exposure to CLIL, Infante, Benvenuto, and Lastrucci (2009) found that CLIL is a positive experience that benefits cognitive dimension, allows students to master the fundamental concepts of content, and motivates them to learn because it involves them in an interesting way. Some disadvantages identified were the absence of collaboration in the planning stage, the difficulties in integrating content and language and in creating authentic and real settings in the classroom, as well as the lack of CLIL materials. Further, teachers' professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and arranging activities that promote the development of thinking skills are crucial in developing a CLIL approach, in addition to offering a communicative environment where the students can feel free to express themselves without any anxiety.

One case study intended to explain how some of the characteristics of a content-based English class could be taken into account to implement CLIL. This research concluded that the content-based English class met various principles, such as language methodology and assessment. By contrast, the 4Cs framework in CLIL (communication, content, culture and cognition) needs to be deeply understood and developed by teachers and students before implementing CLIL. As mentioned in previous studies, teachers should be trained on CLIL so that they can promote opportunities for the students to develop the four skills, and recognize the learners' effort and success. Beyond this, there is the need to improve the language component in order to be in accordance with the standards of CLIL in terms of language of learning, for learning and through learning (Mariño, 2014).

Gallardo and Martinez (2013) reviewed the findings of several studies in Spain to conclude if it is more effective learning a foreign language in a CLIL context. The examination revealed that CLIL programs achieve greater communicative competence in foreign language; however, these programs vary significantly from one region to another in regards to the language of instruction, the subjects taught, the amount of exposure, and the level of competence of the teachers in the L2. Furthermore, participants in CLIL programs perform better than students in traditional FL classes. Several studies indicate superiority by CLIL students in terms of both their receptive skills (listening and reading) and their productive skills (speaking and writing) when compared with students of the same age in traditional learning context, and even when compared with older students.

Interventions in relation to the effect of teaching CLIL or CBI methodology on teachers have shown that teachers struggle principally with the idea of teaching language through content. Additionally, they find it difficult to promote the use of higher-order thinking skills in their students while delivering a class in a foreign language (Cammarata, 2010). In a similar study, Moseley and Utley (2006) conducted an intervention in which preservice elementary teachers

attended a content-based course (integrated mathematics and science content), and a larger group of teachers was enrolled in a methodology course. The research contrasted the efficacy and outcomes of the two groups, and revealed visible progress in terms of teachers' content knowledge and its repercussion on the effectiveness towards their teaching practice.

Alternative studies investigated the differences between a CLIL science lesson and a regular science class. Gabillon and Ailincai (2013) found that in young learners the CLIL approach was successful; nevertheless, in that age a rich extra-linguistic context is necessary, as well as socially mediated activity design. CLIL approach in beginner levels needed to evolve gradually from teacher-learner mediated to peer-mediated activities. During the lessons, the dialogic interrelations usually took place between teacher and learners, and these exchanges were used to scaffold content and language learning in the CLIL context. There were not any significant differences in the learners' classroom behaviors. By contrast, learners appeared more confident during the subject lessons in which they used their mother tongue. However, Suárez (2013) points out that the object of knowledge in a science class is not hindered by the integration or the use of the second language. Students are able to communicate using simple sentences in the foreign language and articulate their own ideas from previous experiences.

Student outcomes in CLIL and CBI contexts. Despite the challenges of implementing CBI and CLIL, many studies point to the benefits of these approaches. Most of these research studies point out that CLIL and CBI educational approaches promote active and meaningful learning processes where students show positive attitude and enhancement of learning, not only in language development but also in acquisition of content knowledge.

A study conducted by Griva and Korosidou (2014) about the effects of CLIL on students' skill performance revealed positive effects on students' cognitive and communicative skills, students' enhancement of content knowledge, and improvement in students' cultural sensitivity and awareness. Additionally, students working with CLIL stated that they considered they had learned in a relaxed environment where learning English was fun.

In a subsequent experimental study, Griva and Korosidou (2016) examined the design, implementation, and evaluation of a project based on CLIL principles. This project included story-based learning, as well as game-based and task-based frameworks. The researchers found that there was considerable improvement regarding students' receptive and productive skills in the target language when implementing CLIL; additionally, the findings of the project indicated students were engaged in cooperative activities during the learning process, and developed citizenship awareness and sensitivity towards diversity.

Yamano (2013) analyzed the potential of CLIL for primary schools, comparing CLIL and non-CLIL instruction in Japanese primary schools. Twenty-two percent of the students were children with learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The results of this study revealed that CLIL has the potential to foster a positive attitude in students, even those with learning difficulties, toward the target language. CLIL classes promoted deeper learning of language, comprehension of the content, enjoyment of the lesson, active students' participation, and satisfaction. CLIL classes also helped to develop higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).

Other research studies and projects consider the benefits when implementing CLIL or CBI approaches in terms of students' skill improvement, development of content knowledge,

collaboration, and enjoyment. Herrán (2015) implemented CLIL in science instruction in a Colombian public school. The project implemented CLIL as a tool to teach and improve second language acquisition processes. The results show that the students improved their outcomes in the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), and significantly enriched their pronunciation and vocabulary; consequently, with the findings mentioned, the students gained knowledge, which encouraged a positive learning environment.

Research to determine differences in terms of linguistic outcomes and academic content competence levels comparing CLIL and non-CLIL students was developed by Lorenzo, Casal, and Moore (2009). The researchers analyzed the impact of CLIL in the acquisition process, and the educational effects of CLIL beyond the L2. The participant selection for this project was organized in line with three major variables: urban/ rural, primary/secondary education, and L2 (English, French and German). Findings indicate that CLIL learners showed greater gains than their monolingual peers. This project also noted that CLIL has the potential to provide an extremely rich language learning environment; therefore, the researchers concluded that CLIL is beneficial to the educational process in general.

In another experimental study developed by Mattheoudakis, Alexiou and Laskaridou (2014), the aim was to investigate the effect of CLIL instruction on learners' language competence in English and in content knowledge. It was shown in the results that CLIL students' content knowledge was not negatively affected by the use of English as a medium of instruction; in fact, CLIL learners performed better on tests than non-CLIL learners. Additionally, the findings indicated that CLIL practice had a positive impact on foreign language learning in primary educational contexts.

Reyes and Bolivar, (2015) intended to find out if it was viable to implement CLIL approach as a tool to teach English in content subjects in a public school in Bogotá. The results of the study showed that the implementation of CLIL approach had a positive impact on both content knowledge and language learning. The study also revealed that the English learning process was strengthened by the vocabulary and speaking exercises worked on in the science class. Moreover, CLIL proved to be a tool to motivate students towards second language acquisition.

San Román (2016) presented a research about the impact of a program called "CLIL Maestro" on the improvement of students' performance. This research was carried out among a group of fourteen teachers and 6th graders from a school in Madrid. The results of this project pointed out that a good CLIL teacher can foster excellent results inside the classroom; thus, a significant improvement in students' outcomes is possible as a consequence of CLIL implementation.

A study carried out by Rojas Ruiz, (2011) among 10th grade students sought to investigate the appropriateness of CBI in the music class. The findings of this project showed that implementing CBI fostered language and culture comprehension; furthermore, it promoted students' awareness, participation, motivation, and interest in development and improvement of their linguistic ability. This research showed that CBI implementation became a new learning experience where students learned meaningfully.

In studies reviewed by Genesee and Lindholm-Leary (2013), results discussed showed that extended CBI was effective in promoting high levels of functional proficiency in the L2. CBI was as effective for students who begin the program in the later years of their schooling as

for students who begin in elementary school, in some cases, especially with respect to L2 achievement. Researchers found that both majority and minority language students achieved at least grade appropriate levels of achievement in academic subjects, and in some cases, higher levels than those of comparable students in monolingual programs.

Some research studies on CLIL and CBI have focused on vocabulary development (Agustín-Llach & Canga Alonso, 2014). Researchers analyzed the patterns of lexical growth in CLIL and traditional EFL learners to compare their vocabulary development across grades. This research project looked at both CLIL and non-CLIL learners from 4th, 5th and 6th grades of primary school. The results showed that differences in the vocabulary size increased with grade, age and proficiency, which co-occur; thus, in the 4th grade, differences in the vocabulary size of CLIL and non-CLIL learners were not significant; however, they became significant in the 5th grade and even more in the 6th grade. At the same time, the findings exhibited that CLIL learners obtained slightly better results, which translate in a bigger vocabulary size. Consequently, CLIL learners incorporated more words every year than non-CLIL learners. The research concluded that the CLIL approach offers a benefit for vocabulary acquisition, which grows as experience with the approach, age and proficiency augment.

Another research study related to vocabulary was carried out by Canga (2015). This research intended to compare the receptive vocabulary size of CLIL primary learners with that of non-CLIL learners at the end of primary and secondary school. These findings indicated that the CLIL approach offers a benefit for vocabulary acquisition since CLIL learners have been exposed to the foreign language for a shorter period of time and the results are quite similar to their non-CLIL secondary school partners. Therefore, longer exposure to English input indicates that CLIL learners have an advantage in general receptive vocabulary size.

A study on thinking and learning processes of mathematics and science in teaching through a foreign language was developed in Finland by Jäppinen (2005). This study was carried out among Finnish mainstream L1 learners aged 7–15 in a public comprehensive school. The experimental group was taught in English, French or Swedish, and it was compared with a control group taught in the mother tongue. The positive outcomes from this study mean that teaching through a foreign language supports CLIL learners' thinking and content learning; thus, CLIL environments offer favorable conditions for thinking and content learning in mathematics and science.

Innovation plays an important role in the field of students' outcomes in CLIL and CBI context (Dourda, Bratitsis, Griva & Papadopoulou, 2014). This study explored new teaching methods in order to enhance the skills needed for future citizens in a digital society. Additionally, they searched for ways in which the learning takes place within a system where a computer game has the role of the educational material in a CLIL context. The results show evidence of considerable improvement in students' content knowledge, vocabulary, reading and writing skills. At the same time, the findings show that students let their imagination free and produced authentic texts, increased their use of memory strategies, and enhanced problem solving skills and critical thinking; moreover, students learned to work in a group and became autonomous learners.

Another study carried out by Theologou and Papadopoulos (2015) sought to analyze students' development of their language, metacognitive and metalinguistic skills. Additionally, this study

attempted to investigate the efficacy and potential advantages of students' developing material and implementing a content-based program based on the principles of the learning communities in English language. The results indicate that students showed considerable development in their language, metacognitive and metalinguistic skills through advancing content and language knowledge. Students also managed to direct their own learning in a learning community context, and developed ways of dealing with complex issues and problems that required different kinds of linguistic expertise. Findings also revealed that students' participation and their active involvement led them to continually strengthen their four language skills in English; furthermore, students improved their critical thinking skills and talents.

Teachers' perspectives and outcomes using CLIL and CBI. Implementing bilingualism in institutions is a broad concern for administrators and educators in general, who face the challenge of reformulating their curriculum and adapting new methodologies or teaching models like CLIL or CBI. For this reason, a variety of studies have been carried out in order to know and analyze the perspectives, opinions, and beliefs of the school community towards this transitional process, as well as the effectiveness of these approaches in students' learning.

Over the last decade, interest in CLIL has spread exponentially in Europe and beyond, as many teachers, learners, parents, researchers and policy-makers have realized the potential of CLIL and interpreted this potential in very different ways; for example, Spain is rapidly becoming one of the European leaders in CLIL practice and research due to the richness of its cultural and linguistic diversity (Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). Asia and Europe can provide us with many examples of CLIL implementation with positive outcomes, as well as negative perspectives and experiences which lead educators and administrators towards improvement and sustainable changes.

Such is the case of Pena and Porto (2008), two Spanish researchers who developed a study with monolingual primary schools in Madrid with the purpose of discussing different issues and needs for implementing effectively bilingualism through CLIL. The research found that although teachers are quite interested in the process and astonished by the positive outcomes of CLIL lessons, they feel anxiety and fear about the way of teaching through this method and have difficulties abandoning old conceptions in favor of innovative ones. Even though teachers are learning within the project, they are preoccupied with their proficiency level and training, which may impact the effectiveness and well-delivering of lessons when teaching through CLIL.

Effectiveness when delivering CLIL lessons is another topic often discussed among teachers and educators since there are different issues that can transform the classroom into teacher-centered lessons instead of promoting social practice and student-centered instruction. A recent research conducted by Pavón and Rubio (2010) in Spain explored teachers' concerns and uncertainties about the introduction of CLIL programs and the adoption of new curriculum integrating linguistic material, methodological needs, teaching implementation and creation of teaching units in CLIL. According to the researchers, the effectiveness of CLIL rests not only on whether subject teachers have a certain level of linguistic excellence, but also on a real organization of the curriculum and the correct use of methodology in the two areas: linguistic and non-linguistic. The research concluded that learning in CLIL is still rather teacher–centered; moreover, the design and use of materials has been shown to have a considerable effect on learning results. Other teachers from the study see language as a social practice or a tool for communication,

rather than work experience or CLIL training; for some others, language appears to be a set of words or a system managed by syntax because the lack of adequate language creates great unease among teachers.

Another research with regard to CLIL effectiveness (Solano, 2015) was carried out in Spain, where bilingualism was implemented in a public school during the last year. This study intended to find out the opinions and concerns from primary English and Spanish teachers about the transition to CLIL approach, previously selected by the school. The study was also aimed at evaluating their proficiency level and linguistic skills, method effectiveness, and the influence of bilingual education through different experiences. The research found that English and Spanish teachers had divided views towards the bilingual project, due to students' learning outcomes. Spanish teachers argued that the students had difficulty reaching the goals in some subjects because they are provided in both languages, which implies more explanation about grammatical rules. They also argued that the methodology is not appropriate for developing math skills because CLIL implementation was abruptly imposed without teachers' understanding and training. In contrast, English teachers endorse the bilingual project and CLIL approach as students' outcomes are positive and their linguistic skills improved along the year. The study concluded that without appropriate teacher education programs, the full potential of CLIL is unlikely to be realized and the approach unsustainable.

Compared to the previous research, with more favorable outcomes, Borda (2012) reviewed general aspects of CLIL approach and its effectiveness in the learning process. Borda interviewed secondary teachers who applied CLIL since the school became bilingual. Results showed very positive opinions among teachers towards this approach since students' outcomes revealed CLIL effectiveness in the classroom due to its flexible, active, and engaging nature, which allow students to be motivated during the classes. Teachers also affirmed that CLIL provided the best conditions for L2 learning, as it offers more exposure to a foreign language and a great variety of communicative situations in natural contexts, which foster meaningful learning. Its benefits enhance teachers' cooperative work, level of satisfaction and academic outcomes, granting the school an innovative experience.

Similar findings can be seen in Herrero (2014), who explored the transition in teaching and learning processes through the use of the CLIL among different bilingual schools in Madrid community. The study focused on the bilingual project's goals and stages, assessment criteria, and teacher training in order to determine the effectiveness of the bilingual program in Madrid schools and particularly how CLIL approach has guaranteed effective teaching and learning. The study found that bilingual education through CLIL leads to the improvement of linguistic skills in students, who are able to use the language as a communication tool while learning content and specific knowledge. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for practitioners and learners to collaborate among research communities in order to better understand the complexities and implications of using languages as effective learning tools and make fundamental contributions to bilingualism at the national or local level.

Indeed, the function of language and its accurate use is one of the main concerns among educators, but also the implementation of effective CLIL teaching strategies into the classroom which facilitates language development and proficiency (Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007). The study analyzed effective CLIL performance of teachers in Dutch CLIL secondary

schools in history, geography, biology, math, English, and arts and crafts. Researchers observed and analyzed lessons based on the following principles from second language pedagogy, a) exposure to input, b) content-oriented processing, c) form-oriented processing, d) output and e) strategic language use. At the end of the study, researchers indicated that teachers are aware of different issues in advance, like text selection, text adaptation, and teacher talk; however, they had to pay more attention to the their L2 language level when selecting the texts. This is because subject teachers feel that explaining forms and giving rules is the domain of the EFL teacher.

Language support in CLIL and CBI. There are several studies that report positive results when implementing CLIL and CBI models in terms of language support in bilingual education at schools, which may lead to the development of a successful bilingual teaching. These studies explored students and teachers' needs in different contexts of learning-teaching practice.

A study performed in Colombia observed first graders and a math teacher in order to explore the types of scaffolding and instructions in CLIL lessons to achieve success in learning experience. Outcomes recognized the importance of visual aids when learning linguistic competences and the use of code-switching to make explanations more comprehensible (Corzo Zambrano & Robles Noriega, 2011). It also suggested the need for a balance between teachers and students through the use of mother tongue to support content learning in second language classrooms.

A similar study in Spain (Lasagabaster, 2013) looked at teachers' perspectives on the use of L1 in CLIL lessons. Teachers reported that the use of L1 in CLIL classes supports the explanation of concepts that are abstract or cognitively demanding. It also helps to scaffold language and content learning, to promote anxiety-free environment, to build self-confidence and to encourage students to participate in context with complex topics (Lasagabaster, 2013). The research concluded that the use of L1 can be grouped in five main categories as follows: a) to help students understanding; b) to make L1 and L2 comparisons; c) to feel comfortable in the CLIL class; d) to boost debate and e) to deal with disciplinary issues.

Nikula (2002) looked at interaction differences in English and CLIIL classes. Nikula found that in English classes, the teacher paid attention to the language as a code or a system, grammar was taught in L1, and the teacher dedicated much of classroom talk to discuss about grammatical aspects of the language. In CLIL math lessons, the language only became an issue when the students were unsure about how certain things are expressed in English and the teacher provided them with lexical information.

In another study in Spain, researchers observed the attitudes and perceptions of Spanish and English teachers, their linguistic proficiency skills, satisfaction level towards bilingualism, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of CLIL approach. The researcher found that CLIL supported the development of linguistic competences and improved the learning of contents in English language. On the contrary, in the case of Spanish classes, the mother tongue competences did not achieve the expectations of teachers in this institution (Solano, 2015).

Engagement and motivation in CLIL and CBI. Research on motivation and engagement using CLIL or content-based learning instruction (CBLI) methodology has focused on students' attitudes toward the class and the teachers' instruction. In general, findings point to the positive effect of CLIL on student motivation and engagement in English language learning. In a study with first grade students in a private school, Huang (2011) analyzed and observed

English language students to determine the effects of CBLI on motivation in terms of behavior, attention, engagement and interaction. Results show that students are more enthusiastic to volunteer and participate more in subject learning classes than in English as a foreign language classes.

In the same way, data drawn from an observation of three CBLI lessons taught by the same teacher, Kong and Hoare (2011) found that when teachers focus the content on academic knowledge, which is challenging to the students, they are more engaged and able to explore the content. Moreover, planning is crucial in CBLT pedagogy, especially to guarantee challenging content and content objectives that contribute to understanding.

A study made by Lasagabaster and Lopez-Beloqui (2015) analyzed the effect of the type of approach and methodology on different types of motivation in primary students. The two types of approaches studied are CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and EFL (English as a foreign language). The study revealed that CLIL has a positive effect on students' integrative and intrinsic motivation, and increases students' interest in interacting and learning about the culture of the second language.

A similar study looked at students enrolled in CLIL approach versus traditional foreign language classes. Researchers analyzed the effect of CLIL on students' attitudes towards English as a foreign language and concluded that CLIL programs help to promote positive attitudes for language learning in general. Furthermore, the use of the foreign language to teach content has a strong impact on students' attitudes because it contributes to provide meaningful opportunities to use the target language (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009).

Fidalgo (2012) analyzed the impact of CLIL programs on the development of motivation in learning a second language. According to the findings, students feel more motivated in classes where they have leisure activities like arts or drawing. Likewise, with CLIL approach, students feel motivated to learn a second language rather than those who take traditional foreign language classes. Tejedor (2015) found that CLIL develops knowledge, intercultural understanding, and improves the language skills and oral communication in a FL. Additionally, students develop interest in studying content from different perspectives using the FL.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to recognize the influence of the context in human behavior and perspectives, the methodology used in this research was based on qualitative, naturalistic and ethnographic study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). As such, this study intended to examine educators' perspectives and behaviors in order to analyze the effectiveness of CLIL implementation at the *Colegio Jordan de Sajonia*. The qualitative methodology used in this project allowed researchers to collect data themselves by examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants to interpret information and develop a picture of the issue identifying multiple factors.

CONTEXT

The *Colegio Jordan de Sajonia* is a private school located in Bogotá. It is a Catholic institution with a socio-critical pedagogical model and a learning communities approach that aims to educate students as citizens with values and the necessary knowledge to guide their lives and contribute to them as leaders in the growth of society. The school is divided into three branches: *Infantil* from pre-K to third grade, *Junior* from fourth to seventh grade, and *Senior* from eighth to eleventh grade. The *Infantil* section has an Academic Coordinator, but currently there is no Bilingual Coordinator.

Beginning in 2012, the school began planning a bilingualism project in order to be in concordance with the National Bilingualism Program (2004-2019) established by *Ministerio de Educación* in 2004. The bilingual project aims to offer comprehensive education, preparing competent and qualified people who are able to use both oral and written language in Spanish and English in academic, social, and working environments.

In the initial stage of the plan, a document was prepared to support the proposal theoretically and methodologically. A pilot phase was to be implemented in order to assess the feasibility of the project. During the second semester (October, November and December), the pilot phase was implemented in pre-school (Kindergarten 4 and 5). A CLIL approach was proposed due to the positive findings of this methodology. During this phase, math and science were delivered using CLIL. Additionally, worksheets and activities were designed to evaluate and observe how children responded to this type of learning. The outcomes were noticeably positive, and the students were greatly receptive to those activities and educational model. For this reason, the bilingualism project was formally established the following year with the purpose of increasing it progressively through fifth grade.

In 2013, the project began again in pre-school (Kindergarten 4 and 5), and included four hours of math, two of science, and two for social studies. English, with nine hours a week, continued to be taught as a core subject supporting processes and content developed in the other subjects. Although students showed progress and teachers covered the content, they were unaware of the methodology and the language approaches necessary to develop content and higher order thinking skills on the students.

In 2014 and 2015, the school executed the project through first grade and changed to a partial immersion (50-50) program in the same areas. The program also sought to implement the preview-review and team-teaching methods, reviewing and strengthening the lessons in both languages. Students in second and third grade began taking two hours of science classes in English. Since 2016, the project has proceeded as initially planned, providing the core subjects in English, with the exception of social studies. Additionally, the approximation in fourth and fifth grade expanded to two hours of math, in addition to the two hours of science previously mentioned.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants involved in this project included twenty full-time teachers from Kindergarten to fifth grade at the *Colegio Jordán de Sajonia*. Among this group of teachers, there is a wide range in terms of academic preparation and teaching experience. Some hold a degree in foreign language teaching, others are university graduates in education with English knowledge; only a minority are professionals in other fields with knowledge in English, and just a few of them are undertaking postgraduate studies. Teachers' experience ranges from one year to ten years. All of the teachers participating in this project have Spanish as their L1 and teach content in math or science in English.

The principal of the school, the vice principal, and two academic coordinators were also included as participants. Interviews were conducted with these individuals in order to have information regarding their knowledge of and perspectives about the bilingual program implemented in the school.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The instruments of this research aimed at gathering reliable and authentic information about teachers' knowledge, perspectives, and practices in order to explore complex situations within educators' reality and current teaching at school. As such, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations enabled this research to triangulate the findings and answer the inquiries proposed.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed and carried out with teachers involved in the bilingual project at the school in order to analyze their professional background and understanding of the CLIL methodology, as well as the way in which those variables were related with the effectiveness of teaching practices at school (See Appendix A).

Observation. Classroom observations were performed in order to analyze teachers' practices when delivering CLIL lessons, their awareness of CLIL theory and methods, and the efficacy of the CLIL used. The observations were carried out with all bilingual teachers from K4 to fifth grade.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently held in order to explore not only teachers' but also the principal and vice principal's opinions with regard to the execution and effectiveness of the bilingual project at school. This type of interview enabled the participants to express their points of view more deeply and in reference to the other data gathered (See Appendix B).

Reflective field journals. A reflective journal, meaning a personal account of an educational experience, allowed researchers to document the positive or negative events throughout the process in order to analyze the topics covered and articulate our opinions about the subject matter.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to analyze and code data, graphic displays, tabulation, and quantification were conducted through different procedures. Common and recurrent information was analyzed in order to identify key categories or clusters.

Teacher questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on a Likert Scale with four ordered response level (totally agree, agree, disagree and totally disagree) (See Appendix A). The information collected through the questionnaires was classified, quantified, tabulated, and graphed in order to see how the teachers responded to each question. Questions 1 to 3 were yes-no questions while questions 4 to 12 were structured on the Likert Scale. Researchers then constructed bar graphs to show the results of each question in order to observe frequencies, and one category on CLIL knowledge resulted from this data.

Class observation. Researchers observed 12 teachers' classes from K5 to 5th grade. The information gathered was transcribed and analyzed, and categories emerged representing common and recurrent themes. These included the use of L1, instructional strategies, language proficiency, use of resources and classroom management. This analysis was then compared with that of the questionnaires in relation to teachers' knowledge about the bilingual project and the CLIL approach proposed for its implementation.

Interviews. Based on the information collected from the questionnaire and the class observation, a list of questions was created for follow-up interviews (Appendix B). Twelve teachers from K5 to 5th grade, two coordinators, the school vice-principal, and the principal were interviewed for about 20 minutes. These interviews were recorded and transcribed in the native language, and from the data gathered, some new categories emerged including the impact of the bilingual project, teacher training, teachers' academic preparation, teachers' proposals for improvement, parental support, use of resources, use of L1, CLIL knowledge, and language proficiency.

RESULTS

Analysis of the data allowed for the answering of the research questions in terms of the conditions for the effective implementation of the CLIL approach in the Colegio Jordán de Sajonia. In general, it is possible to say that the conditions do not currently exist for the successful implementation of CLIL. Although a formal curricular document exists, and school members are aware of the project, there is a general lack of information and knowledge about the approach by all members of the community, including school administration. As a result, classroom practices reflect a lack of knowledge, preparation and training in order to successfully implement CLIL. Teachers lack both language proficiency in English as well as content area knowledge. Further, classroom observations evidence a general lack of clear or effective instructional strategies for CLIL.

Teachers in general report a high degree of unawareness of the details of the school bilingualism project and the approach proposed for its implementation. This lack of awareness is such that members of the community are also unaware of the need for training in CLIL. Consequently,

the school does not provide specialized teacher training focused towards application of the CLIL approach, resulting in the lack of knowledge about how a class should be structured in a bilingual context. The project is aimed at teaching content through a second language; however, the results show that teachers are unfamiliar with specific strategies that promote content learning. This includes the role and use of the mother tongue, which appears to be used indiscriminately during the classes. Further, despite the fact that teachers report that they use the resources provided by the school, there appears to be a lack of material or specialized spaces that might complement the learning and teaching process at school.

LACK OF CLIL KNOWLEDGE

According to the analysis of both the questionnaires and the interviews, teachers and administrators displayed little or inaccurate knowledge of the CLIL approach proposed by the school to implement the bilingual project. Only about half of the teachers reported that they are familiar with the CLIL approach. In spite of this, in the interviews only two teachers showed understanding of CLIL. For example, one teacher commented, *CLIL is a very good technique, because it develops the learning of any subject in second language using real context from daily situations to reach concepts.*[13] A few teachers expressed some ideas about CLIL, but they were very general, and far from the definition: *Yes, I know CLIL approach. It is about the integration of different things to be able to talk about the second language* and deliver a class in a second language. The rest of the interviewees admitted that they were not familiar with this methodology.

Despite their direct participation in the design and development of the project, school administrators also lacked information about CLIL, frequently confusing CLIL with national policies that provide for bilingualism in Colombia. For example, one administrator commented, *It is a national bilingualism focused on the communicative skills because we seek to learn to communicate, besides we want that the project has a reading approach.*

In the class observations, there was also clear evidence of the lack of instructional strategies for CLIL. Teachers showed unawareness of this approach as they delivered teacher-centered lessons, in which the teacher provided most of the instructions without allowing students work actively or collaboratively. An example of this could be seen in the transcription of a math class as follows:

> T: *Now write the date on your notebook and paste the activity*
>
> SS: *Muy fácil*
>
> T: *Very easy, in English*
>
> *(Students talking)*
>
> SS: *very easy*
>
> T: *Ready? Write date please, babies.*
>
> *(Students talking)*
>
> T: *Haga caso (Pay attention).*

> *Ready? Write date and start*
> *Ready?*
>
> SS: *Está very easy*
>
> SS: *Está very easy*
>
> T: *This activity is the same like the last class*
> *Write the number according to the block*
>
> SS: *¿Escribimos la fecha, pro? (We write the date, Teach?)*
>
> T: *yes, write the date, in English*
> *Luis Felipe…!!!*
>
> SS: *Teach, lo podemos hacer en grupo? (Teach, can we do it in groups?)*
>
> T: *Nooo, es individual.*
>
> *Write the number according to the block, and later color*
> *The thousand what color is?*
>
> SS: *Mmmmm*
>
> T: *Red*
> *Hundreds?*
>
> SS: *Blue*
>
> T: *Blue, Tens?*
>
> SS: *green*
>
> SS: *yellow*
>
> T: *green…..and ones?*
>
> SS: *yellow*
>
> SS: *Very easy (students working in their notebook)*
>
> T: *Gabi, finish?*
> *Don't forget….*
>
> S: *Así teach?(Like this, Teach?)*
>
> SS: *(Students working quietly in their notebooks.)*

In this class, the teacher did not promote the collaborative work. She did not support the use of the second language nor enhance student participation in order to analyze and find the answers by themselves. There was no recall of previous knowledge since the class began immediately with a written activity, and the students were supposed to know what to do from the last class. The assessment at the end of this activity consisted merely in checking if the students finished the paper, and then ticking in students' notebooks, without measuring students' understanding of the topic.

Additionally, there was no clear evidence of the four-language skills integration and the four principles, which are the main features of CLIL approach. The class activities observed did not promote communication or the development of higher order thinking skills, which must

be observable throughout the classes as an evidence of learning, leading the students to adopt a passive role in class due to the teachers' methodology to deliver the lessons. They followed instructions, repeated, received and memorized information. They did not try to use the language to communicate; instead, they used the vocabulary when they were asked to or only to meet the teacher's requirement.

Regarding the official document (PEI), which is the basis for the school's bilingualism project, it clearly states CLIL as the approach proposed to deliver the lessons through different strategies, leading to the discovery and introduction of content more than the grammar structure of the language. However, the fact that educators and administrators lacked knowledge about this document has apparently interfered with the appropriate implementation of the project and its adequate execution. According to the interviews, most of the participants declared that they were not familiar with the official document: I do not know the document but I think that the project talks about the integration of English and so far, it is a step-by-step project with fifty percent in Spanish. However, during my classes I try to teach most of the time in English more than in Spanish. Another clear example is, I do not formally know the project, but I would say that it is a project that is being consolidated gradually.

TEACHER TRAINING

In terms of teacher's preparation, the school has held trainings on different strategies and didactics for subjects as math and science, as well as in the use of the platform and textbooks used at the school. According to the data gathered and tabulated from the questionnaire, almost twice the teachers reported that the training provided by the school has been helpful to enrich their knowledge and practice. However, numerous teachers also disagreed with the statement, as shown in Figure 1.
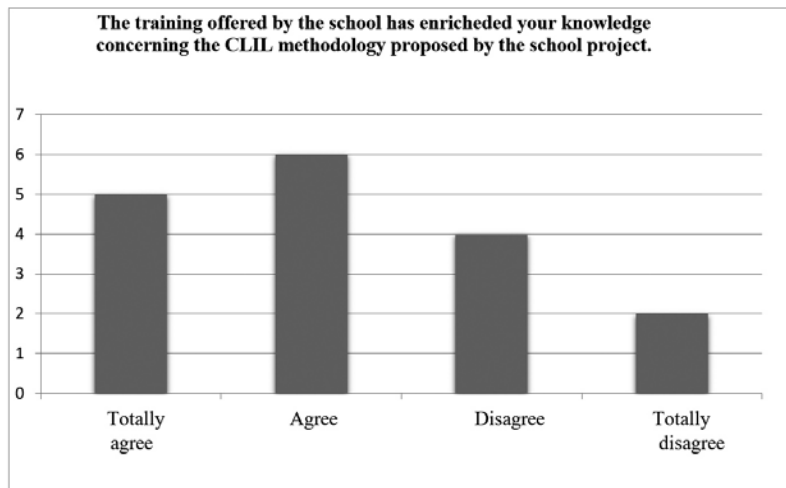

Figure 1. Teacher training

With regard to the interviews, all the teachers considered that preparation is extremely important to boost the bilingualism. However, they claimed that this training has not been focused on the approach: *We have had training, but the sessions have not been as much as we desire. These sessions were oriented on the use of platforms and textbooks from the publisher, but not specifically on the approach contemplated by the school for the bilingual project.* Another participant argued that the teacher's preparation must be permanent throughout the year: *I think that we could have more training during the year and not just at the end.*

Since researchers attended and participated in the teacher training, they had the opportunity to compare the knowledge acquired while researching this topic with the content covered during the sessions. Because of this, it is clear that the training has benefited the class delivery; nevertheless, it has not been focused on the approach of the bilingualism project. Training sessions were oriented mainly on different class techniques for academic purposes, such as problem solving with basic operations, strategies to develop mathematical thinking, the use of manipulatives and online resources, activities to build new vocabulary, among others. This lack of CLIL-specific training has limited the implementation of the bilingualism at school, leading to the in accurate use of the approach and interfering with the development of content and language learning.

ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

In terms of academic preparation, teachers possess a wide variety of professional profiles. Most of the teachers have a bachelor's degree in education; only one holds an engineering degree. For example, four teachers have pedagogical preparation from the university, but they learned the second language through English courses in Colombia or in English speaking countries. Five teachers graduated in languages with emphasis in English, one has an English teaching degree and another holds a bachelor's degree in bilingual education.

Overall, it is possible to identify several findings regarding the academic preparation and language proficiency, which also affects the teaching practices and learning processes. According to the questionnaire, the entirety of the teachers affirmed to be prepared to teach content through a second language, as displayed in Figure 2.
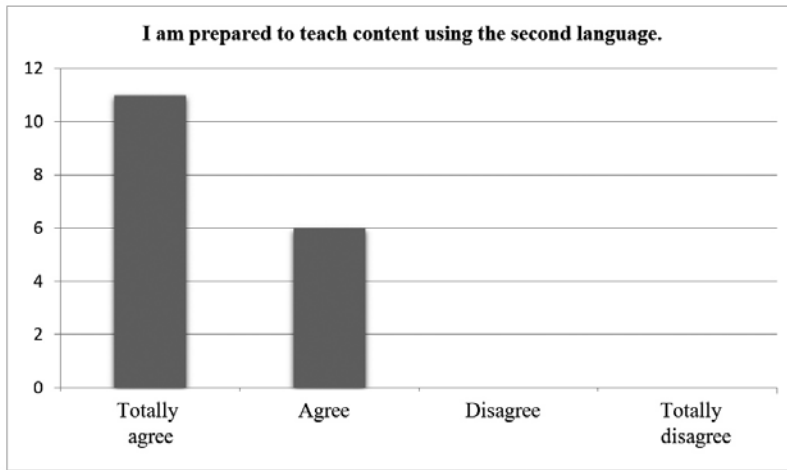
Figure 2. Confidence teaching content through a second language

In the interviews, teachers restated their confidence in their content teaching skills: I

feel prepared to teach content, it is a new challenge. / I think *I am prepared first, thanks to the academic preparation and second because I plan my classes to teach concepts using English.* However, during the class observations, researchers noticed the low level of English language proficiency of teachers and how this affected not only use of English, but more importantly, their ability to impart mathematical concepts and expressions in English. Specifically, pronunciation issues and use of false cognates were common: "*eich*" (each), "*place valú*", "*ekivalent*" (equivalent), "*substraction*" (subtraction), "*four*" (pronounced as written), "*dousands*" (Thousand), "*ubicate*" (located), "*sidawn*" (sit down), "*handup*" (hands up), among many others. Further, grammar and syntactical errors could also be observed: "*There are some person that have 5.*" "*What you do during your snack?*" "*Can erase the board?*" "*Are you listen to me? *"*You can expose with another model*" "*We as person*" "*People use to had*" "*We are going to do something more*" "*You have reason,*" among others. More importantly, teacher' lack of L2 proficiency frequently resulted in imprecision when expressing mathematical problems or other academic ideas: "*How many part I'm going to dividing my cake?*" "*What number means?*" "*What do the tree R's means?*"

Although the entirety of the teachers are university graduates who have learned English by different means, they lack specific preparation to teach content through a second language in spite of their confidence in their own preparation. Moreover, the results show their low level of language proficiency that interferes with their ability to provide accurate or appropriate models or input for students, especially when expressing mathematical problems or ideas.

USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE

The use of the native language (Spanish) in the CLIL approach is supported as a way to facilitate students' learning process, in which the L1 is used to encourage comprehension, clarify content,

and promote understanding leading to students reach academic success. In the questionnaires, teachers affirmed that the use of L1 is aimed at clarifying concepts, as seen in Figure 3. Similarly, in the interviews, most of the teachers argued that they use the L1 to reinforce content and sometimes to manage classroom behavior. One of the interviewees declared:

When I see that a student does not understand and he or she is struggling, I use the mother language to explain and obtain positive results.
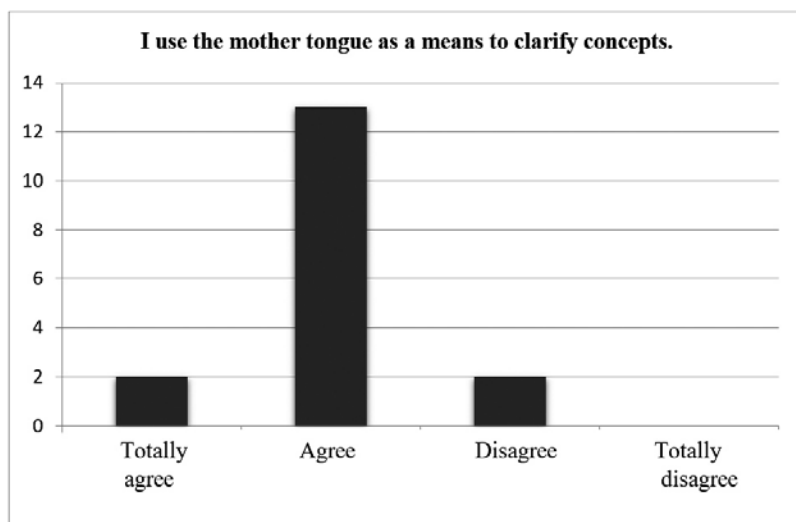
Figure 3. Use of the mother tongue

Another participant added, We must use the mother tongue when complex topics demand. Despite their beliefs and convictions about the use of L1, researchers noticed that teachers used the mother language indiscriminately, and extended this pattern to students Diverse examples are clear evidence of indiscriminate usage of Spanish. Although teachers report clear criteria for using L1, here the teacher uses it for purposes different from those stated, namely to give directions, and as a source of content, versus English, which in this case is used only for formulating answers:

> *Durante el video usted no puede hablar con sus compañeros ni se puede cambiar de puesto, debe estar sentado tomando apuntes. Saque el cuaderno y escriba cosas importantes de lo que va a escuchar. El video va a ser en español pero sus comentarios deben ser en inglés. Ok?*

A class observation transcription shows more evidence. In this case, the teacher uses L1 for giving instructions and guidance to the class. English is used only occasionally when referring to specific content, e.g. "los 'ones'" (the "ones") :

> T:	*Okay, organize the groups…..Ahora que nos organizamos vamos a hacer un ejercicio. Vamos a elegir un niño o niña del grupo que nos diga una*

resta para que el resto hagamos esa subtraction en los blackboards. (Now that we've organized ourselves, we're going to do an exercise. We're going to select a girl or boy from the group to tell us a problem, and the rest of us are going to do this subtraction on the blackboards.)

SS: *Yo miss, yo. (Me, Miss, me.)*

T: *Silent, cada integrante del grupo va a tener la oportunidad de decir una resta. (Silent, every member of the group is going to have an opportunity to say a problem.)*

SS: *Miss nosotros elegimos? (Miss, we choose?)*

T: *Yes, each group chooses the person*

T: *Ok, Who said the subtraction here?.... ¿Quién dijo la resta?*

SS: *Gabriela*

T: *Ok, mis amores. Recuerden que siempre empezamos restando los…? (Ok, my dears. Remember that we always start subtracting the….)?*

SS: *Ones*

T: *Yes, los ones, acuérdense, porque veo niños empezando por los thousand. (Yes, the*

ones. Remember, because I see children who are starting with the thousands.)

SS: *Yo lo había hecho mal miss. (I had done it wrong, Miss.)*

T: *Okay, no hay problema, pero debes estar pendiente siempre. Okay? (Ok, no problem, but you have to pay attention always, ok?)*

SS: *Si miss.*

T: *Okay, Cómo van acá?(How are you guys doing?)*

SS: *Bien Miss, Alejandro dijo la resta. (Good, Miss. Alejandro said the problem.)*

As seen before, the school lacks in unification of standards and policies that guide educators in the use of the mother tongue when delivering content, besides specific training that might clarify the misconceptions regarding the importance of L1 role in the acquisition of a second language. In consequence, teachers use Spanish indiscriminately, which affects the communication process among students and teacher, and does not promote a fluent language development.

USE OF RESOURCES

In terms of the resources provided by the school for implementing the bilingual project, teachers expressed different opinions about the existing conditions that directly affect their teaching practice. Moreover, there are several resources that the school needs to acquire in order to meet the project's needs and complement the teaching and learning processes. Researchers classified

the findings gathered from the interviews to analyze teachers' perspectives in two groups as follows:

Specialized rooms. The entirety of the teachers stated that it is necessary to adapt specific places where teachers could have their math classes and use didactic material such as manipulatives, games, flashcards, posters, math counters among others. Additionally, science teachers added that it is extremely important to have a laboratory where children learn through experimental activities and could develop scientific thinking. One of the teachers claimed: *I think that it is necessary a room only for math classes or a math laboratory where students could use manipulative to make that abstract concepts become concrete.* As one science teacher commented, S*cience labs are important components to allow students experiment and learn.*

Use of technology. Teachers affirmed that all the classrooms have technological equipment such as computers, video beams, and internet access, which support teaching practices and learning processes. However, despite the presence of publishers' platforms for math and science, teachers considered student interaction with technology is limited since the existing room is only for computer science teachers, and there are no devices for the classrooms. Further, the activities provided by these platforms are not enough to reinforce the topics: *I have realized an important necessity related to the interactivity between children and technology. The school could provide devices or computers to use the platforms and didactic online resources.*

CONCLUSIONS

This research study sought to explore in depth the current bilingual project at *Colegio Jordan de Sajonia* in order to find out what factors and needs affect steadily its proper application. In this respect, this study sought to determine in what extent teachers know CLIL approach as a means of executing the project and how it can be effectively implemented at school. At the same time, this study desired to investigate and determine what resources the school needs to improve the bilingual program. Based on the findings from this study, it was possible to identify a number of conclusions. The results point to teachers and administrators' unawareness of the bilingual project being one of the most influent factors affecting its successful implementation at school. They lack in knowledge concerning the foundations of the project, its policies and official documents; consequently, they are also unaware of CLIL approach, not only as the method proposed to implement the bilingual program but also its rationale and guidelines to execute it. Additionally, this lack of information is such that the participants are also unaware of the need for training in CLIL, which according to the results, it is shown as one of the most urgent requirements to effectively deliver content in second language.

With regard to academic preparation and language proficiency, findings reported that there is a great variety of professional profiles among teachers, who acquired the English language by different means. However, most of them denoted a low level of language proficiency, leading in mispronunciation of daily expressions or words and inaccurate use of grammar structures. In addition, the results showed that, despite the participants' confidence in their professional skills and content teaching experience, they also lack in specific preparation to apply CLIL strategies or delivering a lesson when teaching content in second language.

As noted in the results, the resources are also another important factor influencing the effectiveness and successful of the bilingual project at the *Colegio Jordan de Sajonia.* According to the findings, the participants displayed a positive attitude towards the existing resources as a means of supporting the content delivering and learning process; nevertheless, they argued that there are still several resources that the school need to acquire in order to meet the bilingual project's needs and complement the teaching practice, such as didactic material, specialized rooms and technological devices.

In terms of the findings and the literature reviewed for this research, different connections can be highlighted. Literature argued that the lack of knowledge and information on bilingualism stages at schools, results in serious weaknesses in the implementation of the projects (Bermúdez, Fandiño & Ramírez, 2014). This research found that educators and administrators denoted unawareness about school's bilingualism project which implied its inappropriate implementation and inadequate execution.

This is in line with García (2016). When language teachers are asked to participate in bilingual projects for teaching content without professional background in the subjects, it is necessary that the schools address different needs in order to succeed in the project such as the integration of core areas within a process of language acquisition, teacher training in CLIL approach and the implementation of a pedagogical model for instruction in the subject. Findings showed that although the entirety of the teachers were professionals who acquired the English language by different means, their lack of specific preparation to teach content through a second language did not benefit the development of the bilingual project. Most of the current research studies have revealed that the success of implementing a bilingual program using CLIL may be affected by teachers' lack of awareness of this approach. In a study made by Griva, Chostelidou and Panteli (2016), the participants agreed on the necessity of being trained in CLIL approach to foster the required skills for executing CLIL, such as identifying students' needs, introducing formative and summative assessment, cooperating with colleagues, and using a variety of learning approaches.

Just as Bermúdez, Fandiño and Ramírez (2014) found, teacher training must be permanent and include further grounding in bilingualism theory and methodology. In this research, teachers considered that preparation is important to boost the bilingualism. They recognized that the training provided by the school had been useful to enrich their teaching practice; however, they claimed that this training had not been focused on CLIL approach and it had not been permanent throughout the year. Moreover, during the class observations there was also clear evidence of the inadequate use of strategies and didactics focused on CLIL approach. As in this study, Mariño (2014) also found that teachers should be trained on CLIL in order to promote opportunities for the students to develop the four skills, and recognize the learners' effort and success.

In the line with Gerena and Ramírez-Verdugo (2014), findings showed that most of the class activities delivered by the bilingual teachers did not foster activation of prior knowledge, development of higher order thinking skills, or collaboration among students. The majority

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[14] Language in parentheses is translation provided by the authors

of the classes were teacher centered in which students were not empowered to construct new learning adopting a passive role in their learning experiences.

Corzo Zambrano and Robles Noriega (2011) suggested the need for a balance between teachers and students through the use of mother tongue to support content learning in second language classrooms, and the use of code-switching to make explanations more comprehensible. Lasagabaster (2013) found that the use of L1 in CLIL classes supports the explanation of concepts that are abstract or cognitively demanding. It also helps to scaffold language and content learning, to promote anxiety-free environment, to build self-confidence and to encourage students to participate in context with complex topics. Despite teachers' beliefs and convictions about the use of L1, researchers noticed that teachers used the mother language indiscriminately and students were allowed to use it without any restrictions. This suggests that the school lacks unification of standards and policies that guide educators in the use of the mother tongue when delivering content, besides specific training that might clarify the misconceptions regarding the importance of L1 role in the acquisition of a second language.

One of the most significant limitations of this research was the time when the class observations were conducted. They were done in the last weeks of the academic year when teachers just reviewed some topics in class or correct tests with students, thus it was not possible to be aware of the real class structure and the strategies implemented in class. It would have been valuable for the research to do the class observations along the term in order to have more evidence regarding the class structure and the CLIL approach implementation.

For future research, it would be worthwhile to have enough time to do an intervention applying pre and posttests in order to determine the proper implementation of CLIL and the change in the academic results of students. Future research should also include more than one class observation for teachers to identify their daily class structure, the delivering of content in second language and the use of strategies that point to the execution of this approach.

ACTION PLAN

- The school should inform about the bilingual project, its aims and changes to the school community when necessary.

- The school should provide permanent teacher training on CLIL approach to all the teachers involved in the bilingual project.

- The school should request a language proficiency test that certifies B2 level in English for all the new teachers entering the school.

- The school should enlist teachers that have experience in bilingual environments and in teaching English as a second language.

- The school should aim at enhancing the existing resources to guarantee their adequate operation and permanent upgrade.

- The school should acquire extra resources that address the project's needs such as specialized rooms and didactic material.

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' Questionnaire

1. Do you know about the school bilingual project?

2. Do you know the approach defined by the school for the implementation of the bilingual project? What is it?

    _____

3. Do you know about the CLIL approach? If so, define it in your own words

    _____

    _____

According to the following rating scale indicate:

4	3	2	1
Totally agree	Agree	In disagreement	Strongly Disagree

4.	The bilingual project of the school has a positive impact on the strengthening of knowledge in the subjects of Math & Science.	4	3	2	1
5.	The implementation of the bilingual project favors the development of second language skills.	4	3	2	1
6.	The school has created the necessary conditions for the implementation of the bilingual project.	4	3	2	1
7.	The training provided by the school has enriched my knowledge about the approach proposed in the bilingual project.	4	3	2	1
8.	In a bilingual process, students can use their mother tongue at any time during classes.	4	3	2	1
9.	I use the mother tongue as a tool to clarify content.	4	3	2	1
10.	I am prepared to teach content using the second language	4	3	2	1
11.	Students of the school are prepared to learn different contents through the second language.	4	3	2	1
12.	Parents support the bilingual processes provided by the school.	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions for Teachers and Administrators

(conducted in Spanish)

What is your professional training?

According to the results of the survey, most of the teachers are familiar with the bilingualism project. What do you know about the project? How would you describe the project?

What do you think of the bilingual project approach defined by the school?

What do you know about the CLIL approach?

All the teachers affirm that the project has a positive impact on the acquisition of knowledge. How do you think this is reflected in your classes?

Most of the teachers of the school agree that the school has generated the necessary conditions for the implementation of the bilingual project. What conditions do you think favor the project? What conditions do you think are lacking or could improve the project implementation?

The results of the survey showed divided opinions regarding the training provided by the school. Do you think that the training has been sufficient to enhance the CLIL approach? How these trainings have enriched your knowledge regarding the CLIL approach in your lesson planning and class delivery? What kind of training would you like to receive?

According to the results of the survey, most teachers agree that students use the mother tongue at any time in the classroom. At what times do you consider that the use of the mother tongue by the students is necessary? Why?

When do you use your mother tongue during the course of your classes? When do not you use it? How do you decide when to use the mother tongue? Why?

According to the results of the survey, all teachers consider themselves prepared to teach content using the second language. Why do you consider yourself prepared for this? How do you think it could improve the teaching of content in second language?

Why do you believe students are prepared or not to learn content through the second language? How do you think it could improve student readiness to learn second language content?

Most teachers agree that parents support the bilingual school process. How do you evidence this support? How do you think that the participation of parents in the bilingual process could be optimized?

CONDITIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN ELEVEN RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BOGOTÁ: PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Fanny Zambrano Orjuela

With a population of over 8 million people, it is difficult to imagine rural public schools in a city such as Bogotá. Nevertheless, these types of schools do exist in the outlying sectors of the city. With over twenty years of experience working as a counselor, primary teacher, rural director and rural coordinator in rural schools, Fanny Zambrano asked herself how the city's goals of bilingualism are being addressed in these schools, and whether these institutions are close to achieving the national standards. She was also interested in identifying possible obstacles as well as positive factors that influence the actual and potential achievement of these standards. Her work points to conditions and areas for action that most likely apply to all schools, not only rural schools, in which the perception of English, and communication from the central government to outlying schools are critical.

ABSTRACT

Key words: Rural Schools, English language learning, School improvement, Bilingual education

This project explored how rural schools in Bogotá are addressing achievement of English language standards. It explored the conditions that may facilitate or hinder improvement programs in ten rural primary schools and one rural high school in Bogotá. Likewise, the study proposed actions needed to facilitate improvement programs in these schools. Data was collected in *El Destino* School, and the *Ohaca* and *Usme Alto* primary schools. The techniques for the data collection included questionnaires for students and parents, interviews of English teachers and management staff, and documentary analysis. The results allow for the description of conditions that exist in these rural schools in terms of bilingualism and English language learning, and the requirements needed to facilitate improvement programs. In terms of the support that exists for bilingualism, participants perceive that there is not enough support from the school, nor the District Secretary or National Ministry of Education.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave: Escuelas Rurales, Adquisición de Segundo Idioma, Programas de mejoramiento en inglés.

Este proyecto exploró la manera como las escuelas rurales de Bogotá están abordando el cumplimiento de los estándares del idioma inglés. Exploró las condiciones que pueden facilitar o dificultar los programas de mejoramiento en diez instituciones de educación básica primaria rurales y en un colegio que presta todo el servicio educativo de preescolar a educación media técnica rural en Bogotá. Así mismo, el estudio propuso las acciones necesarias para facilitar los programas de mejoramiento en estas instituciones. Los datos fueron recolectados en el Colegio rural El Destino, en la agrupación de instituciones de preescolar y primaria "OHACA" y en la agrupación de instituciones de preescolar y primaria "Usme Alto". Las técnicas para la recolección de datos incluyeron cuestionarios para estudiantes y padres de familia, entrevistas con profesores de inglés y docentes directivos y análisis documental. Los resultados permiten la descripción de las condiciones que existen en estas instituciones rurales en términos de bilingüismo y aprendizaje del idioma inglés y los requisitos necesarios para facilitar los programas de mejoramiento. En cuanto al apoyo que existe para el bilingüismo, los participantes perciben que no hay suficiente apoyo institucional, ni de la Secretaria de Educación Distrital ni del Ministerio de Educación Nacional.

INTRODUCTION

In Colombia, the National Ministry of Education (MEN) has created many programs and plans to promote changes and improvements. Colombia's national Bilingualism Program proposes that the teaching of English is a key element in the development of global citizens who will be able to interact in English both inside and outside the country. Citizens competent in English are seen as an important force in the plan to develop Colombia as a member of the international community in the areas of commerce, science and innovation, culture, and education.

As part of this national program, the Ministry and local school Secretariats promote initiatives, draft and communicate standards, propose suggested curricula and provide occasional training and assistance in the development of English language programs. Specifically, teacher training in both methodology and English language proficiency have been important strategies, along with the development of a national English curriculum, including materials.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the processes of bilingualism in specific local settings in Colombia. This research points to strengths, difficulties, needs, and requirements of these programs, among others. In particular, in public schools, there continue to be obstacles to the full and successful implementation of English language teaching (bilingualism) or achievement of national standards. Many of the studies have led to investigating these contexts further and in more depth.

For these reasons, this research explored the current state of English language teaching and bilingual education in a group of rural public schools in Bogotá. Specifically, this study identified conditions for improvement of English language standards in eleven rural public schools in Bogotá. Findings help identify ways to achieve improvements in the second language in these and other similar schools in the city.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education refers to the way people learn or teach languages apart from their mother tongue (Baker, 2011). There are many instructional models for bilingual education, depending on the particular context. In Latin America, bilingual education usually refers to the learning and teaching of indigenous languages along with Spanish (Ministerio de Educación Nacional - MEN, 2014). Nevertheless, in Colombia, it generally refers to the teaching of English as a foreign language in the school system.

The term bilingual education emerged in the first decade of the last century. Sissons in Canada (as cited in Baker, 2011) was the first to publish on bilingual education. In 1926, Aucamp (as cited in Baker, 2011) also wrote about bilingual education, but in South Africa. In the U.S., bilingual education began to be discussed in the 1960s. In Europe, publication on bilingual education has focused on specific places, for example, Wales, Ireland and Sweden. The conception of

bilingual education in these countries stems from processes of immigration, cultural issues, and political phenomena, to social and cultural changes.

From the birth of bilingual education in the 20th century to nowadays, authors and researchers have developed a range of definitions designating diverse types of programs to teach a second or more languages (Abello-Contesse, Chandler, Lopez-Jimenez, & Chacon-Beltran, 2013). As a result, bilingualism and bilingual education is a broad term with different approaches based on different theoretical schools, and depending on the experience of particular countries, as well as a range of cultures, public policies, aims, and uses. Abello-Contesse et al. (2013) report that bilingualism and multilingualism are often defined similarly, describing the ways in which communities and individuals use two or more languages in their daily lives. Others favor a more specific definition or distinction.

Baker (2011) describes different definitions of bilingual education which are based on a variety of levels of analysis: definition of language ability, individuals' needs of one language or another, the age of the onset of acquisition, and the level of individuals' own culture and knowledge. An equally important aspect to consider is the learner's relation to and contact with a particular geographical and cultural region and the underlying aims of this migration (Baker, 2011).

Baker discusses a range of perspectives (2011) of bilingual education and defends holistic approaches. He proposes some objectives of second language acquisition:

- Adjustment between first language and second language in order to understand cultural and social contexts

- Enhancement of language acquisition, related to developing and improving skills and performance in mother tongue and second language

- Global communication between people

- To join a multicultural and diverse world

- To facilitate communication with different cultures, traditions and customs

- To promote biliteracy

TYPES OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

There are many theories in the study of bilingual education, some focused more on skills, others centered in social support. These types have strong relationships with the aims of bilingual education (Baker, 2011). The initial typologies of bilingual education are more related with the development of skills in the second language acquisition in schools. The first is *submersion or mainstreaming education*. This type is oriented to students who are in a language minority. The official name in schools is *mainstreaming*. This type of bilingual education aims for students to communicate in the majority language in school. Second, *structured immersion programs* are used with basic communication in the majority language, and teachers allow students to express themselves in their native language. *English as a second language* (ESL) is a type of structured immersion program. The purpose of English as a second language is to acquire language skills.

The curriculum is developed in English, and the content is taught in basic English. This type of bilingual education has had much criticism because it has a limited context of the process of learning a second language.

The third type of bilingual education is *mainstreaming with pull-out classes.* This type of model is related with English classes for children with minority languages, and is a form of remedial classes. Sheltered content instruction or specially designed academic instruction in English is a type of mainstreaming model. Fourth, *transitional bilingual education* is a style of bilingual education where students are allowed to use their mother tongue, and then, they have to increase the second language. Fifth, mainstream education (with foreign language teaching) is the case where schools teach in the language of the country and students have a class in that that foreign language (Baker, 2011).

The following types of bilingual education are ways in order to gain biliteracy, biculturalism and bilingualism (Baker, 2011). *Dual language bilingual education* (two way) is characterized by a balance between students' majority and minority language in classrooms. One objective of this is for students to constantly develop skills in both languages, gain academic success, and learn to live in peace among different cultures. *Heritage language bilingual education* is when students use their mother tongue as a way to achieve bilingualism. *Immersion bilingual education* is a type of exhaustive language programs, largely dependent on the age of the learners and the amount of time spent immersed in the two, especially the foreign or second language. Others include bilingual education in majority languages, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and international schools.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

Without a doubt, bilingual education is relevant to a country or region's particular educational goals in terms of globalization, as described in public policy. In Colombia, the National Ministry of Education (MEN) has understood bilingualism as the different levels of communication that a person has in more than one language, dialect or culture, depending on the context in which the person is. The term is understood as performance in two languages. The levels range from complete mastery of both languages to basic communication in the second (MEN, 2014). Further, the MEN cites Grosjean's studies that take into account the fluidity, and highlight that a bilingual individual is someone who uses two or more languages daily life (as cited in MEN, 2014).

The national standards for English language mention the definition given by McNamara (as cited in MEN, 2014) who wrote about "degrees of competence" based on the four skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading (MEN, 2014). This document also revisits Baker's perspective of additive bilingualism. *Additive bilingualism* is a condition when a bilingual or multilingual person has favorable cognitive consequences with the acquisition of second language because of first language support (as cited in MEN 2014).

This perspective has served as the basis for Colombia's bilingualism program and has been cited in public policy documents. In 2014, Colombia prioritized English as a second language for those reasons:

- English has been taught for years.

- English has been included in public policy agendas.

- The development of English proficiency includes global competences.

- The need for English to access knowledge.

- English proficiency brings greater possibilities of access to jobs and job mobility.

- To understand other cultures.

- To understand the richness of cultural and environmental diversity.

In 2004, the government drafted the National Bilingualism Plan, and included English as a strategic aim for the education in the country. In order to begin implementing the plan, the MEN began measuring students and teachers' levels of English as a second or foreign language. These measurements revealed that 6,4% of tenth graders achieved an acceptable language proficiency. About 65% of the teachers also had only a basic level of English proficiency. Only less than 1% of Colombians achieve a level of mastery to understand and write different types of text. For this reason, the MEN established as its priority the improvement of the linguistic and pedagogical skills of the English teachers (MEN, 2006, p. 55). The proposed targets from this plan included the following: 1) English teachers have to improve their communication and teaching skills; 2) Teachers should reach a B2 level (corresponding to the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages); 3) Students in high school must improve their mastery in written texts and oral communication, and 4) Students should attain a B1 level upon graduation (11th grade), and university students a B2 level.

The issue of language proficiency also influences one's conception of what bilingualism is and what the goals of bilingual education may be. This may be understood as the potential to achieve and improve listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, or in components such as grammar, vocabulary, phonology and graphology. In the study of how a second language is acquired, it is of vital importance to consider factors such as the purpose for which the language is used, what skill has been developed by learners more, which language is used more, the degrees of cultural immersion, the amount and type of contact with information and communication technologies, among others (Baker, 2011). Current theories and studies have constructed notions and levels of proficiency that also take into account cultural and social aspects (Baker, 2011). Those approaches have been called *holistic* models. Bachman's model integrates *language competence* and *language performance.* Later models have included more emphasis and detail on real and everyday communication (Baker, 2011).

THE ROLES OF FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE

Many authors have defined a bilingual person as an individual with the capability to perform well into two languages (Baker, 2011). Thus, some perspectives highlight the strong relationship between the native and second language in order to achieve and improve the new one (Baker, 2011). However, other authors emphasize the differences between first and second languages. The first language acquired, or the *dominant tongue*, refers to an individual's mother tongue. The dominant tongue is also the language used most. Second language has been understood as the acquisition of new skills and performance that allow communication with others. The second language may be a language, dialect or signs, and is characterized by official recognition (Baker & Prys Jones, as cited in Ministerio de Educación Nacional - MEN, 2014).

The strong and beneficial relationship between the first and second language, in order to improve the second, is derived from numerous theories, studies, methodologies, strategies, and techniques. Moreover, the development of those perspectives depends on many factors, including age, cultural background, capability, family, and friends' support (Baker, 2011). Some theories argue the importance of age, whether second language acquisition begins at birth, at school, or in adulthood. Others emphasize more the learners' cultural background in the first language to support the second and the degree of affinity with the new culture. Others highlight the existence of social support (Baker, 2011).

Another key area of study has been the role of the second language in a bilingual individual's life, and the degree of proficiency in that language. The literature includes mention of *equilingual, ambilingual* or *balanced bilinguals* interchangeably, referring to a person that uses two languages equitably. This idea has been controversial because some question the possibility of using two languages with the same equivalence (Baker, 2011). *Semilingualism* may be described by an individual who, for some reason, must migrate to another country or needs to communicate in another language, but has problems or limitations in his or her mother tongue and the new language in vocabulary, grammar or connecting ideas (Hansegard, as cited in Baker, 2011). In the levels of second language acquisition, it is also interesting to mention is the *monolingual view of bilingualism*, which is when bilingual people are assessed in different areas of language acquisition and their scores are measured with people that only speak that language. This measurement is considered inequitable (Baker, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed for this study looks at issues of bilingual education as well as school improvement more generally. There are many studies on ways to increase student achievement and improve their skills and knowledge, taking into account many possible variables. Furthermore, as Colombia has a commitment to high levels in English as a second language or foreign language, studies also exist of how English has been implemented in the different regions in the country. Further, it was important for this study to know the development of English in schools and the implementation of the policies in Bogotá as the capital city.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WORLDWIDE

Many countries have been interested and concerned about how their governments and politicians develop public policy for education, and how schools implement those decisions in order to achieve the desired outcomes in students. This has proven to be difficult, but successful achievement is possible and evident. McKinsey and Company (2010) studied 200 school systems worldwide, interviewed leaders and their staff who have implemented reforms, and carried out twenty direct observations in order to build a map that shows the necessary path to follow to transform student performance. Authors found that achieving and sustaining a school system's progress is very hard work. They reported that one of the main challenges in a school system is to choose the best way intervene in order to improve performance. They discovered a correlation between levels of performance and the degree of narrow central control over the school processes. They take into account three ways that school systems have improved: 1) collaborative practices; 2) developing mediation between central administration and schools; and, 3) prospective leadership.

Similarly, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2008) carried out document analysis which shows the important relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The study confirms findings from a large number of previous studies that increasing student achievement depends on many unknown and unsteady variables in teacher effectiveness.

On the other hand, Freeman, et al. (2005), in their case analysis study, report on dual language programs in specific cities in the US. They describe the importance of understanding contexts deeply; this means that it is essential to know teachers, administrators, families and students, as well as their strengths and needs.

In general, these studies confirm the importance of the relationship between teachers' actions in classes and student achievement. Studies showed the importance of that relationship, but also the importance of knowing the specific context in each case as well. Additionally, the last study places emphasis on dual language programs and students and teachers' strengths and needs for implementing such a program.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BILINGUALISM IN COLOMBIA

In 2004, Colombia began implementing a program of bilingualism with English as the second or foreign language. Research documents many experiences in the country that share important issues related to school practices in response to this challenge. Each region has had its own experience, but these can clearly help other regions implement their programs more successfully. The research looks at different variables, most notably again teachers, but also more comprehensive and holistic approaches to exploring the contexts and gaining understanding of conditions, programs, practices and challenges.

Rubiano, Frodden and Cardona (2000) analyzed the effect of the implementation of the Colombian framework for English, or COFE project. This project was initiated by teachers

from four universities in Bogotá in the 1990s in order to qualify their degree programs in modern languages. The study examined particular aspects of the academic programs in nine universities: language development, professional development, research, resources, and evaluation. The revision found that the aim of promoting curricular reforms in order to qualify teachers was accomplished. However, programs needed responsiveness in some areas; for example, it was necessary to determine systematic evaluation schemes in order to encourage curriculum changes. Also, language departments need to think in terms of permanent qualification programs. The study also highlighted the value of working collaboratively, and the importance of showing not only positive gains, but also frustrations and limitations.

Sanchez and Obando (2008) examined the academic needs that have to be met in order for both teachers and students to reach the goals set by government. The authors revisted Braslavsky's ideas about the importance of developing students' self-esteem, belief in learners, competent staff, academic communities, and coherent planning (Braslavsky, in Sanchez and Obando, 2008).

In contrast, Gonzalez (2009) carried out a literature review which analyzed two models implemented in Colombia for English teachers: in-service certificate in English language teaching (ICELT) and the teaching knowledge test (TKT). Gonzalez criticizes those models as standardization and marginalization. He also emphasized the importance of studying a range of perspectives about the implementation of programs to improve the effectiveness of English teachers. Additionally, the author highlights the importance and value of local culture in order to create programs to improve knowledge and skills in English teachers and to enhance ways to know the experiences of different actors within the educational system. Gonzalez (2009) affirms that language educational policy needs reforms that include updates on the teaching and learning processes, teachers' qualification, and ways to achieve standards.

In one case study, Sanchez (2013) analyzed how English as a second language has been implemented in schools in Colombia and how schools may improve their outcomes for teachers and students. The author argues for the need for teacher training, specifically support for primary school teachers in the second language.

Another study examined the infrastructure and resources of private schools in Cali and the implementation of the Colombia bilingualism program (Miranda & Echeverry, 2010), specifically with twenty-two private schools in strata 1 to 4[15]. It took into account basic resources and infrastructure for the implementation of the Colombia bilingualism program, as well as support to provide the conditions for the teaching and learning of English, for example methodological resources for teachers.

Cárdenas and Miranda (2014) carried out an interim assessment of Colombia's bilingualism program, working with 56 schools from 22 municipal districts in the city of Santiago de Cali. They concluded that the management of physical and human was deficient to support the processes planned to implement the bilingualism policy. They also pointed to wide differences between public and private schools. They recommended a critical evaluation of the current state of teaching English as well as an estimation of what the schools have to do to improve foreign language teaching.

Correa, Usma and Montoya (2014) presented their results from an exploratory study in schools in the department of Antioquia in reference to the implementation of the national bilingualism program. They found that participants had little knowledge about the program. For example, participants reported that they were not invited to an official presentation of the program of bilingualism. However, they managed to implement some actions in the department and each municipality. The study offers some advice related to the effectiveness of many of the actions implemented and a real comprehension of the linguistic and educational needs.

Other studies look at the actors in processes of bilingualism and the role of students as a central agent in this process. Guevara and Rendon (2014) describe the context of English teaching and learning in a public school in the department of Risaralda, particularly as it relates to methods that encourage students' motivation in English classes. These include viewing the student as a central actor in the process of second language acquisition, building a collaborative learning process in the classroom, and promoting the teacher as a guide, facilitator or mediator.

In a related study, Villarreal, Muñoz and Perdomo (2016) explored students' beliefs about their English class in a public school in the city of Armenia. They found the strong relationship between student beliefs and their experiences in English classes. Factors such as disciplinary issues, monotony, lack of motivation towards materials, and the impact of the foreign language were important aspects to be analyzed. Additionally, they argue the importance of developing policies that take into account students' contributions. Similarly, the authors argue that schools and English teachers have to pay attention to students' beliefs when attempting to reach program and curricular goals.

In a broader view, Correa and Gonzalez (2016) analyzed four public policy programs of bilingualism in Colombia. They described how the government has had a short-range perspective of the implications of teaching English in Colombia. This perspective has resulted in limited programs and only a small commitment to teacher training, as well as lack of attention of the materials required. They recommend that Colombian local and department governments recognize mistakes and analyze the particular realities, needs and problems.

Bilingualism in Bogotá. As the country's capital, Bogotá is at somewhat of an advantage in several areas. The city is the center of decision-making and policy that is often then applied in other regions in the country. As such, Bogotá was the first city to implement many public policies, including educational policies. Furthermore, the capital city has some of the best universities, private and public schools, and other institutes and centers of study and training. However, the city also has serious problems that affect the lifestyle of its citizens, and education is not an exception. There are many studies focusing particularly on bilingualism in Bogotá, and some strengths and weaknesses have been identified in the literature.

Moreno (2009) studied the process of implementation and development of public policy of bilingualism in two public schools in Usaquén, a *locality*[16] of Bogotá. Document analysis, interviews, school visits, curriculum and literature review revealed the need to take into account socio-cultural features as well as the use of resources in order for the teaching and learning

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[15] Colombia divides socioeconomic levels into 6 strata, 1 being the lowest, and 6 being the highest.

of English to be effective. In addition, the study argues that some incentives are necessary for teachers that show they are improving their skills and knowledge. Further, teachers need educational opportunities.

In terms of students' views, Devia (2011) examined perceptions about teaching a foreign language and bilingual education in students' last year of school. The author concluded that students recognized the importance of English because they knew that nowadays people are in a globalized world and need the second language in their near future.

Aljure, et al. (2011) investigated seven schools in Bogotá in order to identify the educational community's views on bilingualism and bilingual education. Parents agreed that English is an essential aspect in their children's education. Further, the study identified the importance of knowing the educational community's perspectives in order to clarify the learning process in the second language, and the model and method used in a particular school.

In terms of student outcomes, Davila (2012) investigated the incidence, importance, use, acceptance, and support for the implementation of bilingualism as a public policy in two public schools in Bogotá that had high and average results on the state standardized test. The study found that there are factors beyond socio-economic level that cause low test scores. Educational dynamics, institutional organization, isolated work, student motivation, and educational actions of teachers also affect students' scores. The author highlighted the need for local and national governments to recognize the real situation of their schools and their population in order to improve guaranties to reduce inequalities. Davila (2012) recommends in-depth analysis of the image of bilingual education in public schools as it may affect students' second language acquisition.

Similarly, Bermudez, Fandiño and Ramirez (2014) described and analyzed the perspectives of principals, coordinators, and teachers of public schools, as well as resources and external support in these schools. They found that more than analyzing what a school needs to improve on standardized tests, it is necessary to understand the school community, students' backgrounds, and teachers' needs, among others. They considered the importance of renovating curricula to incorporate these areas in the process of second language acquisition, as well as collaborative work, plans and activities that include the whole community in order to motive the process of learning a second language and promoting the use of resources. Lastly, they suggest that institutions should have internal design standards according to the own needs to help improve the quality of second language teaching and learning.

Finally, these studies permanently open doors to analyze some aspect of the state of English as a second language acquisition in the country and particularly in Bogotá. In this way, this study sought to provide current information about the process of second language acquisition in a selection of rural schools in Bogotá, in specific aspects such as the conditions that exist for teaching English as a second language and needs for improvement.

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[16] Bogotá is divided into 20 localities (localidades), and then into neighborhoods within each locality.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was a qualitative, naturalistic, and ethnographic study. It attempted to understand the complexity in selected rural public schools, and describe phenomena in these institutions in relation to bilingual education from a holistic point of view. It also sought to propose what schools could do to raise English language standards among these populations that have historically been less favored. This type of research is characterized by numerous purposes; for example, narrative and reporting of social phenomena, the foundation of principles, and theory generation. Additionally, naturalistic methods try to answer the questions, "What are the features of a social phenomenon? What are their causes? and What are the consequences?" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). To summarize the overall purpose of this investigation, Lincoln and Guba's words are retaken:

> The advantage of the 'human instrument' is his or her adaptability, responsiveness, knowledge, ability to handle sensitive matters, ability to see the whole picture, ability to clarify and summarize, to explore, to analyse, to examine atypical or idiosyncratic responses (Lincoln & Guba, as cited in Cohen, et al,, 2007, p. 170).

CONTEXT

The research was carried out in the rural zone of the locality of Usme, in the south of Bogotá. There are ten rural primary schools located in the same number of small towns, serving from preschool to fifth grade. The high school, *El Destino*, offers preschool to eleventh grade to 544 students from small towns and some young students from the urban part. *El Destino* also has technical high school focused on agriculture and farming. The school is articulated with programs offered by the national vocational training service (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje, SENA*), and awards a technical degree in Farming and Ecological Systems.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study included ninety-six students, between 11 and 18 years old, nine parents, three teachers of the management staff (Principal, Coordinator and Rural Director), three English teachers of *El Destino* school, and three English teachers of primary groups schools (OHACA and USME ALTO).

The researcher in this study has been working for approximately twenty years in rural educational in Bogotá and has carried out previous investigations on rural public education

policy. She is currently a Coordinator in *El Destino* school of the program of articulation of the high school with other educational entities, such as *SENA*, and is also a Disciplinary Coordinator. As such, her relationship with the participants and the object of the research is framed by her knowledge of the realities of the rural environments, particularly the weaknesses of these sectors, for example in relation to the second language acquisition. Additionally, with her daily work as part of the management team, she is aware first hand of some of the shortcomings of the institutions analyzed. As Gold describes, in this case, the researcher is also a complete participant:

> The move is from complete participation to complete detachment. The mid-points of this continuum strive to balance involvement with detachment, closeness with distance, familiarity with strangeness. The role of the complete observer is typified in the one-way mirror, the video-cassette, the audio-cassette and the photograph, while complete participation involves researchers taking on membership roles (Gold, as cited in Cohen, et al,, 2007, p. 397).

As such, the researcher's relationship with the research brings with it strengths such as the fine analysis of the instruments used, the types of responses of the participants, the veracity or falsity of the information they provide, among others. Likewise, the weaknesses would be with respect to the possible biased views of the investigator.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

This research paid attention to different views and perspectives that allow us to describe the current state of the schools and the requirements needed to facilitate improvement programs in bilingual education. Furthermore, the study may help other similar experiences to improve achievements in English as foreign language teaching. For these reasons, this exploration used three qualitative techniques in order to acquire relevant information.

Documentary analysis. The official documents of the schools were reviewed in order to identify any coherence, consistence or divergence from the views expressed by members of the educational community about the development of bilingualism in their schools.

Questionnaires. These were designed and administered to students and parents in order to identify their points of view and conditions, situations, and practices in the schools in terms of bilingual education. The questionnaires were designed to identify participants' perceptions and contained four ordered response levels, (totally agree, agree, disagree and totally disagree) (See Appendices A and B). These questionnaires were answered by students and parents.

Interviews. The interviews were applied in order to deepen knowledge of participants' perspectives (principal, coordinators, rural directors, primary teachers and English teachers) about whether objectives have been fulfilled and what may be needed to meet school's commitments with the bilingualism policy. Some questions for the interview were developed after the analysis of the questionnaires in order to further explore issues that were raised by students and parents (See Appendices C and D). Each interview was around 20 minutes. These interviews were recorded and also transcribed in the teachers' native language.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was collected from the questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis. Then, qualitative data interpretation was carried out, allowing for the classification of central themes in order to analyze and establish possible relationships among them. Thus, as Krippendorp suggests, "Content analysis is at its most successful when it can break down 'linguistically constituted facts' into four classes: attributions, social relationships, public behaviors and institutional realities" (as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 476)

Questionnaires. The first questionnaire was answered by ninety-six students from sixth and tenth grade and the other questionnaire was answered by nine parents. Answers were tabulated in an Excel data base. Bar graphs as visual techniques were constructed to see percentages and interpret trends. Open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed, and four categories were established to reflect the predominant theme clusters in the responses. For students, the importance of English and proficiency level stand out as key themes. For example, students said that English is important for further study or work. Students mentioned their level of English as well, and qualified themselves as low or good. Parents' responses centered around their beliefs about the purpose or importance of English for their children.

Teacher and school interviews. The researcher carried out interviews after analyzing results from the questionnaires in order to gain further insights into key issues. In total, it was possible to have a number of short interviews in participants' native language, Spanish. Six teachers (four teachers of primary feeder schools and two from the secondary school), a rural director from a group of primary schools, a coordinator, and a principal from the secondary school were interviewed. These interviews were recorded and transcribed in participants' native language. The analysis of this information supports the categories constructed from the answers of these interviews. Further categories were also established, based on interviewees' comments: The categories extracted are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Interview categories

Category	Description	Example
Awareness	This category refers to how much teachers and administrative staff have learned about English standards, public policy of bilingualism, national plan of bilingualism	When teachers say that is possible to reach English standards with rural students or when teachers say that is impossible meet the goals of national plan of bilingualism.
Conditions for improvement	This category refers to what strengths teachers have identified to develop English standards.	When teachers say that in primary schools they have few students and they manage their classes with autonomy and their students are motivated for English classes.
Support	This category refers to the help that teachers receive from administrative staff in the school, the secretary of education and the Nacional Ministry of Education.	When teachers say that the only thing they identify as help is the time that coordinator give them for meetings.
Construction of curricula or Contents to be taught	This category refers to decisions that administrative staff and teachers take about relevance of contents to be taught in rural schools	When teachers say that it is necessary in English classes develop the four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading).
Motivation for English	This category refers to ideas that teachers have about how students perceive their English area.	When teachers say that rural students are not motivated for learning English.
Conceptions of bilingualism	This category refers to the knowledge that teachers and administrative staff have about bilingual education and bilingualism.	When teachers and administrators say that bilingualism refers to the skills that people have with two or more languages.
Expectations about bilingual education in rural areas	This category refers to ideas and perceptions that teachers and administrative staff have about how improve English in rural areas.	When teachers and administrators say that schools need more support of distrital administration to gain improvements in English area in rural places in Bogotá.
Human and physical resources	This category refers to identify who are in the schools and what type of materials exist to improve English classes.	When teacher say about their studies and experience. When they show what type of materials and resources they need to do better their classes.
Problems	This category refers to obstacles hindering the improvement of bilingual education in those schools.	When teachers explain what problems they have had with listening or speaking activities in their classes.
Teacher training	This category refers to identify types of training that teachers and administrative staff have had in English area.	When teachers say that the school have not done any training or when they say that they improve their skills with their own economical resources.
Importance of English for administrative staff	This category refers to the relevance among other needs, in the school, that principal, coordinator and directors have for English improvements.	When administrators say that they have not seen the opportunity of prioritizes English area.
Organization, management and responsibilities	This category refers to the actions that administrative staff have to do in order to improve condition in English area.	When the coordinator say that he gives teachers time to do meetings.

RESULTS

In general, the analysis of the data allows for the description of the conditions that exist in the ten rural primary schools and a rural high school in terms of bilingualism and English language learning, and the requirements needed to facilitate improvement programs in these schools. In terms of the support that exists for bilingualism in these rural schools, teachers and management staff perceive that there is not enough support from the school, or the District Secretary or National Ministry of Education, for example to improve teachers' level of English or to inform schools about plans or trainings on national or district bilingualism programs. While teachers reported that they have a general view about the national bilingualism program, management staff reported that they have not received any information about either.

In terms of resources and support for teachers in order to facilitate conditions that provide or enable English classes and make standards possible, teachers sense that if they need or wish improve their English skills, it is on their own initiative and with their own economic resources. They observe that some of the schools have technological resources that they can use, but schools have crucial technological problems such as connectivity, books, and specific materials. Teachers reported that they have worked with their own English resources.

In terms of student motivation, teachers perceive that students do not have enough motivation for English classes. Specifically, they report that students in primary levels have high levels of motivation in English classes, but in secondary and high school, they have some problems because students sense that English is difficult. However, students and parents both agree that English is needed in their lives.

In terms of conditions for improvement, teachers sense that schools can improve English levels when management staff and teachers know their obligations to the national bilingualism program, and when members of the community envision English as important in today's world. Teachers do not believe that it is not relevant whether students live in urban or rural environments. They argue, rather, that what is necessary is to specify obligations and priorities for each school clearly in official documents.

AWARENESS AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Interviews revealed that teachers and management staff have some general ideas about their obligations in terms of second language acquisition. Teachers referred to specific commitments, for example the level of English required for students finishing high school. They recognize English language standards because they use them to plan classes. However, when teachers were asked about the national plan of bilingualism, they did not go into specific detail. Management staff recognize English as a second language as another area in the curriculum with an equal level of commitment as other areas. They did not identify specific obligations that the school might have in relation to the teaching of English.

Teachers have different perceptions about compliance with standards in the rural area. It depends on the particular conditions of the schools where each teacher works. A teacher expressed:

> Well, obviously they are not achievable. First of all, because students in our schools who are preschool to fifth do not have an English teacher. I know that the OHACA group (name given to the administration of five of the participating schools) has a support teacher I do not know what hourly intensity it has. But for example, in our 5 USME HIGH institutions (name given to the administration of five of the participating schools) we do not have an English teacher. I am an English teacher. That was my training but I did not come here as an English teacher but as a primary teacher, and I am in charge of the fourth and fifth grade groups. However, this is because I have the knowledge of the language and I have dedicated myself to the other children to learn a little, with a very low hourly intensity. Therefore, it is not attainable that they will one day have as knowledge or skills to express themselves in a second language, neither in the form, nor in any of the abilities, nor in listening, nor reading, nor anything because they do not have in the context here. They have nothing that is in English. When they go home, they do not hear anything in English. There are children now who are listening to music in English and all that, but it is because of the cultural opening of everything that comes from the capital and everything that comes from the world and globalization gives us that opening that we have more knowledge and more information. Then, many things come in English, but the children here do not have any contact with the language apart from the little that is done in school.[17]
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> In other schools, for example in Chisacá, I know that the teacher also has knowledge of the language, so I know that she also gives the children. But because the other schools the teachers do not have the knowledge, they are afraid to express themselves in a second language, and more so in English. Then, surely they teach it but very basically, some vocabulary.

On the other hand, another teacher described more work with English from her experience:

> Here we are doing deepening of English with the full time, but, only in some courses and I only do in cycle 3 (grades sixth and seventh). Then, you can say that we are working with them 7 hours a week in English.

Management staff perceive that the areas have the same level of importance and their obligations with the schools are with general organization:

> To have the role as a teaching manager in the processes, in the programs of the third language and especially of English, well, one with a management role is to guide and direct all academic processes in the institution and obviously English is one of these that must be supported for children to learn this language, or at least have an idea, a basic knowledge of English. Well, I do not know them very well, the standards of English, but I

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[17] Translated from the Spanish.

suppose that same as the standards of another area, of another subject. Whether they are achievable or not depends on one or another different factors. I believe that in knowledge they are achievable by children because rural children have the same capabilities as any other child in the urban sector. The problem is the means, forms, pedagogies, teachers use to achieve those standards.

Additionally, with reference to questions about whether the institutional documents show commitment to English as a second language, these documents refer only to the curriculum. In these schools there are no specific written purposes in the PEI (Institutional Educational Project) related to second language. Participants acknowledged that teachers from other areas are not aware of the school's obligations in terms of the national plan for bilingualism.

SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

In general terms, the majority of participants reported that they have not had support from the District Secretary or National Ministry of Education in terms of teaching English as a second language. They have not received any talks, for example, about national or district bilingualism plans. Only three teachers reported that they responded to calls for participation, but on their own initiative. Two teachers described how they participated many years ago. One teacher described his course as well:

In the year 2013 a call was made at the district level for the strengthening of the levels of language management by the teachers of the English area. There was a competition and from that contest teachers were selected who would participate in an immersion program to improve strategies for teaching English and managing things like vocabulary and other language skills. I did part of that program in which lasted eight months. I went through the different stages. First, there was a written-oral exam and then with the course as such. That was as I mentioned in short a duration of 8 months working every Saturday in ludic activities in which we had to handle different situations, how we would handle them in the classroom, And above all, strengthening our English skills, both in listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Another teacher participated in a program called a "cascade plan" of the Ministry of Education:

I participated in the cascade plan. That is at the national level. It is a program in which English teachers are trained to teach English with a British Council program. I participated in this program and with teachers from Bogota.

This program was a strategy with the purpose of helping English teachers improve their language skills. Other teachers did not report any such experiences.

The majority of teachers identified support by management staff in terms of time. They said that their principal, coordinator or director organize time for area or cycle meetings, but they have not directed any purposes, plans or projects. In other words, the support from management staff is the same for other teachers of other areas. For example, a teacher said:

Well, the director gives us total autonomy. We are in charge of one area. Then, as a teacher of English, I am responsible for the area of English, I have full autonomy to create the syllabus and create the way to move everything from the curriculum in terms of English. Well, with him we had no problem. The problem is to have in each school someone who replicates what is in the curriculum.

Other teachers mentioned that they have had time with external teachers who help public schools with academic topics and curriculum, as a strategy from the district administration.

The data revealed that teachers have completed courses, trainings, and have updated and created materials with their own time and resources. Moreover, two teachers have taken international English language tests, one of them IELTS and the other TOEFL. Another teacher had an immersion experience and did a course for English proficiency. Other teachers have started Master's degrees, for example, in neuropsychology or pedagogy. Some teachers of the management staff have done Master's degrees, but in education in general. Nevertheless, the bulk of these experiences have been on teachers' own initiative and with their own resources.

RESOURCES

Teaching staff. At this point, the ten primary schools exhibit differences from the high school in terms of conditions and resources. For example, high schools have two English teachers with their degrees in that area, and two teachers in the primary level that develop the area in the first (preschool, first and second grades) and second cycles (third, fourth and fifth grades). Five primary schools have an English teacher in the third cycle (sixth and seventh grade), and a teacher who goes to each school once a week. That experience was narrated as follows:

This institution consists of five branches, which means that for children to do the English, you need a teacher who rotates through the institutions, or a teacher for each institution, which is a bit difficult, because the student population does not allow for this. …. Then, at least in my case, I am the teacher who rotates through the institutions. I am part of the project 40x40 (strategy of the district development plan of "Human Bogotá") that starts now, as one school day[18]. So, directly my commitment, my job is not like an area teacher. Yes I try to do it but my role as such is not that but to meet the need for commitment to teach the second language. Well, I adopt this position a bit and try to comply with that part. But in reality, if it is needed or would be necessary that the main teacher or the teacher who is always with the children will also be in charge of strengthening the area. It is therefore the knowledge of some teachers, as if they have the facility and they do, and others. Not because they may be difficult or prefer not to navigate uncharted territory. So I think that it would be a lot more lacking in that part, in order to strengthen it.

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[18] This strategy seeks to do away with double-shift school schedules, a product of overcrowding in the system, in favor of one day-long shift, in order to offer students enhanced extra-curricular experiences as part of the school day, and to reduce delinquency as a result of students in vulnerable areas being out of school but unsupervised during the day.

The other five schools are called "Group two."[19] These schools do not have an English teacher. In one school there is a primary teacher with a degree in English. She described the situation in these terms:

Well, "Group two" is composed of five schools. We are in the upper part of Usme: the Andes, Mercedes, Majority, Chisacá and Union. By geographical order that's more or less it. Each school has one or two teachers, but here in the Mayoría school, we are three teachers. I arrived six years ago and my role has been a teacher of fourth and fifth, and as teacher within the institution of English for other grades pre-school to fifth.

Physical resources. In terms of physical resources, such as books, photocopies, laboratories, among others, all teachers have expressed that they look for their own materials, and the majority of them conduct their classes with photocopies that can be made at the school. A teacher said:

I believe that in the rural context there are still many shortcomings so that a good implementation of these programs can be carried out. Then there is the lack of resources: laboratory, there are no books. There are many things which students need because it is not just arrive and teach the class. No, they need a lot of material, and above all, learning is visual. Also, then, one cannot arrive with the photocopy in black and white because the colors, all this, have a really important meaning for learning English. So there, it really falls short. But, then we have to wait to see how the program continues, what material they begin to send us, even though the rural sector is always like the last one. Soon, materials and things are generated, but they arrive later to the rural sector, like two years later. Well, then, there is another one of the weaknesses of these programs.

In general terms, with respect to the role of managers, they have allowed for only basic materials due to the school budget. Management staff reported in the interviews that they took into account the needs of improving English conditions, the need to inform all teachers of the obligations, the need to write in the official documents the obligations as schools. A rural director teacher said about his knowledge and role with English area:

No, I do not know them (the commitments with English as a second language), I know that there is a policy and it is that English must ... well, preferably English. But, whether there is a policy of a second language, in practice and must be learned, in all institutions, but already in a particular way, no. I mean, it is the same, English and technology, we must involve all teachers! But the truth at this moment, in this respect, the second language, English, I have nothing, I have not thought, let's say, of a strategy at a special institutional level. While in technology yes already, we are going to work, or continue with the processes that are being developed.

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[19] A pseudonym

STUDENT MOTIVATION

Analyzing the information collected from the questionnaires from students and parents) and the interviews from teachers and management staff, it was found that most management staff and teachers have a negative perception about students' motivation while students and parents were more optimistic about English learning process. In the questionnaire for students, most students agreed with the statement "I like English", as shown in Figure 1. Group B, particular, composed of students from the ten rural feeder schools agreed strongly with the statement.
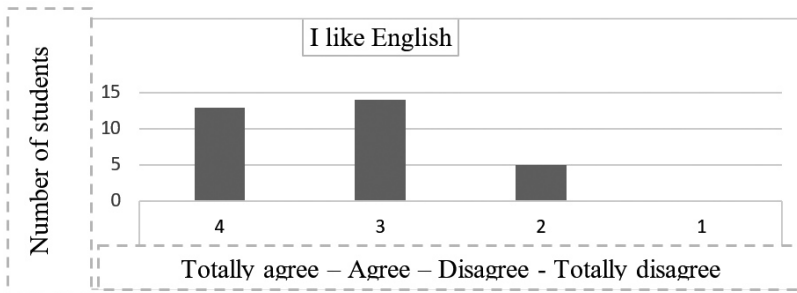

Figure 1. Students' attitudes towards English (Group B)

Student participants were also asked to respond to the statement: "I think learning English is important for my life":
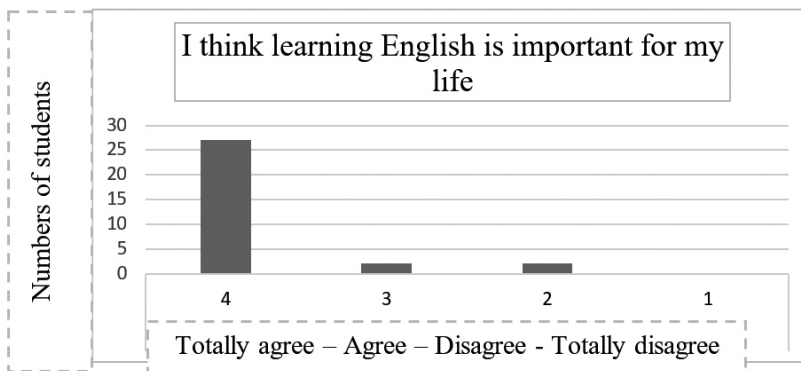

Figure 2. Students perceptions on the importance of English (Group B).

According to Figure 2, most of Group B also strongly agreed that English is important in their future live. Furthermore, in the other two groups the majority of participants also agreed with this statement. .

On the other hand, when teachers and management staff were asked about their perceptions of students' motivation, most of them answered that students are not motivated towards English as a second language. Some of the arguments were, for example, that students do not have a context that motivates English learning, do not have parents' motivation, only have contact with English in classes at school, say that English is difficult, do not have television in English, among others. One teacher articulated this perception as follows:

> Well, depending on the ages. When they are children, they are open to everything. They like English and are not afraid to repeat, to say, to ask, to try. Logically writing for them in English, as they are just acquiring the written code, and because it is in English, is even more difficult. When they are bigger, it is the embarrassment block, of wanting to express myself and feeling that they are doing everything wrong and, "What am I saying wrong. I'm saying it wrong. I have to move my mouth in another way." So, that mental block is very difficult and when they are adults they still have the idea that it is very difficult, that they will never learn it, that English is the worst, that I am doing it "super bad." Believing that they cannot do it is complicated.

In the questionnaire with parents, only a small percentage responded, but when asked about children's motivation, many of the them agreed with the statement. However, some parents still said that their children do not like English:
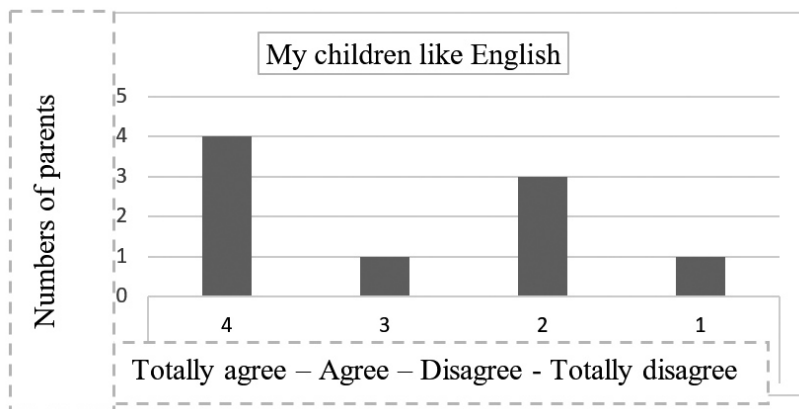

Figure 3. Parents' perceptions of children's attitudes towards English

When teachers and management staff saw the results of the student questionnaires, they were amazed. One perception:

It's a surprise! Because as I mentioned to you, it seemed to me, they had a conception that it was not important to their lives. But seeing the results of the survey, then, then, it makes me think yes, that really for them it is something of vital importance for their training as people. So, it is a good thing that motivates me to think that then things are being done, somehow, well.

Other consciousness from the management staff was:

Yes! Yes! It is noticeable, really, seeing it already in the graph. It changes our perception really, because we think that the kids are not much interested in learning another language. But, we understand that there they demonstrate that yes, for them it is important. I would believe that it is because of the teacher who manages to make the kids love it. That it is important that they love what they do and transmit that to their students.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In terms of improvement, English teachers agreed that if schools really want to improve their conditions, teachers, management staff, secretary and Ministry of Education must be aware of these needs. Participants identified several aspects to consider for improvement:

a) Each school has particular conditions.

b) Curricular work is needed.

c) Agreements between schools are needed.

d) Teachers in the eleven schools need to be trained to know and fulfill their obligations in terms of bilingualism.

e) Management staff needs to be aware of their obligations to bilingualism and guide the different groups in the schools to be trained.

f) The need to put institutional commitments in the corresponding official documents, such as the institutional educational project.

g) English laboratories are required in order to really improve students' skills.

h) All teachers need training to improve their level of English as well as appropriate pedagogical strategies to use with their students.

One teacher expressed this in the following way:

Well, we would need at least one teacher for each institution, a teacher who is prepared even with an elementary level if not with the level that is needed because children, no matter how small, need a fully prepared teacher. We would need more hourly intensity, at least four hours a week of English within the organization of the schedule. We would need the tools that the school does not have at the moment (We need the Internet running at a much better speed). We have computers in this school, we have tablets,

then the teacher who is prepared would know how to work with that and can find the programs and everything you need to work with children. Then the tools. For example, in this school. I don't know that in all the schools of the city, nor of the rural ones it is this way, but in this school, we have the technological tools that are needed, but we do not have the personnel qualified to do it.

Moreover, parents identified that English teachers must be competent and the school needs to do more activities in order to improve students' English skills. They were asked their opinion about teachers' competence for the adequate teaching of English and they responded as follows. Likewise, in the students' questionnaire all groups strongly agreed with this statement.
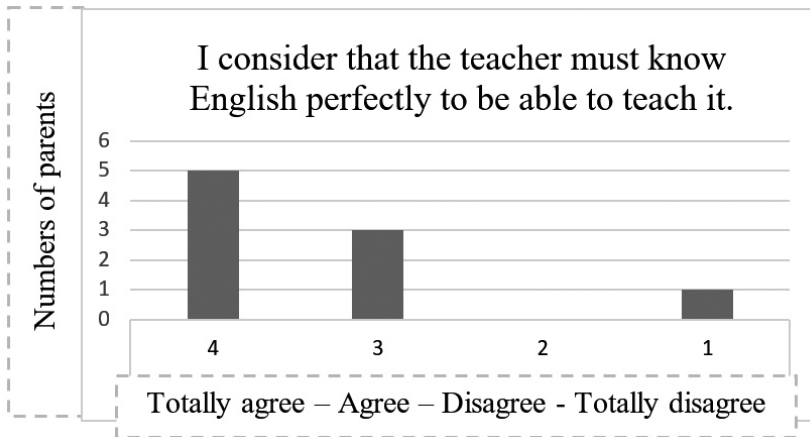
Figure 4. Parents' perception of English teacher proficiency

These affirmations reveal that parent identified the importance of the level of knowledge and skills that are needed in a teacher that teach English as a second language. Finally, many conditions are necessary to overcome and to offer a better quality in English teaching. Among them are the level of the fulfillment of public policy in rural schools, the institutional actions, mastery of the language of teachers and management staff.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to identify conditions for improvement of English language standards in eleven rural public schools in Bogotá. It regarded the conditions that exist that may facilitate or hinder improvement programs. The study also aimed to identify some requirements needed to facilitate improvement programs in these schools. In general terms, the results showed that these rural schools have particular conditions where they can improve their English learning process. The institutional educational projects of the two groups of primary schools and the high school do not contain anything in writing about the purpose of English or the school's obligations to bilingualism. Managers have not thought about those commitments with English

as a second language. They consider English as any other area in the curriculum. They have distributed basic materials as with other areas.

Teachers and management staff realized that they need to agree in terms of English improvement for that rural region, not only internal to each group of primary but between them and high school. They reported the need to find external support, maybe from the district Secretary or from the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, they affirmed that it is necessary all teachers, managers and administrative staff need to improve their English level and to know the obligations with the bilingualism. Additionally, participants reported the demand to decide the best ways for parents to know about the importance of bilingualism and the purposes in each school.

English teachers of the two groups and the high school identified the importance of meetings regularly to take into account how they would want to develop English area in the region. Likewise, they recognized the meaning of presenting their objectives, with the central and national level, with the purpose of giving adequate support and resources to facilitate conditions that enable English classes and make standards possible in these rural institutions. For example, overcome complications such as connectivity, laboratories, books, specific materials, among others.

In terms of student motivation, teachers reported that schools need to emphasize in the students' English motivation in primary and what happen in secondary and high school in order to find out the best way to develop all their skills beyond their limitations because they recognize that they need English in their lives.

In regards to the findings and the literature reviewed for this research, several connections can be highlighted. In terms of general organization of each school in order to improve students' achievement in English, the study could identify major failures of organization and agreement. As McKinsey and Company (2010) emphasized in their study, there is a correlation between levels of performance and the degree of narrow or central control over the school processes. They defined three ways that school systems have improved: 1) collaborative practices; 2) developing a mediation between central administration and schools; and, 3) prospective leadership. When in this study, participants identified several problems, some of them related to organization and administration, they took into account the schools' responsibilities with their communities in the development of English as a second language. In these terms, there are a connection with McKinsey and Company's study (2010).

In terms of rural schools, the study found out that there are general needs but there are particular issues too. As found by Freeman, et al (2005), it is of crucial importance to understand contexts deeply. They said that it is basic to know teachers, administrators, families and students, as well as their strengths and needs. If these processes were possible, the rural schools in this study might raise improvement in general, and in English learning process in particular.

Regarding the connections between many studies in Colombia related to the topic of this study, it is important to highlight meeting points. For example, in this study, interview questions identified that teachers have had to improve their English level with their own resources. Further, in primary school, there are not enough English teachers. Sanchez (2013) analyzed how English as a second language has been implemented in schools in Colombia and how schools may improve their outcomes. He advised paying attention to teacher training, and

support for primary school teachers in the second language. Besides, Correa, et al. (2014) discovered that participants had little knowledge about the program. Participants reported that they were not invited to an official presentation of the program of bilingualism, as this study identified. They advised the importance of a real comprehension of the linguistic and educational English needs.

Some limitations of this study include the participation of parents. If more parents had participated in the questionnaires, it would have been possible to identify more clearly their perception as a rural community. Similarly, if more teachers had been able to participate, for example, from primary schools or from different areas, the analysis could have been more complete. The short time was, definitely, a limitation for the study.

In terms of future research, it would be interesting to inquire into English learning processes in many other rural schools in Bogotá and Colombia. Specifically, it would be interesting to study ways that rural schools construct methodologies to develop English in those places and to compare them. Another option is to emphasize parents and students' perceptions about second language acquisition. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate how the Ministry and Secretaries of Education implement programs to show and support obligations towards bilingualism in rural schools. Finally, it would be significant to analyze the possibility of creating specific criteria for bilingualism within public policy for rural schools.

ACTION PLAN

- Rural schools should be aware of their obligations towards the national plan of bilingualism and include these obligations in their official documents.

- Rural schools should guarantee the adequate pedagogical and technological resources for the teaching of English.

- Rural schools should guarantee training for all teachers to improve their English skills.

- Management staff should know and study the requirements for English as a second language.

- Management staff should be transformed into prospective leadership.

- Management staff and English teachers in the eleven rural schools should have regular meetings in order to agree on common strategies in the area.

- Each school or group of schools should agree on action plans around common purposes of the area.

- English teachers should continue training and updating their knowledge and pedagogical strategies.

- The eleven rural schools should visualize the importance of English as a second language with the entire educational community.

- The eleven rural schools should carry out activities aimed to show that English is basic and important nowadays.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for students

Research: Conditions for Improvement of English Language Standards in Eleven Rural Public.

Dear students, thank you for participating in the research on Conditions for the improvement of English language standards in rural public schools in Usme. Your opinion is of utmost importance for the development of the subject and the possibility of improving some conditions.

This survey is anonymous and the information you provide and your identity will be kept confidential.

The approximate time required to respond to the survey is 10 minutes. Please be as honest as possible with your answers.

In the following statements, please indicate your degree of agreement:

Strongly Agree   Strongly Disagree

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

1. I like English.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

2. I like how the teacher teaches English.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

3. In elementary school I learned a lot of English that helped me to reach a good level to sixth grade.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

5. I like activities more when I have to listen and try to understand, for example, movies or songs.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

6. I like activities more when I have to write my own ideas.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

10. I think learning English is important for my life.

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

11. I consider that my teacher must know English perfectly to be able to teach it.

☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1

12. My parents should know or learn English.

☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1

13. What do you mean by bilingualism?

_____

14. Why do you think it is important to learn English?

_____

15. Describe in a few words how you consider your level of English.

_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for parents

Research: Conditions for Improvement of English Language Standards in Eleven Rural Public.

Dear parents, thank you for participating in the research on Conditions for the improvement of English language standards in rural public schools in Usme. Your opinion is of utmost importance for the development of the subject and the possibility of improving some conditions.

This survey is anonymous and the information you provide and your identity will be kept confidential.

The approximate time required to respond to the survey is 10 minutes. Please be as honest as possible with your answers.

In the following statements, please indicate your degree of agreement:

Strongly Agree   Strongly Disagree

☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

1. My child likes English.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

2. My child likes as his English teacher teaches.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

3. My child likes the activities that the English teacher does.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

4. The school carries out many activities for my child to learn English.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

5. The school teaches everything my child needs to know in English.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

6. I consider that the teacher must know English perfectly to be able to teach it.

   ☐ 4   ☐ 3   ☐ 2   ☐ 1

7.   As a parent, I must know or learn English to be able to lead by example.

8.   What do you mean by bilingualism?

   _____

9.   What do you think is the purpose of English in school?

   _____

10. Why do you think English is important to your children?

   _____

APPENDIX C

Interviews for coordinators, staff and teachers

Notions:

What do you mean by?

Bilingual education

Bilingualism

English as a second language

English as a foreign language

What is your opinion of learning English as a second language?

Commitments from the management role:

What is your role as a manager in the development of English as a foreign language?

Do you think English standards are achievable for a rural school?

What do you think of the national bilingualism plan?

How have the school's commitments to the national bilingualism plan and district bilingualism plan developed?

Do you agree that the commitments of English as a foreign language are embodied in the PEI document? Where?

The group of teachers is aware of the commitments of the school with bilingual education?

What support have they received from the central or national level related to the bilingualism plan?

What strategies have you used as a manager to socialize aspects of the national bilingualism plan?

What strategies have you used as a manager to build and develop the institutional training plan with the English area?

Have you received any support from the central or national level for the development of teacher training plans in the English area?

What do you consider the most important curricular aspects to develop from English as a foreign language?

What do you consider the most difficult aspects to implement in the teaching-learning process of English in rural schools?

Do you consider that there are differences between the learning process and the teaching of English in urban and rural schools?

How do you describe the methodology used by foreign language teachers to teach English?

What do you expect from the students when they finish the basic primary in the development of the foreign language?

Do you consider that external support is necessary for the development of the area? Why?

What support would you consider it would be necessary to meet the commitments of English as a foreign language for 2019 in the schools you address?

Questions of the result of analysis of student questionnaire

How would you interpret the finding of questionnaires of the score given by other schools as opposed to the other group with respect to the taste for English?

How would you interpret the results again with higher scores in the group of other schools regarding the development of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)?

Characterization managers:

Age range in which they are

Undergraduate degree

Other studies

Years of experience in private schools

Years of experience in public schools

Years at school.

What have been your motivations to work in the rural sector?

APPENDIX D

Questions for English Teachers

Notions:

What do you mean by?

Bilingual education

Bilingualism

English as a second language

English as a foreign language

What is your opinion of learning English as a second language?

Commitments as an English teacher:

Do you believe that English standards are achievable for a rural school?

What do you think of the national bilingualism plan?

How have the school's commitments to the national bilingualism plan and district bilingualism plan developed?

Do you agree that the commitments of English as a foreign language are embodied in the PEI document? Where?

Do you consider that the group of teachers is aware of the commitments of the school with bilingual education?

How do you describe the support received from the principal (from the coordinator and the principal) in the construction and development of the curriculum and English curriculum?

In what institutional plans of teacher education in the English area did you participate? Describe the most important contributions.

What local, district or national teacher training plans have you participated in in the English area? Describe the most important contributions.

Have you presented any standardized English proficiency test? Which one? Do you think that teachers should present them to demonstrate their quality as a teacher?

What do you consider the most important curricular aspects to develop from English as a foreign language?

What do you consider the most difficult aspects to implement in the teaching-learning process of English with your students?

How do you describe the methodology you use in class development? Have you used others? What were the main reasons for changing it?

What are your main purposes in teaching English with primary school children (with junior high school / middle school)?

Describe how important your classes are in developing the skills of: speaking, reading, writing, listening.

Do you consider that your "way of being" affects the learning of your students?

What do you think your students expect from English classes?

What do parents expect from English language development?

Do you consider that there are differences between the process of learning-teaching of English in urban and rural schools?

What support would you consider it would be necessary to fulfill the commitments of English as a foreign language for the year 2019 in the schools you address?

Characterization of teachers:

Age range in which they are

Undergraduate degree

Other studies

Years of experience in private schools

Years of experience in public schools

Years at school.

What have been your motivations to work in the rural sector?

Questions of the result of analysis of student questionnaire

How would you interpret the finding of questionnaires of the score given by other schools as opposed to the other group with respect to the taste for English?

How would you interpret the results again with higher scores in the group of other schools regarding the development of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)?

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS FORMATIVE AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT AND ITS EFFECT ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATION

Juan Carlos Figueroa Pinilla

Many English teachers in Colombian high schools cite students' lack of motivation as an important obstacle to learning. However, teachers may not be aware as to how their practices, specifically their assessment practices, may play a role in dampening students' motivation towards the target language. English teacher Juan Carlos Figueroa has been interested in documenting the ways in which task-based learning linked to formative assessment may provide a light for students in that it encourages and rewards real life involvement with the language, benefitting student motivation in very positive ways. This in turn may help teachers change their mindsets about evaluation and help them embrace assessment practices that enhance learning, engagement, and motivation.

ABSTRACT

Key words:
Assessment,
Motivation, Attitude,
Student performance,
Peer assessment,
Assessment for
learning

This study explored the impact of formative and authentic assessment on high school students' performance in English language classes, and identified both students and teachers' attitudes, mindsets, and practices including motivation and engagement. The project was conducted with a group of 9th grade students and teachers from the *I.E.D Nuestra Señora de Fatima* in the municipality of Sasaima, Cundinamarca. Data collection techniques included questionnaires of students and teachers, teacher interviews, and documentary analysis. The results indicate that teachers find that that using formative assessment produces valuable benefits, including a higher impact on student performance and motivation. This type of assessment also changes students' mindsets, and improves communicative and social skills. Better attitudes using feedback lead to a potential for greater confident classroom interaction for applying assessment strategies.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:
Evaluación Formativa,
Motivación,
Actitud, Desempeño
del Estudiante,
Evaluación Formativa
entre Compañeros,
Evaluación Formativa
Para el Aprendizaje

Este estudio exploró el impacto de la auténtica evaluación formativa en el desempeño de estudiantes de secundaria en las clases de inglés. El estudio también identificó las actitudes tanto de estudiantes como de profesores, su mentalidad y sus prácticas incluyendo su motivación y su nivel de compromiso. El proyecto fue llevado a cabo en un grupo de estudiantes y profesores de noveno grado del *I.E.D Nuestra Señora de Fátima* en el municipio de Sasaima, Cundinamarca. Las técnicas de recolección de datos incluyeron cuestionarios para los alumnos y profesores, entrevistas con los profesores y análisis documentales. Los resultados indican que los profesores consideran que el uso de una evaluación formativa produce considerables beneficios que incluyen un alto impacto en el desempeño y la motivación estudiantil. Este tipo de evaluación además modifica la mentalidad de los estudiantes y mejora las habilidades sociales y comunicativas. La mejora de la actitud por el uso de la retroalimentación conlleva un potencial de alta confianza en la interacción del salón de clase derivado de la aplicación de estas estrategias de evaluación.

INTRODUCTION

In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to assess, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. Formative and authentic assessment are useful to identify individual students' weaknesses and strengths so that educators can provide specialized academic support. Formative assessments may take many forms, from more formal quizzes and assignments to informal questioning techniques and in-class discussion with students. Teachers can then use the results to modify and enhance teaching strategies during an instructional period. Students can also change their mindsets about their skills, feel more confident, and increase their self-esteem through authentic assessment.

Many studies have shown that effective outcomes from students are essential in order to increase motivation in the classroom and meaningful learning through effective assessment. This means that teachers can apply and use formative and authentic assessment, using their own special skills to involve students in the active learning process, and engage knowledge with students' interests and daily lives. By using such strategies, results may be higher and learning may more clearly show students' success. It is also possible to enhance student attitudes and impact their learning processes greatly.

Other studies show that appropriate assessment helps teachers gather information to plan and modify teaching and learning programs for individual students, group of students, and the class as a whole. Assessment for learning provides students with information and guidance, so they can plan and manage the next steps in their learning. Students use feedback to move from what has been learned to what needs to be learned next.

Teachers have the tools to increase interest in classes, units, lessons, feedback or assessment, but they sometimes forget the magic that students have for learning. Sometimes teachers forget to provide a safe and comfortable environment, or to create and imagine new ways for teaching and interact with students. For this reason, it was found to be interesting to investigate how formative and authentic assessment could change students and teachers' attitudes, and at the same time, improve outcomes and abilities in 9th graders at a public school in Sasaima, Cundinamarca.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the effect of formative and authentic assessment on *Nuestra Señora de Fatima* high school student's performance in English language class?

What is the impact of formative and authentic assessment on *Nuestra Señora de Fatima* high school student's attitudes and mindsets, specifically related to engagement and motivation?

What are teacher's attitudes and practices towards formative and authentic assessment?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the way teachers can improve talents, skills, and goals in students' learning processes. It is also one of the most important tools to encourage students in their path towards knowledge, through the use of different assessment strategies. Assessment can also be understood as a global term for gathering information for the purpose of decision making (Guskey, 2007). Assessment may be a task that helps teachers to diagnose students, through placement tests and meaningful achievements. It is important to understand how positive feedback may help students improve their proficiency and outcomes. However, it is also important to understand that assessment is a way to change learners' mindsets and can help them to acquire an appropriate attitude towards the learning process (Burke, 2009). When teachers want to assess students, they should bear in mind specific options other than tests, including alternative, authentic and formative assessment.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Alternative assessment is the way to use activities that reveal what students can do using language skills, emphasizing their strengths instead of their weakness. In this way, students can reflect on and evaluate their own learning and linguistic development. In alternative assessment, teachers may apply authentic tasks that demonstrate students' abilities in order to support successful teaching-learning processes. Some useful activities include portfolios, task observation, work samples, team projects, and strategies to increase creativity (Luongo-Orlando, 2003).

Alternative assessment is very useful for designing new tools for learning, new tasks to engage knowledge, and real purposes from students. One of the most important ways to encourage higher achievement is to provide feedback according to the results and to modify specific standards, guidelines, or rubrics in order to review and achieve positive reinforcement (Erwin, 1991).

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Authentic assessment is a form of "assessment in which students are asked to perform real world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills" (Burke, p. 14). An authentic assessment usually includes a task for students to perform that will be evaluated. Examples include real life situations in context (realia), applying knowledge and abilities, and new language challenges. Authentic assessment involves students in tasks that require the application of knowledge and skills in real-life situations and tasks (Luongo-Orlando, 2003). Benefits of this type of assessment include the possibility to help students be more creative, critical, to look for success, and think differently according the way they are evaluated.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment refers to a variety of strategies and methods used to conduct in-process evaluations of students' learning needs and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessment helps teachers identify learning problems, support skills, recognize difficulties, and adapt strategies. It is very important to collect detailed information and academic support in order to use and improve instruction for students (Burke, 2009). Teachers can apply teaching or learning modifications and achieve effective teaching. Formative assessment is useful in the classroom and includes actions of listening, observing, and gathering evidence to evaluate the learning and development of children in the classroom context (Burke, 2009). In these actions, teachers assess the entire learning-teaching process, listening, observing, supporting, and collecting evidence to evaluate students' performance in order to improve their weaknesses, applying meaningful learning every class (Guskey, 2009).

Marzano (2010) explains the link between learning progressions and formative assessment, and how the development of learning progressions has become a prominent focus in the field of formative assessment as follows:

> The purpose of formative assessment is to provide feedback to teachers and students during the course of learning about the gap between students' current and design performance so that action can be taken close the gap. To do this effectively, teachers may have in mind a continuum of how learning develops in any particular knowledge domain so that they are able to locate students current learning status and decide on pedagogical action to move students' learning forward. Learning progressions that clearly articulate a progression of learning in a domain can provide the big picture of what is to be learned, support instructional planning, and act as a touchstone for formative assessment. (Marzano, 2010, p. 45)

When teachers assess through formative assessment, they can develop standards based on content, measured topics, and clear goals in order to motivate students (Guskey, 2009). Furthermore, if students apply knowledge through formative tasks, they can recognize new skills in their daily lives through activities that allow them to increase their academic performance. Moreover, teachers may also use an effective system of grading that, when used uniformly and consistently, can yield much more valid and reliable information that provided by traditional grading system (Brookhart, 2008).

Formative assessment became popular after Black and William (1998) summarized findings from more than 250 studies on formative assessment, and in recent years, has become very popular. It is typically contrasted with summative assessment. As Brookhart (2008, p. 45) explains, "Formative assessment means information gathered and reported for use in the development of knowledge and skills, and summative assessment means information gathered and reported for use in judging the outcome of that development." In addition, formative assessment can assess more effectively and provide better results than summative assessment because in the learning process, teachers think beyond grades or scores. They have the opportunity to reflect about ways of conducting comprehensive assessment in students.

ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Assessment can become an integral part of instructional processes. In this way, teachers may have the opportunity to change their approach in three important ways. "They can (1) use assessments as sources of information for both students and teachers; (2) follow assessments with high-quality corrective instruction, and (3) give students second chances to demonstrate success" (Guskey, 2007, p. 27). In this case, teaching practices have to change. Guskey (2007) argues that teachers must think about and use assessments differently than their teachers did, in order to include new ideas, creative classes, and meaningful learning.

Some authors argue that if teachers change their way to assess, they will help to improve performance, outcomes, and students' goals. Burke (2009) argues that it is very important that teachers change and adapt their methods, strategies and teaching practices for, the new generation of students. Teachers should change their mindset and reflect about the new minds they have in the classroom and the new teaching they have to apply every day. He advocates assessment as one of the major components in the restructured school.

Guskey further argues that some types of assessment do not always measure significant learner achievement, do not focus on thinking abilities, nor do they always reflect whole understanding, or the most important concepts about a subject or a topic required on tests. This is important because teachers must keep in mind that tests do not always assess everything that students are learning. The role is to increase creativity and critical thinking in our students in order to help them in their educational progress, not only to use tests as a method to score and compare students, public or private schools, or countries (Guskey, 2009).

Clear goals and student performance. When teachers assess students, it is important to think about what the achievements are and appropriate targets they are going to develop with students in the classroom. Besides, it may help teachers to understand how clear goals encourage students to knowledge, when they apply effective tasks, and formative assessment tools. Brookhart further argues that one of the purposes of evaluations usually leads to feedback content and skills, and there are many ways in which assessment can be used. A standardized assessment can be a high- stakes assessment, for example, but so can other forms of assessment that are not standardized tests. A portfolio of student work can be used as both a "formative" and "summative" form of assessment. Teacher- created assessments, which may also be created by teams of teachers in order to encourage more successful students, and increase recognition of patterns such as classroom behavior, strengths, and challenges such as whether a student has a particular learning need, or disability. In short, assessments are usually created with certain approaches and focus on students' performance (Brookhart, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are extensive studies about how students can improve performance in the classroom through new assessment strategies and alternative methods, and how to encourage, support, and engage students to knowledge applying formative and authentic assessment. Literature

reviewed for this study focused on the positive effects and changes that students can show every class, and teachers can evidence in their teaching process.

IMPROVING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Research has found that teachers who place more emphasis on holistic and formative assessment can support and maintain learning outcomes. One study on improving assessment looked at secondary students and teachers who used formative assessment for six months. Results provide firm evidence that improving formative assessment does produce tangible benefits in terms of externally-mandated assessments (William, Lee, Harrison & Black, 2004). Researchers analyzed two science and two mathematics teachers, in each of six schools. Schools were supported over a six-month period in exploring and planning their approach to formative assessment, and then, teachers put these plans into action with selected classes.

Research conducted by Brown, Irving, Peterson, and Hirschfeld (2009) aimed to investigate students' conceptions of assessment, how students' defined assessment, and how student conceptions of assessment related to their definitions of formative assessment. Most students agreed that formative assessment was to help them improve knowledge they associated with teacher controlled practices and experiences in the classroom. Results showed that students feel that they obtain better outcomes using positive feedback through assessment process.

AUTHENTIC PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Innovative assessment practices have the potential to shift the way teachers practice peer assessment, and give the opportunity to engage students in a real learning process. In general, findings indicate that many teachers find peer and self-assessment useful in their classes, and that there is potential for greater classroom use of new assessment strategies. In one study, Noonan and Duncan (2005) explored the effects of the nature and frequency of high school teachers' use of peer and self-assessment for learning. They defined formative strategies as the feedback provided by teachers during the formation stage of learning to check on student learning outcomes. Data for this study were collected as part of a survey of 118 high school teachers' assessment practices in Canada. Results showed that assessment strategies can increase students' high level of reflection. They argue further that assessment for learning is based on a student-involved approach to classroom assessment.

Another study related to peer and self-assessment was conducted by Kearney (2013) and analyzed students' engagement and performance. This research presented initial, qualitative findings from student surveys in order to incorporate an Authentic Self & Peer Assessment for Learning (ASPAL) model. They found that by incorporating the ASPAL model, students were more engaged, had increased efficacy, and felt that they were a part of the educative process, rather than being subjected to it.

PRACTICES OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

One of the most important strategies to increase effective learning is to create realistic tasks or challenges. Students may integrate a variety of knowledge and skills brought to bear on a real context interaction. Turnbull (2006) investigated the context of assessment and its relationship to achievement as well as the importance of teacher knowledge to students' technological practice. This study used the same assessment task in two different ways with selected students from the same six classes. Initially, the task was used as an 'out-of-context' assessment task. This meant that students were asked to complete the task before being involved in any study of the relevant technological practice. The most important change was understanding of technological practice outside the classroom but involving students "in the context." This research supported technological practice, which identified four constraints that influence student practice through authentic assessment. A significant factor is teacher knowledge as it impacts greatly on the quality of feedback given to students by their teachers. Authors advocate timely teacher intervention and formative assessment feedback.

In the same way, Harlen (2005) examined classroom assessment practices of 3rd- through 12th-grade teachers in order to determining the frequency with which specific assessment item formats were utilized. The practices were selected as quality classroom assessment in middle grades schools, which had the potential to improve learning, if teachers involved students in assessment process. Students learn through meaningful, hands-on experiences in the classroom that is collaborative in nature and involves students in the decision-making process. As a result, findings in this study suggest that better assessment at the classroom level can have positive impacts on student learning, and support teachers' efforts at improving classroom assessment.

SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION

Taking into account strategies applied in a positive classroom in order to encourage self-esteem and motivation, authors argue that these factors affect an individual level of motivation, competence and autonomy and they are basic needs for human beings to obtain success in life. Harlen (2005) explored the use of assessment for learning (formative assessment) and assessment of teachers and students from high-school-learning (summative assessment), and found that it affects students in positive or negative way according to effective feedback. The research evidence reviewed showed that teachers that only evaluate via summative assessment need to consider that each student is different, and that they may harmonize with students by applying formative assessment. The detailed results show specific criteria and suggest that formative assessment increases motivation in learners and that teachers adopt a new style of teaching, which emphasizes reflection about teaching, knowledge, and motivation. Also, students prefer to learn in this way because they increase self-esteem through more active and creative learning experiences.

Another study was conducted to find out the benefits of using a constructivist model of formative and authentic assessment to increase and involve teachers in working on classroom assessment. Collaborative knowledge constructed through authentic assessment and field-based experiences

have confirmed that these kinds of opportunities for teachers are critical and useful to improve assessment tasks as well as teachers' abilities in applying classroom assessment. Useful feedback to students is collected daily in the classroom, and better assessment at the classroom level can have a positive impact on student learning as learners feel more confident and motivated about learning. At the same time, this research introduces and provides an example of one district that has worked on classroom assessment in a substantial way. It describes professional development approaches that can be used to support teacher' efforts at improving classroom assessment. Authors also describe lessons learned based on their experiences with districts. Finally, the results suggest that better assessment at the classroom level can have a meaningful impact on student learning, and support teachers' efforts at improving classroom assessment (McMunn, McColskey, & Butler, 2004).

USE OF RUBRICS

A rubric is a criteria chart or a plan that identifies a piece of students' work. It can be an essay test, paper, communicative activity, or some other student production. The rubric is very useful for describing qualities or characteristics of performance in different levels. The best rubrics offer important details for each category or task.

In a study reviewed by Jonnsson and Svingby (2007), several databases were searched for empirical research on rubrics to improve formative assessment. This research investigated whether evidence for these claims can impact meaningful learning and formative learning process. The results show that the reliable scoring of performance assessments can be enhanced by the use of rubrics, especially if they are analytic, topic-specific, and complemented with exemplars and/or rater training. Finally, rubrics facilitate valid and performance assessments, increasing and improving students skills.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used in this study was based on qualitative, naturalistic and ethnographic research to the extent that it contemplated humans as constructing their own meanings of situations, sharing their values and behaviors, and establishing social interactions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this way, this research tried to understand how formative and authentic assessment could help students and teachers to change their attitudes about evaluation, and improve the performance and motivation of students in the classroom.

Naturalistic inquiry is research that focuses on how people behave when they are observed in genuine life experiences in natural settings. As this research sought to understand how formative and authentic assessment could improve outcomes and student performance, it was necessary to inquire about the characteristics of the group involved via selected instruments to acquire

this information. The advantages of the "human instrument" in the research, building on their tacit knowledge, and in addition, using methods with human inquiry, swuch as questionnaires and interviews of the participants. The advantage of the "human instrument" is his or her adaptability, responsiveness, knowledge, ability to handle sensitive matters, to explore, analyze, summarize" (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 170).

CONTEXT

The *Institucion Educativa Departamental Nuestra Señora de Fátima* is a public school located in the center of Cundinamarca, in the Gualiva region. It serves both urban and rural areas, offering meaningful learning according to the Institutional Education Project or *Proyecto Educativo Institucional* (P.E.I), and strives towards quality at all levels of academic formation. Next year, the school will articulate with vocational programs offered through the national vocational education service, or *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA), and will offer technical and technological programs through institutional agreements with the educational community in order to grant a technical degree in four areas: systems, green environment, cooking, and agriculture.

The school has two urban area branches in the center of the town: primary and secondary, and nine rural area branches, which offer basic education (K-5). Each branch section has a coordinator. The school works in morning shift.

Work with formative and alternative assessment. In the year previous to the study, the school began a Meaningful Learning Project to promote the use of formative and alternative assessment. We included specific guidelines for formative assessment in the school's Institutional Evaluation System (*Sistema Institucional de Evaluacion, S.I.E)*. including the following:

- The evaluation in the school is and has been continuous, integral, dialogical, qualitative, systematic, flexible, interpretive, participatory and formative and is expressed in descriptive and qualitative and quantitative reports that respond to these characteristics.

- Teachers have the opportunity to apply and increase meaningful tasks, stimulate the reinforcement of values, habits and attitudes. Also, they should help each student to develop abilities and capacities. It is very important that students feel that they identify their personal characteristics, interests, development rhythms and learning styles.

- According to the S.I.E, teachers and students can share alternative activities for assessment, including room projects every term of the year, and show the final products in the English Day at the end of the fourth term.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this project were 35 9th graders, three English secondary teachers, and seven teachers from other areas. All work in the morning shift in a public school in Sasaima, Cundinamarca. Students were from 13 to 15 years old, coming from the town of Sasaima and surrounding villages and farms. Teachers have changed strategies about assessment in the last six months in order to apply formative and authentic tasks in order to change mindset and attitudes about traditional assessment.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection techniques were applied in order to analyze the same data from different perspectives, allowing for methodological strategies, and certainty in the findings. Cohen, et al. (2007) affirm that the more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher's confidence about the findings. The data collection proposed inquired valuable information in order to gather perception from students about formative and authentic assessment, their own development and learning performance.

This research deals with human beings feelings, beliefs, interests behaviors, practices, and life reality, a variety of techniques were used in order to obtain enough, authentic, and relevant information. Different qualitative research techniques were applied in order to gather reliable information regarding change in attitudes and mindsets about assessment, teachers' motivation, students' performance, and improving classes in the classroom.

In order to answer the research questions, the following data collection instruments were chosen:

Questionnaires. A structured questionnaire with open and closed items was designed that related to formative and authentic assessment, motivation in the classroom, and meaningful learning for life, in order to identify how the those variables were related. The questionnaires were designed based on the Likert Scale with four ordered response levels for students and five for teachers, (totally agree, agree, disagree, totally disagree), and four open questions for students and teachers (Appendices A, B). No written informed consent was obtained from respondents to the questionnaire as agreeing to complete the questionnaire is considered as informed consent. If one does not consent, one simply does not respond to the questionnaire.

Document analysis. Official school documents were reviewed, including the Institutional Evaluation System (SIE), official rules, and the Institutional Education Project (PEI) in order to understand the factors that could affect effective assessment, meaningful learning strategies, and enhancing of students' attitudes. Written institutional approval was sought and obtained for the carrying out of this study, and also for its subsequent publication as well as authorization to use the school's name in the publication.

Interviews. A guided interview approach was applied in collecting data and beliefs about the impact of assessment in students. Cohen, et al. (2007) state that interviews in qualitative research allow both interviewer and interviewees to express how a certain situation is seen

from a particular point of view and discuss the interpretation of That situation, allowing for a deeper understanding. A list of questions was created based on the information collected from the questionnaires (Appendix C), and document analysis. Four students and two teachers from grades 9th were interviewed applying questions for about 10 minutes per person. This approach allowed for conversation, and for a better level of comprehension of the data. Written informed consent was sought and obtained from all teachers and from parents of all student participants (Appendices D, E).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As data was collected from instruments that sought out participants' perceptions of facts and occurrences, using questionnaires, students/ teachers' interviews and documentary analysis. Qualitative data interpretation was required in order to analyze and account for all significant aspects discerned. Coding, graphing and quantification tasks were carried out and conducted in order to analyze and interpret the data gathered.

The teacher researcher then read through the transcribed qualitative data and established categories according common and repetitive issues in the information. In this way, the data was a key element for the qualitative analysis, in order to figure out and obtain an optimal quality of relevant information. One common procedure for achieving this is content analysis, a process by which the "many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories" (Cohen, et al., 2007).

Questionnaires. The information in every questionnaire was classified, quantified, charted, and graphed in order to see how the students and teachers answered to each question. Answers from questionnaires were tabulated in an Excel database and then graphs were generated to allow for visualization and interpretation of each finding. Twenty 9th graders and ten teachers from grades 6-11 responded to the questionnaire. The teacher researcher tabulated the data and generated bar graphs as visual techniques for each question in order to understand the data. This allowed for the appreciation of frequencies and percentages, as well as their interpretation. The open questions were transcribed and the researcher read through the transcriptions and constructed eight categories to describe *thinking and attitudes about assessment in the classroom*. These are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Category descriptions questionnaire questions.

Category	Description
Improving Formative Assessment	This category refers when teachers and students work together in order to enhance classes and assessment strategies.
Students' Benefits in the Learning Process	This category refers to when the student talks about how formative assessment helps him or her and give benefits in the learning process.
T-S Interaction	This category refers to students' mentioning their role and the teacher's role together in the process of evaluation.
Motivation in the Classroom	This category refers to motivation strategies in the learning process of students during the classes, and when they are evaluated in order to engage students with knowledge and allow students express their opinions and interests.
Change Mindsets	This category refers to students' beliefs and points of view about education and assessment strategies.
Capacities and Skills	This category refers to the different abilities that students can show or apply in the teaching-learning process in order to do a particular thing, or specific task.
Reflection about Learning	This category refers to the strategies to analyze the teaching-learning process and students' progress in class by class in successful way.
Teacher Training	This category refers to any time that teachers mention training. For example, a teacher said:" we need more formative assessment training".

Teacher and student interviews. Selected teachers and students participated in guided interviews with the purpose of collecting data on their beliefs about the impact of assessment. These interviews were recorded and transcribed in teachers and students' native language. This approach allowed for a conversation, and for a better level of comprehension of the data. The analysis of this relevant information supported the categories constructed from the answers of these interviews. Some new categories also emerged from the analysis. The categories extracted are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview categories

Categories	Description
Effective Evaluation	This category refers to evaluation as an effective tool in order to involve students into the learning process, and meaningful strategies to encourage knowledge in the classroom and improving student's interaction.
Motivation	This category refers to motivation as the internal and external factors that stimulate energy in students to be continually interested and committed to a role or a task and make an effort to attain a goal.
Assessment Strategies	This category refers to the specific strategies that teachers apply in the classroom in order to develop skills and communicative abilities according learning needs.
Formative Assessment Focus	This category refers to teachers that use formative assessment in order to gather information, adjust strategies, and instructional flexibility.

Documentary analysis. The documentary analysis was done of the Institutional Evaluation System1 from the school. The documentary analysis inquired about assessment criteria issues and valuable information related to the way students may be evaluated. From the review and documentary analysis these categories emerged:

Table 3. Categories document analysis

Categories	Description
Assessment Criteria	This category refers to some established criteria as far as evaluation is concerned, since the students must know the parameters and achievements from the beginning of the academic year.
Talents and Skills	This category refers to school's emphasis on agro-culture prepares students for working life skills, and in this way the evaluation must be connected with their talents and skills.
Student's Process	This category refers to valuable aspects that teachers find out, such as strengths and weaknesses during student`s process applying formative and authentic assessment.
Strategies for success	This category refers to formative assessment strategies as a starting point, individual qualities of each student, their personal interests and likes, and how to project some progress and success in their academic life, their work, personal and family environment were taking into account.
Values,Principles and attitudes	This category refers to values and principles that help students to be a good person into society. Also, there are some criteria that guide the educational community.
Self/peer-Evaluation	This category refers to interaction and development of communicative skills, so that the students are part of their own learning process, self-evaluation and peer- evaluation.
Summative Assessment	This category refers to summative assessment as a tool for helping and define grading or specific score. Records or ranks of students' performances are valuable support to apply the pertinent criteria to the academic and formative performance of each student.
Academic Promotion	This category refers to teachers who take into account accumulated qualification during the learning processes, but students have more opportunities to promote because formative assessment can be integrated in the final qualitative results of the students as a whole process.
Academic Incentives	This category refers to academic incentives that students have if students demonstrate exceptional academic and formative skills to achieve goals.
Parents' support	This category refers to the participation of parents as a fundamental core in the educational and pedagogical learning process.

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[1] S.I.E. (Sistema Institucional de Evaluación)

RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected allowed for the answering of the research questions of this study. In general, the findings strongly indicate the positive effects of formative and authentic assessment on students particularly. One of the most important aspects is that students increased motivation in order to obtain higher performance and attitudes when formative assessment processes were used. The impact on students shows that they prefer assessment strategies other than traditional tests because it allows them to improve their learning, communicative skills, and performance. Some students say that traditional methods are not useful for effective learning, and they prefer communicative tasks in which they can reflect, discuss, or solve problems about meaningful information or essential knowledge.

At the same time, in this research we can see that questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis were useful to determine whether teachers had changed their mindsets and adapted new assessment strategies. Students in this study think that when teachers increase motivation for improving assessment in the classroom, they feel more confident, and their interaction with partners and teachers increases their social skills in class. Students felt that formative and authentic assessment activities can enhance their competences, abilities and individual skills.

One valuable result was that formative assessment helped teachers to improve their attitudes towards students in assertive ways, and they changed their points of view about students` processes. For that reason, their academic outcomes were higher using formative and authentic assessment compared to the previous semester. Another important result was that teachers were more flexible and open minded about activities carried out as part of students' learning processes, taking into account their weaknesses, strengths interests, likes, opinions, feelings, and daily lives. This indicates that interaction and communication through formative and authentic assessment between students and teachers were more effective and higher. Also, it generated a great impact on students' academic outcomes.

Formative assessment allowed teachers to interact with students applying positive attitudes and to reflect about the whole assessment as well as important strategies including projects, self-evaluation, co-evaluation, and peer-evaluation processes. In general, formative and authentic assessment were very useful for students in order to create strong rapport in the classroom, and improved social interaction between teachers and students.

MOTIVATION

One of the most important results from the data was that the use of formative and alternative assessment had positive effects in terms of students' attitudes, confidence, and motivation. Based on the analysis of the student questionnaire, in the open questions section most of students said that they felt "more confident during interaction and could participate better. They felt that they could achieve the challenges in class without fear." Teachers interviewed concurred and mentioned;

Students say that when they presented a written test they felt scared because the score is the most important aspect in summative assessment, but using formative assessment they felt that they could do better things"

One example is a student that spends extra time studying or preparing a project showing great interest and engaging topics and lessons. Another 9th grader said this:

One of the best ways I prefer to be evaluated is using oral test, because I feel more confident and motivated with the teacher. I can speak and express my opinion, interacting and sharing my points of view, and feelings much better. I feel that writing tests is boring. I feel better when teachers evaluate my knowledge using communicative activities. Writing tests is very complicated for me, because I cannot remember some concepts from memory in my tests.

My teaching role in the classroom motivates formative assessment.
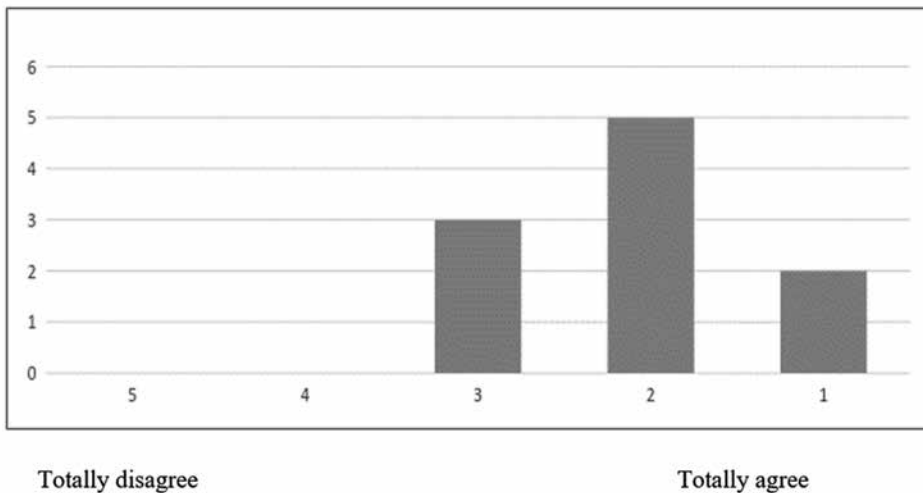
Figure 1. Motivation and role of teacher

The figure illustrates that graphic shows us that most teachers implement formative and authentic assessment in the classroom, and they agree about the importance of their role in this endeavor. Few teachers are not motivated about this topic. It indicates that the majority of teachers consider their role relevant for the learning process, and motivate students to apply meaningful tasks in the classroom.

EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

We can define effective evaluation as an effective communicative tool in order to involve students in the learning process, and meaningful strategies to encourage knowledge in the classroom and improve student interaction. Some valuable answers from the data, according to interviews applied, were useful to analyze the impact on students' communicative skills. For example, one student reports the following:

> I like that teachers evaluate using an effective evaluation using "playful activities," because I feel that I learn in higher way, and I can remember faster. In my opinion this is an effective way because I am not scared about speaking and answering oral questions,. I do not like to memorize everything. I need to learn myself doing and practicing my skills.

This indicates that students prefer formative assessment as a potential improvement for learning. Students feel that traditional methods are not useful for an effective learning. They feel more confident using formative assessment and enjoy the communicative tasks. These tasks also necessitate higher creativity and reflection on their part

CHANGING MINDSETS AND ATTITUDES

Student attitudes refer to the manner, disposition or feeling that students show with regard to a class, subject or teacher. This disposition can change students' performance and mindsets in positive or negative ways, according to opinions, beliefs and points of view that students may have about traditional assessment. In the interview, one student explained about her attitude in class:

> Formative assessment is a process in which students can express personal points of view and opinions of topics. Also, we can see our academic progress strengths and weaknesses. Teachers develop our competences and level of English language learning.

Another 9th grader mentioned some advantages:

> I like formative assessment. It is a very good type of assessment, for example in the English class the teacher helps us to learn about languages and different cultures of other countries and their traditions This class is very dynamic and authentic use for real life, I feel that I am learning. I understand that using formative assessment teachers allow students to know the level of learning that we have.

Another valuable aspect from the data analysis is that teachers think that by applying formative and authentic assessment, students can reflect about negative aspects from traditional evaluation in their performance. One teacher explained it thus:

> Unlike the traditional evaluation, formative assessment is very useful for me because it gathers much more detailed information of the teaching-learning process of my students, with the objective of making more pertinent decisions of the processes of each one. Formative assessment is fundamental since it assesses the student as an integrated

being, and the most important thing, it assesses the process more than the final result. It is qualitative evaluation, which allows us to see the weaknesses and strengths of every student and reflect in order to improve their competencies and talents. Formative assessment is very valuable for me because students feel better and show greater interest.

As the same time, students were asked to respond some to statements about formative assessment and the way they have different attitudes in the learning process.

I consider that formative and authentic assessment help me learn and change my attitude in class.
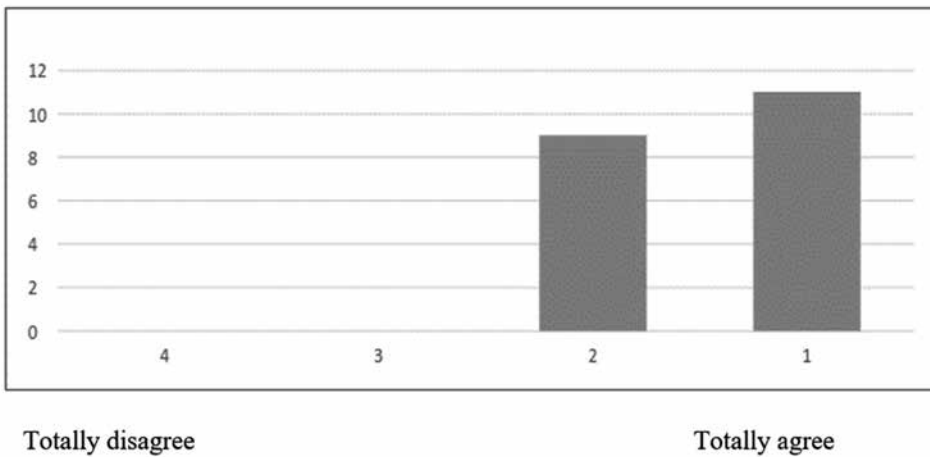

Figure 2. Formative assessment and changing attitudes in the classroom.

Figure 2 illustrates that most students feel motivated to learn when they are assessed using formative strategies. This indicates that students have an active mind and greater attitudes about the way they are evaluated.

The application of the formative and authentic evaluation allowed teachers to review previous processes they were using. Also, it was possible to compare the performance of the students, compared with the traditional evaluation. The teachers likewise showed interest in seeing students in another way and sought to increase the interests and skills in the activities carried out. This indicates that this type of assessment allowed students and teachers to change their mindsets and demonstrate more positive attitudes through the learning process.

FORMATIVE AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Based on the open questionnaire analysis some students and teachers agreed that when students have successful interaction with teachers they can create a friendly atmosphere that allows them to develop the tasks and activities. In order to assess for learning, students are engaged with knowledge and encouraged to improve class by class according the strategies applied. Teachers notice that students feel proud about their new abilities. Students' discipline also improves in order to learn more in a positive manner when teachers change some aspects of their classes. Students also expressed feeling more confident when they had to prepare formative activities. One student expressed "I began to get better at the different activities, making more effort, on my own, doing my best".

According to the data analysis, another valuable issue concerns some students who had been labeled by teachers as problematic. It was interesting to see that they changed their behavior and participated in activities at a higher level. Teachers allowed them to share their individual beliefs and this improved discipline. One teacher expressed this:

If teachers allow problem students to participate in activities and express their opinions, they are good support for the class and teachers can see students differently, and how this has a positive effect on behavior with new strategies.

In the questionnaire for students, Question 8 asked "*What do you think are the benefits of changing the type of assessment and strategies within the classes?*" One student explained this way:

It is important to change the evaluation strategies, and not always do the same routine in some classes. If the teachers change the way of evaluating, we do not get so bored and learn differently. The benefit of changing the type of evaluation may be important for applying formative evaluation to help us be more creative and motivated. It would be good to change the type of assessment to foster the personal skills and competencies of each student.

Some specific strategies in the classroom refer to those that teachers apply in order to develop skills and communicative abilities, according to learning needs. In the student questionnaire, Question 9 asked, "*What are some interesting and dynamic strategies to improve formative and authentic assessment in class*?" One student mentioned the following:

Doing oral activities to recognize and know what I have learned, play games that strengthen my learning, role play, class discussions and presentations, to demonstrate and develop our learning better. To make more dynamic explanations of participation and appropriate to our future interests and daily life. Watching videos or images, that is, in a more playful way and we can interact with the classmates and really evaluate my learning process.

At the same time, in the teachers' questionnaires, Question 3 asked, "*What do you think are the benefits of formative and authentic assessment in the teaching-learning process?*" One teacher explained the benefits:

One of the benefits of formative and authentic assessment strategies is that diagnostic tests can be used, which we can use to contribute to the learning process. In addition, this type of evaluation is not summative, allowing students to reflect on what they learn and why they learn it, since the goal is to improve and achieve successful results improving academic performance. In addition, it is flexible assessment that allows the monitoring of educational outcomes and enhances discipline in the classroom.

Afterwards, one of the most valuable contributions of formative and authentic assessment in the learning process is that students and teachers can interact using qualitative evaluations including self-evaluation, co-evaluation and peer evaluation.

One teacher reported her experience:

Interaction with students helps us to know them more and to value the things they do well and the mistakes they make. Students share points of view together and we can share evaluation criteria in the different learning processes. Afterwards, they can develop communicative and social skills. In this way, students are part of their own learning process through self-evaluation, co-evaluation and peer- evaluation.

In the SIE of the school, we can see two fundamental aspects about evaluation in the chapter "Purposes of Education: 1) Establish individual characteristics, interests, aptitudes, abilities, rhythms, and learning styles of students; and 2) Determine the progress in the learning process based on the achievements and competences developed by the students." This indicates that formative and authentic assessment strategies are a starting point to find out and encourage individual qualities of each student, their personal interests and likes.

In the questionnaires, teachers were asked about this issue:

In class, teachers give importance to cognitive and formative activities and students are assessed taking into account their abilities and interests.
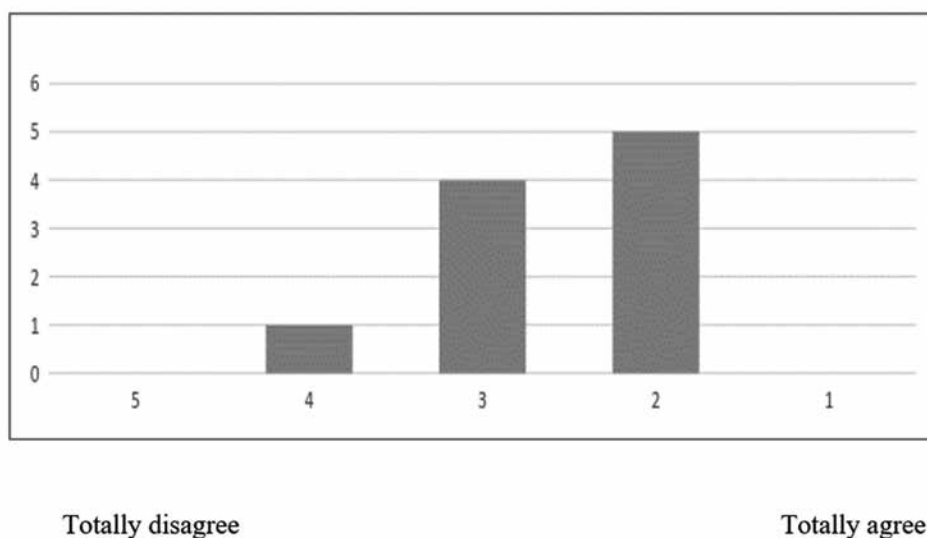

Totally disagree   Totally agree

Figure 3. Assessment increase abilities and interests

Figure 3 illustrates that most teachers agree that students' skills and abilities should be assessed for an effective evaluation process and higher outcomes. According to this graph from the questionnaires, few teachers do not agree and think that this is not necessary. This indicates that the majority of teachers give importance to formative activities related to students' interests and preferences in order to obtain greater performance in their classes.

Teachers report that they apply strategies in the classroom in order to develop communicative skills and interaction, abilities according to their learning needs. In this way, students were part of their own learning process, through self-evaluation, co-evaluation, and peer- evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to find out teachers attitudes towards formative and authentic assessment and its effect on student performance and motivation in the *I.E.D Nuestra Señora de Fatima, in Sasaima-Cundinamarca.* It also sought to determine any effects on the students and teachers who participated, and what the effects of this type of assessment could have in both students' learning processes and teaching strategies. It also looked to find out if formative and authentic assessment developed high school students' attitudes, mindsets, and enhanced performance for learning (engagement, motivation). It also examined teachers' attitudes and practices towards formative and authentic assessment. Students in this study were able to become more confident and dynamic, and showed a higher social interaction with others.

Based on the findings, it was possible to draw a number of important conclusions. It was found that the 9th graders participating in this study developed communicative skills and abilities that allowed them to feel confident and successful about their achievements and learning expectations for life. Motivation as a strategy helped students in the learning process during the classes, and when they were evaluated they showed more interest, a better attitude at the moment of activities, and engaged with knowledge and meaningful tasks. At the same time, teachers allowed students to express their opinions, likes and points of view.

Another important factor was that teachers helped use effective assessment and communicative skills as an useful tool in order to involve students into the learning environment. Also, meaningful strategies to encourage competences were applied and developed students' interaction in higher way. Students compared and expressed that traditional methods were not useful for effective learning in order to generate creativity, fluency and relevant goals. This corroborates the findings William, et al., (2004), who explored and planned their approach to formative assessment, and then, teachers put these plans into action with selected activities. Results provide firm evidence that improving formative assessment does produce tangible benefits in terms of externally mandated assessments and academic performance of students.

Another important research conducted by Brown, et al., (2009) aimed to investigate how students' conceptions of assessment related to one another, how students' defined assessment, and how student conceptions of assessment related to their definitions of formative assessment. Most students agreed that assessment was to help them, and they improve the more they associate assessment with teacher successful practices in the classroom.

When 9th graders in this study showed their knowledge and skills in classes, they connected to other peers, felt themselves improving and learning, and felt encouraged to develop their abilities. Feedback was also more positive for them. In one study, Noonan and Duncan (2005) explored the effects of the nature and frequency of high school teachers' use of peer and self-assessment for learning. They defined formative strategies as the feedback provided by teachers during the formation stage of learning to check on student learning outcomes. Results showed that assessment strategies can increase students' high level of reflection. They argue that assessment for learning is based on a student-involved approach to classroom assessment.

Students who participated in this study found out valuable differences between summative and formative assessment, related to the way teachers evaluate students and how this may increase motivation and reflection. Harlen (2005) explored the use of assessment for learning (formative assessment) and assessment of teachers and students from high-school-learning (summative assessment) and found that it affects students in positive or negative way according to effective feedback. The detailed results show specific criteria, and suggest that formative assessment increases motivation in learners, and that teachers adopt a new style of teaching, emphasizing reflection about teaching, knowledge, and motivation. Also, students prefer to learn in this way because they increase self-esteem through more active and creative learning experiences.

Some limitations of this study including the following: It could have been interesting to have involved more teachers from the rural area of the school in order to increase and share this experience with more teachers and students of other grades. Second, all 19 teachers and some parents could have been interviewed in order to know and share more learning practices about assessment. Third, there was a short amount of time and limited number of students for the

study. More information would have been able to be gathered, and this would have broadened the perspective even more and provided interesting and important information about the impact of formative and authentic assessment on student performance in a longer span of time.

For future research, it would be interesting to interview and record a native teacher or other successful teachers and strategies they use about assessment. It would also be interesting to explore more strategies about motivation and increasing positive thinking with students in the classroom. Also, it would be interesting to investigate more about the way teachers apply strategies according to different learning styles and needs. It would be very helpful and enriching to support and train teachers of the school in this study and in other similar schools in Colombia on the positive effects of formative and authentic assessment in daily academic life of students in order to enhance motivation, performance and outcomes .

ACTION PLAN

The proposed plan of action based on this study on the effects of formative and authentic assessment on students' performance and motivation, could include the following:

- Improve the formative assessment project and criteria at the school in order to improve students' abilities and teachers' strategies inside the classroom.

- Support teachers with training about assessment and share my research with them.

- Lead campaigns to improve positive thinking and job skills for life.

- Help teachers plan curriculum according assessment strategies and apply it in their daily practices.

- Review the S.I.E (*Sistema Institucional de Evaluacion*) and include new strategies and criteria in the chapter related to formative and authentic assessment.

- Create classroom projects in order to increase communicative skills.

- Help teachers and parents to establish better connection and communication in order to improve the school assessment processes.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Teachers

Cuestionario:

Proyecto de investigación sobre la evaluación formativa/auténtica y cómo puede mejorar el rendimiento y los resultados en los estudiantes.

Querido docente de secundaria. Quiero agradecer su participación en este proyecto de investigación *Evaluación formativa/auténtica.*

Esta encuesta es anónima y la información que usted suministre y su identidad serán confidenciales.

El tiempo requerido aproximado para responder la encuesta es de 15 minutos. Por Favor sea lo más honesto posible con sus respuestas.

1. ¿Qué conoce acerca de la importancia de la evaluación formativa?

   _____

   _____

En las siguientes afirmaciones, por favor indique su grado de acuerdo:

Totalmente de Acuerdo   Totalmente en Desacuerdo

   5   4   3   2   1

2. La institución educativa capacita a los docentes acerca de la importancia de la evaluación

   5   4   3   2   1

3. Considera que docentes de la institución tienen un conocimiento amplio acerca de la evaluación formativa, con el fin de crear actividades que promuevan su uso en el aula.

   5   4   3   2   1

4. Es necesario desarrollar y evaluar todas las habilidades y competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes.

   5   4   3   2   1

5. Pienso que se debe dejar tiempo de clase a la reflexión del estudiante, sobre el progreso de su aprendizaje.

   5   4   3   2   1

6. En clase se da importancia a las actividades cognitivas y se evalúa teniendo en cuenta habilidades e intereses de los estudiantes.

   5   4   3   2   1

7. Mi rol docente en clase motiva la evaluación y la coevaluación con los estudiantes.

_____

_____

8. ¿Cuál cree que sea el propósito de la evaluación formativa dentro del aula

_____

_____

9. ¿Cuál cree que son los beneficios de la evaluación formativa en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje?

_____

_____

10. ¿Cuál podría ser el faltante para implementar nuevas estrategias de evaluación formativa dentro del aula, con el fin de mejorar el desempeño de los estudiantes y sus resultados académicos?

_____

_____

Gracias, sus respuestas y aportes son de gran valor.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Students

Cuestionario:

Proyecto de investigación sobre la evaluación formativa/auténtica.

Querido estudiante de grado 901. Quiero agradecer su participación en este proyecto de investigación *Evaluación formativa/auténtica.*

Esta encuesta es anónima y la información que usted suministre y su identidad serán confidenciales.

El tiempo requerido aproximado para responder la encuesta es de 15 minutos. Por Favor sea lo más honesto posible con sus respuestas.

1. ¿Qué concepto tiene sobre la evaluación formativa?

En las siguientes afirmaciones, por favor indique su grado de acuerdo:

Totalmente de Acuerdo   Totalmente en Desacuerdo

    4   3   2   1

2. La evaluación es importante para mí en el proceso de aprendizaje.

    4   3   2   1

3. Considero que la evaluación me hace sentir motivado a aprender.

    4   3   2   1

4. Siento que cuando me evalúan tienen en cuenta mis capacidades, habilidades e intereses.

    4   3   2   1

5. Pienso que se debe dejar tiempo en clase para la reflexión sobre mi progreso en el aprendizaje.

    4   3   2   1

6. En clase se da importancia a las actividades y me evalúan teniendo en cuenta mi ritmo de aprendizaje.

    4   3   2   1

7.   En clase puedo interactuar con mis compañeros.

    4   3   2   1

8. ¿Cuál crees que son los beneficios de cambiar el tipo de evaluación dentro de las clases?

9. ¿Cuáles serían algunas actividades interesantes y dinámicas para mejorar la evaluación en clase?

10. ¿Cuáles serían algunas actividades de evaluacion para sentirme más motivado y dispuesto a mejorar mis resultados académicos?

Gracias, sus respuestas y aportes son de gran valor.

APPENDIX C

Questions for Interviews

Questions for students' interview.

- In your opinión, What type of assessment can motivate students in the learning process?

- How do you prefer be evaluated and why?

- What type of assessment do you think is not effective for motivation in the learning process of students?

- Do you consider that formative assessment can improve your performance and academic outcomes?

Questions for teachers' interview.

- What type of assessment do you consider is effective for students in the learning process?

- Do you consider that formative assessment increase higher academic results and motivation in your students?

- In you opinion, What type of assessment is not effective in the learning process of students?

- What are the assessment strategies do you prefer and why?

Preguntas para entrevista con estudiantes

- En tu opinión, ¿Qué tipo de evaluación puede motivar a los estudiantes en el proceso de aprendizaje?

- ¿Cómo prefieres ser evaluado y por qué?

- ¿Qué tipo de evaluación piensas que no es efectiva para la motivación y el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes?

- ¿Consideras que la evaluación formativa puede mejorar tus resultados y tu rendimiento académico?

Preguntas para entrevista con docentes

- ¿Qué tipo de evaluación consideramos que es efectiva para el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes?

- ¿Consideras que la evaluación formativa mejora los resultados académicos y la motivación en tus estudiantes?

- En tu opinión, ¿Qué tipo de evaluación no es efectiva en el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes?

- ¿Cuáles son las estrategias de evaluación que tu prefieres y por qué?

APPENDIX D

Teacher Consent Form

FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL PROYECTO

Declaración de edad

Tengo 18 o más años de edad.

Interés Por Participar

Yo quiero participar en el trabajo de investigación de Juan Carlos Figueroa.

Propósito

Entiendo que el propósito de este estudio es llevar a cabo una investigación sobre, Como el desarrollo de "formative and authentic assessment" puede mejorar el rendimiento y los resultados en los estudiantes, permitiendo una mejor actitud en ellos.

Procedimientos

Participaré de manera diligente en una entrevista de aproximadamente 10 minutos. Así mismo, responderé de manera muy honesta a las preguntas requeridas.

Confidencialidad

Toda la información recogida será confidencial; SÓLO será utilizada con fines académicos para la ejecución de un proyecto de investigación sobre "ASSESSMENT" . Entiendo que mi identidad será protegida y que no aparecerá en los resultados finales de este estudio.

Riesgos

Entiendo que mi participación en este estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo distinto al tiempo que emplearé al participar en una entrevista y permitir la observación de una de mis clases.

Beneficios

Entiendo que este estudio me podría permitir mejorar mi práctica docente frente al aspecto de "improving formative assessment".

Posibilidad de retiro

Entiendo que puedo retirarme de este estudio en cualquier momento que quiera o que decida.

Posibilidad para preguntar

Entiendo que puedo hacer tantas preguntas como desee, antes de y durante mi participación en este estudio.

Información de contacto del Investigador …

Firma del participante: _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Fecha: _____

APPENDIX E

Parent Consent Form

FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL PROYECTO

FORMATIVE AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT Y SU EFECTO SOBRE EL RENDIMIENTO Y LA MOTIVACIÓN DE LOS ESTUDIANTES.

Gracias por aceptar participar en este estudio, que se llevará a cabo en noviembre de 2016 en la I.E.D Nuestra Señora de Fátima del municipio de Sasaima. En este formulario se detalla el propósito de este estudio.

Las entrevistas serán grabadas para ayudar a capturar con precisión las ideas de los estudiantes en sus propias palabras. Los videos sólo serán escuchados por mí y con el solo propósito de este estudio.

Las informaciones recogidas por los estudiantes y otros participantes serán utilizadas en un informe escrito de investigación cualitativa, la cual será leída por mi tutor y presentada al comité de ÚNICA universidad para obtener mi título como especialista en educación bilingüe. Los videos de los estudiantes serán usadas por escrito, sin embargo, los nombres de los participantes y otra información de identificación se mantendrán en el anonimato y de manera confidencial.

Al firmar este formulario de consentimiento Certifico que yo padre o madre de _____ _____del curso 901, estoy de acuerdo con los términos de este consentimiento.

_____

(Firma)

(Fecha) _____

THE EFFECT OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND A TASK-BASED CURRICULUM ON ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

Nolvin López Ortega

Well-intentioned foundations seeking to help disadvantaged youth in cities like Cartagena must face the stark reality of life for these children as well as the current state of public education in much of Colombia. The Fundación Squash Urbano identifies talented youth to participate in a Squash and English language program, and has been operating in Cartagena for several years. In those years, many youth have been offered the chance to participate, and a few have continued as motivation to participate in after-school programs is uneven, even if these programs are free. In spite of obstacles to participation and poor academic preparation from the children's school, Nolvin Lopez was able, with a program of formative assessment of student tasks in a task-based learning curriculum, to demonstrate clear gains in oral proficiency of all the students in the study. The challenge goes out to similar organizations to consult with capable curriculum specialists sympathetic to the children and their conditions when attempting to address students' needs.

ABSTRACT

The present research project aimed to document the effects of formative assessment and task-based learning on the English language proficiency of basic-level English students in a sports program for disadvantaged and at-risk youth. The study's participants included 25 students from fourth, fifth, sixth, and tenth grades in an after-school program offering academic assistance, English classes, and squash training in Cartagena, Colombia. Pre- and post-tests were applied in order to measure students' oral proficiency in English before and after the intervention. Formative assessment and task-based learning were applied for a period of approximately eight months between the application of the pre and post-test. The researcher implemented lesson plans in which he carried out formative assessment and tasks recreating authentic use of the language. The findings reveal an important increase in the English level of students, and a positive effect of a task-based approach on students' learning of a second language.

Key words:
Assessment, Formative assessment, Task-based learning, English as a foreign language

RESUMEN

El presente proyecto de investigación está dirigido a documentar los efectos de la evaluación formativa y el aprendizaje basado en tareas sobre el nivel de desempeño en inglés de estudiantes de inglés de nivel básico en un programa deportivo para jóvenes en desventaja y riesgo. Los participantes en el estudio fueron veinticinco estudiantes de cuarto, quinto, sexto y décimo grados de un programa extra-escolar que ofrece asistencia académica, clases de inglés y entrenamiento de Squash en Cartagena, Colombia. Se administraron examenes de entrada y salida para medir el nivel de desempeño oral de los estudiantes antes y después de la intervención. Se suministró evaluación formativa y aprendizaje basado en tareas por un periodo de aproximadamente ocho meses entre la aplicación de los examenes de entrada y salida. El investigador implementó planes de clase en los cuales aplicó evaluación formativa y tareas que recreaban situaciones de uso auténtico del idioma. Los resultados muestran un incremento importante en el nivel de inglés de los estudiantes y un efecto positivo de la metodología basada en tareas en el aprendizaje del segundo idioma por parte de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave:
Evaluación, Evaluación formativa, Aprendizaje basado en tareas, Inglés como idioma extranjero

INTRODUCTION

Assessment and evaluation are two important aspects that are inherent in every education system. Both processes go hand in hand with other aspects such as curriculum creation, goal establishment, and decisions on methodologies or approaches to be used during the teaching-learning process of any subject. It seems then paramount for every teacher to decide on the assessment and evaluation system that is going to be followed, taking into account the setting, students' background, objectives of the course, and the kind of population. In the English as a foreign language class, learners' exposure to the language in and outside the classroom should be considered as well.

Recently in education, a movement towards using both formative as well as summative assessment has begun. According to Black and William (as cited in Chappuis, 2005) in order to improve formative assessment, teachers should reduce evaluative feedback. Examples of evaluative feedback are giving a letter mark to students such as "A+", a comment like "good job", or just telling the student, "You need to put in more effort." Instead, the kind of feedback that is descriptive should be promoted, such as "Eye contact throughout the presentation was kept."

Research on formative assessment applied in different settings has argued the advantages of its use and the impact it might have on students' second or foreign language learning process. Indeed, there is evidence of student improvement in an environment in which formative assessment is promoted. Further, teaching practices have also been shown to improve as a result of the constant follow-up on the expected outcomes from the curriculum, and their accomplishment or not by pupils and educators. Some studies also highlight the skills development of students in the second language as a secondary effect of a well-structured, outcome-driven, and student-centered assessment system.

In spite of the benefits of formative assessment, it is summative assessment that continues to be the more popular and widely used and promoted in many places, and certainly in Colombia. As such, the evidence of studies and effects on the latter in our country is still limited. According to Ayala (2015), in Bolivar, and its capital city Cartagena, 50% of students finish high school with a low level of language, mathematics, and science competence. The author argues that, among other factors, evaluation and feedback are two of the most important aspects of an education environment, and as they are directly connected to the quality of education, students' competence might improve if attention were given to these two aspects.

This research project was developed in Cartagena, Colombia. Cartagena is a city of approximately one million people located in the northern Caribbean (Atlantic) coast of Colombia. The current project was carried out in the facilities of the *Fundación Squash Urbano Colombia* (S.U.C), a non-profit organization dedicated to working with public school children from low income families in Cartagena.[2] The Foundation is located at the *Complejo de Raquetas*, which is a public sports center in which different sports such as tennis, squash, and chess are practiced.

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[2] Squash Urbano Colombia Website: http://www.squashurbanocol.org/

The after-school program offered by S.U.C. consists of an opportunity for children to go to the foundation after school to learn and practice a sport, in this case squash, learn English, and receive help and guidance in their academic process. It is hoped that this process might contribute to the improvement of students' social, academic, and personal lives by giving them opportunities not only to be physically fit but also to have an impact on their families, schools, and their communities in general.

Students at Squash Urbano are selected by a screening process for physical and language learning aptitude. They are usually boys and girls that start at S.U.C. at the age of nine or ten. They attend school from 7 to 12:30 p.m. and then they go to "Squash" to train and study English. Initial diagnostic observation of participants revealed that the students are enthusiastic about the idea of playing a new sport and learning English. However, they lack not only English knowledge and skills, but also exhibit difficulties in Spanish, their first language, including a low level of reading comprehension, lack of vocabulary, and poor writing skills. Some students also cope with other problems including attention difficulties and possible dyslexia. Others even belong to gangs.

In order to undertake the current research project, the task-based language teaching-learning approach was used due to the characteristics and advantages it can offer for the population under study. Nunan (2004) argues the importance of experiential learning as the basis for the task-based language learning approach. TBL takes the learners' immediate personal experience as the departure point for building the learning experience. The active involvement of students is central to the approach, and learning by doing is a key pillar of the curriculum and hence, the classes. This approach stands in contrast to the traditional 'transmission approach,' in which pupils acquire knowledge for the teacher. As students at Squash have limited opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom, with little material or resources for teaching and practicing, it was found necessary to follow a methodology that takes students' experiences as the starting point, and then allows the teacher to bring real life situations to the classroom so that language can be practiced as if it was taking place in a real context.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the effect of formative assessment using a task-based learning approach on the English language level of A0 students from Fundación Squash Urbano Colombia?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With the emergence of the term assessment and its evolution, some authors such as Marzano, Fullo, and Harlen have defined it in different ways, and a remarkable variety of types has developed. Some variables and parameters have been created in order to help people get the most out of any assessment process, and the differentiation between assessment and evaluation has become necessary. Some academics have tried to generalize the main points of any kind of assessment regardless the reason why a person decides to use it. According to Marzano

(2006), there are some generalizations we should bear in mind when conducting any sort of assessment. For instance, he mentions that providing a clear picture of progress and how to improve is the first requirement assessment should fulfill. He goes further by arguing that at a basic level, classroom assessment is a form of feedback to students regarding their progress.

Likewise, encouraging students to improve is directly related to the manner in which feedback is communicated to students. It will greatly affect them in a positive or negative way; consequently, it is going to have an effect on student achievement. Marzano (2006) also discusses the importance of frequency in the assessment process. He has mentioned that the frequency of assessment is related to student academic achievement and remarks the use of systematical classroom assessment as a way of giving feedback.

Assessment is a system, and as such, has certain components, variables and principles whose most relevant purpose is to guarantee its effectiveness. Additionally, as every well-established system, assessment has developed and changed as the time has gone by. Hence, there are some differences between the way in which assessment was carried on in the past, and the way it is conducted today. Worthy of remark is the fact that the establishment of certain properties to any type of assessment provides different aspects to evaluate if the sort of assessment will fulfill the requirements of being reliable, valid and having an impact on student development.

DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment can be defined as the process of identifying, obtaining, and interpreting information gathered through different sources in order for teachers to make decisions about students' learning process, and more importantly, based on facts and data, to evaluate, judge and take actions in favor of pupils' learning improvement. Assessment is also related to the difficult process of collecting and analyzing data so that decision-making about students, academic programs and policies can have reliable support. Assessment can be described as an important medium of communication between the learner and the teacher (Liljedahl, 2010). Liljedahl argues further that assessment allows students to communicate what they are learning to the teacher. It is important for students to know where they are in their learning process and where that learning is supposed to take them

Differences between assessment and evaluation. Even though some people use the two terms interchangeably, some argue and discuss how these concepts differ. Fullo (2005) defines assessment as a procedure to determine the degree to which an individual child possesses a certain attribute. The term can be used interchangeably with measurement. According to Mindes (as cited in Fullo, 2005), there are characteristics or elements that all types of assessments share: they are all a process, they are used as a decision-making tool, they can be applied to an individual or group, and they result in the generation of products.

Evaluation, on the other hand, refers to the process of making judgments about the merit, value, and worth of education programs, projects, materials, and techniques. Usually, it requires the inclusion of research-like techniques in order to yield judgments and conclusions based upon evidence; this evidence includes both systematic and unsystematic observations of

program outcomes (Smith & Glass, as cited in Fullo, 2005). Evaluation can be comparative and non-comparative. When talking about assessing and comparing outcomes from alternative program, this sort of assessment is regarded as comparative evaluation. On the other hand, in non-comparative evaluation, program outcomes are assessed in one group only; additionally, the results are compared with an absolute criterion (Fullo, 2005).

TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Although a variety of assessment methods have existed for some time, their use has not always concerned the same aspects. In fact, the difference between traditional and current approaches to assessment is noteworthy. According to Suskie (2009), traditional approaches to assessment are planned and implemented without considering the learning goals and even worse, in most of the cases the learning goals did not exist. Additionally, in these approaches the focus is on memorized knowledge. Due to the few opportunities that faculty and staff have to learn how to design and use effective assessment strategies and tools, the old-style approaches are often said to be of poor quality. Moreover, the decisions about changes to curricula and pedagogies are based on hunches and anecdote, not on solid evidence. When being assessed by external entities or others, traditional approaches use star students as sampling; the most common situation is that they disregard using broader evidence from representative students (Suskie, 2009).

Unlike the traditional approaches to assessment, the contemporary approaches are carefully aligned with goals, or the most important aspect we want our students to learn. Besides, the focus is on thinking and performance skills. Also, this sort of assessment is developed taking into account research, methodologies to assess, and best practices of teaching. This type of assessment is not only used to improve teaching and learning, but for evaluating individual students and assigning them a grade as well. In addition, the contemporary approaches to assessment usually stress those aspects that make a school or program distinctive as well as how successful the school, university, institution is meeting students and societal needs (Suskie, 2009).

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

In recent years, discussions about what assessment is and what constitutes good assessment have taken place, including the issue of formative vs. summative assessment. Though the definitions of both terms have been used interchangeably in the last years; the two kinds of assessment should and have to be part of every balanced assessment system as an essential part of information gathering (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2003). These authors describe formative assessment as a part of the instructional process that provides the information required to make adjustments in teaching and learning in real time. They go further by arguing that formative assessment informs both students and teachers about pupils` learning when changes can still be made.

Another definition of formative assessment is offered by Chappuis (2005), who defines it as a process that applies informal evaluation strategies to collect information on student learning. By doing so, teachers can determine what pupils are understanding, and what they still need to learn in order to reach a desired outcome. The strategies mentioned by the author should be quick and easy to use; besides, they must fit easily into the instruction process.

The definition given by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) focuses more on the identification of students' needs. They argue that formative assessment is the process whereby information is used to identify and respond to students` learning needs. They also mention that in classrooms in which formative assessment takes place, educators make interactive and frequent assessment of the understanding of students, which clearly helps better help pupils to achieve high standards and also to meet individual student needs.

According to the Center for Educational Research and Innovation – CERI (2008), formative assessment in the classroom involves the adjusting of teaching appropriately based on frequent and interactive assessments of the students' progress. Important to note here is that there is more than one moment of assessing students. They also make their own distinction between assessment and evaluation, stating that the first refers to judgments of students' performance, while the latter has to do with judging programs or organizational effectiveness. For the CERI, formative assessment is the representation of an important shift in the relationships found in the classroom, and the way in which teachers and students work toward obtaining the desired outcome (2008).

Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) stress the importance of formative assessment specifically for lower performing students with specific instructional support. They go further to discuss that even if an assessment is packaged and designed as summative or formative, it is the methodology, analysis of the data, and the use of the results that will determine if the assessment is either formative or summative.

According to the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, in order to have a well-balanced system for assessment, interim, summative, and formative assessment should all be incorporated. They define formative assessment as an ongoing assessment process that brings feedback to teacher and pupils about the progress made toward progress in instruction. According to Castro (et al), some of these types of ongoing assessment might include students' self-assessment, observations, or projects rated or graded using a rubric (2009).

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2013) defines the characteristics of good formative assessment and gives reasons why teachers should be the ones to decide over the assessment practices being implemented. According to the NCTE (2013), for a kind of assessment to be considered formative, it should be informing for teachers, students, and families. It is important to notice, that in this particular case, the importance of the assessment as a tool to inform parents on their children's performance is stressed. Another requirement presented is that the assessment that is considered formative can and should be structured. Lastly, the author presented the three types of formative assessment that on his view must be part of any learning cycle. On the one hand, we have the "on-the-fly" kind of formative assessment, and it is the one that occurs during a lesson. On the other hand, we find the "planned-for-interaction" type of assessment, which basically refers to the one decided before

instruction. Finally, we encounter the "curriculum-embedded" formative assessment, and it is typically used to collect data at relevant points throughout the learning process and embedded in the curriculum. The NCTE concluded that if teachers, who become knowledgeable inquires, are permitted to decide on the assessment practices they are going to use to give important information in their classrooms; then formative assessment might definitely be powerful and productive; especially, those assessments that are planned, designed, implemented, and studied by the classroom teacher.

TASK-BASED LEARNING

Definition of task-based learning. Task-Based learning has had an important impact on the development of pedagogical practices in recent years. According to Nunan (2004), TBL has contributed to teaching with some principles. The author states that one of the major contribution of TBL to teach English has to do with the establishment on an approach for content selection based on the needs of students. Also, the author mentions that in TBL the emphasis in on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. Introducing authentic texts into the learning situation is another principle discussed for Nunan as key in Task-Based learning.

Not only TBL allows to use authentic material in the class, or emphasizes on interaction. Nunan states that providing opportunities for students to focus not only on language but on their learning process as well is worth remarking. Moreover, the author highlights which can be considered the most remarkable feature of Task based learning. In TBL there is a direct link between the classroom language learning and the language used outside the classroom.

Every TBL implementation, according to Nunan, has the concept of experiential learning implicit. It consists basically on taking the learner's immediate personal experience as a starting point for the learning experience. The intellectual development of students occurs when learners are engaged in and reflect on sequences of tasks.

According to Loschky and Bley-Vroman (as cited in Chalhoub-Deville, 1997), tasks can be seen as devices that allow learners to practice and learn using the language as a tool of communication instead of using it to focus learners on grammatical features of the target language. They complement this definition by stating that the task-based pedagogy moves away from the traditional focus on form to a completely different approach, promoting, without disregarding the grammatical skills, the ability to interact to achieve communicative goals in the real world. Task refers to all the activities that simulate real-world situations outside the classroom, and that promote the development of interlanguage. Krahnke; Long & Crookes, (as cited in Chalhoub Deville, 1997).

Task based learning is defined by the Council of Europe Council of Europe (2001) as the type of learning that is fostered through the performing of a series of steps, or activities, leading to the realization or completion of a task. In this type of learning environment, the focus is not on using language items in a decontextualized vacuum, but on language as vehicle for authentic, real world needs.

Task-based learning and formative assessment. The Task- Based learning approach has been said to own a series of advantages for both, teachers and learners. As part of the ´can-do' assessment movement, TBL has some positive features. According to Shohamy, (as cited in Brindley, 1994), educators and pupils' attention becomes more focused on language as a tool for communication rather than on language for or knowledge as end in itself. Besides, assessment is part of the learning process through the use of fulfilment targets that are directly connected to objectives and course content (Griffin & McKay, as cited in Brindley, 1994).

Besides, Brindley argues that another of the pros of TBL is that students can obtain useful diagnostic feedback on their achievement and progress due to the fact that explicit performance criteria are given so that they can compare their performance. This definitely nurtures collaborative learning and promotes self-assessment. The author lastly mentions that due to the nature of TBL-that is to say a 'can-do' sort of assessment- there is a better communication between the assessment information and the educational institutions which in turn is possible thanks to the use of various forms of outcomes (Griffin & Nix, as cited in Geoff, 1994).

Guiding principles of task-based learning. As the main purpose of TBL methodology is related to creating opportunities for language learning and development of skills through a collaborative knowledge-building environment, there are some principles, Ellis states, which can be used as a guide to select the options for the design of the lessons. Teachers should ensure an appropriate level of task difficulty. This can be adjusted by making use of the pre-task phase. Educators must also make sure that learners have the strategies they need to be able to execute the task-based interaction.

Each lesson in a task-based methodology should have a clear and attainable goal. It is not enough to have learners engage with tasks believing that they will develop their interlanguages as a simple result of using the L2. Different aspects of language use, such as fluency vs. accuracy, can be prioritized by deciding on methodological options beforehand. (Skehan, as cited in Ellis, 2003).

In terms of orientation, Ellis argues that learners should be aware of the reason why they are being asked to perform the tasks. Pupils need to take tasks seriously and not just view them as 'fun.' In this regard, post-task options can play a crucial role as they demonstrate to learners that tasks play a clear role in the developing of their proficiency in L2, and in the ability to monitor their own progress.

The role of the learner is further enhanced in TBL as students play an initiating as well as responding role in the classroom. Negotiating meaning when problems in communication arise is a key way for a student to be "active" during the lessons. Encouraging learners to be risk takers is also mandatory in a TBL environment. Ellis (2003) argues that when pupils are performing tasks, they need to expand their interlanguage resources, which requires them to be prepared to experiment with language. Encouraging learners to use private speech when performing a task, and helping to create an appropriate level of challenge in an effective climate that defends risk-taking are key critical elements of TBL.

Performing tasks in a foreign language focuses learners primarily on meaning as the main objective is to give a context in which language processing communicatively is provided, treating language as a tool not as an object. Displaying language is not the main concern when

students perform a task; rather, they should be concerned with achieving a communicative outcome. Motivation to do the task is a key part of achieving the desired outcome. Although focusing on meaning is mandatory, to focus on form cannot be disregarded. Willis and Shekan (as cited in Ellis, 2003) argue that there is a need to check form as well in task-based lessons. For these authors, paying attention to form is not only possible but also beneficial. So, providing opportunities for focusing on form is the seventh principle.

The post-task phase of the TBL model requires teachers to follow up on students' performance of the task. Pupils are asked to evaluate their own progress and performance. Skehan (as cited in Ellis, 2003) argues that learners should be made accountable for their performance in a task and their progress in general. Moreover, metacognitive awareness in pupils must be engaged and fostered in task-based lessons.

These guiding principles of TBL can serve as a path for those teachers interested in following the TBL strategy; however, it is the teacher's final decision to choose which methodology will be better for the students in the light of his or her observation.

What is and is not a task. Although the term real world task is always part of the Task Based Learning jargon, in recent years there has been a call to clarify what it is really mean by real world. According to Nunan (2004), we should clearly differentiate between a pedagogical task and target or real-world task. The author presents a task that is pedagogical as the work that is done in the classroom, and in which comprehension, manipulation, production, and interaction of students in the target language, along with their active involvement, are required. At the same time, pupils' attention is directed to apply and activate grammar structures so that meaning is expressed. The author emphasizes that the goal is not to manipulate form but to express meaning. Nunan goes further to say that a task is required to have a beginning, a middle and end in order to have the sense that it has been completed. This definition refers to the usage of grammatical knowledge to explain meaning, highlighting the fact that form and meaning are highly interrelated, and that the main objective of grammar is to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings. Willis and Willis (as cited in Nunan (2004) argues that tasks are different from grammatical exercises since learners are able to use a range of language in order to achieve the outcome of the task- forms are not given in advance.

A task vs. an exercise. Not all the activities undergone by teachers in the classroom can or should be considered a task. A clear differentiation between a task and an exercise is given by Romero (2011). According to the author there are some characteristics attached to a task, and some others connected to an exercise. A task, Romero states, is aimed towards learning a second language, and it is contextualized since it represents real life communicative situations. A task two main focuses are on how to communicate (content), and on multiple language elements and skills. Lastly, Romero´s characterization of a task argues that learners are free to choose the way they will carry it out, and the assessment of the task is mainly done by using observation and raised awareness. An exercise, on the other hand, does not necessarily have to be directed towards learning a second language. It is usually decontextualized and does not have to represent a real life situation. Unlike a task, an exercise does focus on linguistic elements (form), and it does focus on a specific language skill and/or element. Finally, an exercise has limited choices to be solved, and it can be corrected using an answer key.

Aspects to consider with task-based learning. The implementation of the task-based approach in any educational context requires considering some important aspects. According to the Council of Europe (2001), the first aspect to take into account is learner´s profile. In order to decide on the material to be used with a specific group, it is important to have a general profile of the class or group we are working with. In addition, it is recommended to prepare the materials for a defined group. The Council of Europe (CE) goes further to say that adaptations should be made when the language level of students does not enable them to complete the different stages of the task. In this regard, it is advisable to always keep in mind that a functional approach to language learning always ensures that students are aware of the context in which the language they are learning must be, and that they are going to use the language for real-world situations. Lastly, in the learner profile creation, educators must consider that pupils always come with their own experiences, feelings, learning backgrounds, and attitudes. So, TBL application would always has students' profile as the first factor to examine.

The second factor to consider has to do with negotiating course content. The Common European Framework argues that when working under the TBL approach, the wishes of the participants will be an over-riding influence when choosing the tasks. According to the CE, participants should be asked about their expectations, needs, requirements, and wishes. Moreover, there is no point in following a course of action that pupils are not willing to follow it up.

Not only should teachers bear in mind student profiles and the content to be taught, the location in which the course takes place along with resources available must be taken into consideration as well. Where the course is taking place will definitely has an impact on the availability of tasks and materials. The CE argues that there are some points teachers should consider. Is the material to support the tasks and activities going to be freely available? If not, what can the tutor do to obtain suitable material? Is it going to be necessary to change or adapt tasks previously planned for the specific location? Are students going to contribute with material creation or bringing it? What can you do if the material is minimal or not exist at all? How can other resources be used along with language-based materials?

Having evaluated the content, learner profile, setting, and availability of materials, the last factor to consider is the intercultural dimension. When deciding on language course materials and activities, it is paramount to increase students' cultural awareness. By learning the language, class participants should also be encouraged to consider aspects related to everyday life that might be completely different from what they are accustomed to. The main objective of doing this is to provoke self-awareness and awareness of others to check learn the cultural aspect of the language.

Stages of TBL lessons. Lessons in the Task-based Learning (TBL) approach include the stages or components whose main part is a task to be completed. In terms of the stages of the lesson, Ellis (2003) presents a *pre-task*, *during-task*, and *post-task* phase. In the pre-task session, all the activities that teachers and students can undertake before starting the task take place. An example of this phase can be if students are given time to prepare and practice the performance of the task. The part of the class that focuses on the task itself and applies different and various instructional options is connected to the during-task phase. For instance, the teacher should decide whether students complete the task under time pressure or not. In the post-task part of the class, strategies, evaluation devices, and different procedures are applied in order to do a follow-up on the learners' performance of the task.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Recent research on formative assessment highlights the importance of formative evaluation for education in general. Studies have analyzed the way in which formative assessment can be applied in the classroom, best strategies and ways for teachers to apply it, factors that can affect the implementation of formative assessment, and educators' perspectives about the impact it might have on student learning. López (2010) developed a study with three different teachers from three different schools to describe strategies that teachers can apply to use evaluations in an effective way, and for the benefit of students. López found that when evaluation is considered to be part of the learning process, learning is facilitated and enhanced. He also found that some educators might have difficulty using evaluation effectively because they react against realities such as the number of students, the classroom environment, the available resources, and students' motivation, among others.

Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) reviewed the literature on the advantages of classroom-based formative assessment. Similarly to López, assessment that is formative was found to contribute to positive educational outcomes. Besides, they found that formative assessment eases the improvement of instructional practices, identifies gaps in the curriculum, and helps increase the performance of students. The authors also realized that low performing students are those who benefit the most from formative assessment. However, there is little research on the advantages of this kind of assessment for this group, according to the author.

Looney (2002) conducted a similar study about the implementation of formative assessment in English schools, as well as assessment policies introduced in England. Looney's study coincides with Dunn and Mulveno's in that there are positive comments and thoughts about the benefits of implementing formative assessment in the classroom. It was found that the schools that were part of the research shared some features after the implementation of formative assessment. For instance, many of the teachers in the study stated that they realized that by making small changes, they were able to obtain convincing results from students. Besides, they understood that they must focus on the process of learning as well as the content of what students were required to learn. Looney reports that the educators in the study recognized the great effort required to identify and put into practice more often those things that work well, and they also placed greater attention on what students retain, rather than curriculum coverage. A salient finding from Looney's work is that teachers acknowledge that thanks to the implementation of formative assessment, their lesson plans shifted from focusing on the regulation of activity (what students do in class) to the regulation of learning (what students learn in class).

Pastor (2003) undertook a research in which she studied the way in which second language is evaluated in a university in Murcia, Spain. She found out that evaluation is usually considered just the teachers' work, there are definitely other variables that must be taken into account. Among these, Pastor mentions the type of learning, since it is different in different subjects, the attitude and methodology of the teacher, the materials that are used in the classroom, the evaluation strategy, class participation and environment, and students' attitude and interest towards the topic. The author also concluded that evaluation that just focuses on grammar,

without paying attention to speaking, listening, writing, and reading activities, is incomplete and insufficient. Hence, Pastor's research work complements Looney's and Dunn and Mulveno's in the sense that the author presents a series of factors that may prevent evaluation from reaching the advantages described by previous studies.

Gauntlett (2007) carried out a literature review on formative assessment with the aim of designing a resource of information for workers of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. However, some of Gauntlet's inquiries can be generalize to other contexts. The author also found a basis for the reinforcement of the pedagogical role played by formative assessment in the mental health field that are worth applying in the educational setting. According to Black and William (as cited in Gauntlett, 2007), formative assessment encompasses all those activities undertaken by pupils and/or teachers that provide information that can be used as feedback to modify teaching-learning practices. This study was done with medical students, who were found to value formative assessment activities that were non-threatening, fun, and gave them the feedback on their learning. The author further highlights the importance of being able to express and clarify misunderstandings. He concludes that important learning gains are principally possible thanks to the improvement of educators' formative assessment capabilities. All the research presented here focuses on showing the advantages of applying formative assessment in the classroom. Some general guidelines are also given so that evaluation can be used in the best way, and the advantages claimed by the author can have a positive impact on students' learning.

ASSESSMENT IN COLOMBIA

Muñoz, Palacio, and Escobar (2011) undertook a research project with sixty two English teachers from a university in Colombia. The main aim this study was to study the way teachers perceive assessment in the EFL context in Colombia. The purpose of this study was to analyze the way in which teachers' conceptions and misconceptions affect their way of seeing evaluation. The teachers participating agreed that educators should be better equipped, through education programs, to put into practice a broad repertoire of assessment processes to evaluate students' performance, which are completely different from popular test formats. The teachers also mentioned that although they perceive that students are learning, sometimes the relationship between assessment and standards is not fully direct. Mixed ability groups, the uneven pace of student learning, lack of time, and pressure to meet the standards are all factors considered by teachers to be the causes of such a mismatch (Muñoz, et al., 2011). The authors also found that teachers agreed on the fact that assessment is a practice that can help them to improve instruction. The authors argued that teachers' pre-existing conceptions are to be taken into account if institutions want to move them into a preferred system of beliefs about assessment.

Areiza (2013) conducted a research study with students from an English extension program in a public university in Colombia in order to explore students' views on their learning process with and without the implementation of formative assessment strategies including feedback, conferences, and self and peer-assessment. The author of this study made some important conclusions about the way in which students consider that formative assessment influences

their learning. It was found that proper formative assessment in the classroom concentrates on teachers and learners' attention on learning, not on scores, grades, or passing or failing marks. Besides, the study concluded that assessment can be an attempt to understand how students are learning rather than a way to reward and punish. Areiza (2013) also reports the idea of active involvement of pupils in assessment by giving value to their voices in their own learning regarding the expected outcomes of the course program and asking them to describe their learning constraints and gains. This guided a very local and small group of people to have a sense of democracy in the classroom. Both, Areiza and Muñoz, et al. studies call for an inclusion and consideration of teachers and students' views and ideas when designing and applying any kind of assessment, especially formative assessment.

TASK-BASED LEARNING

There are different and varied studies in which the task-based approach is analyzed. Nemat (2011) carried out a study with sixty male and female students from the intermediate level of English as a foreign language from Iran. The students were divided into control and experimental groups with the experimental group receiving the task-based approach techniques and/or strategies. The primary goal of Nemat's research was to investigate the effects that task-based strategies or techniques may have on the development of speaking proficiency of students of English as a foreign language. They also wanted to show the advantages of having a classroom in which TBL is implemented. The author found that the performance in speaking of students from the experimental group was markedly better than those of the control group on the final speaking test. Nemat lists possible tasks such as playing a game, solving a problem, or sharing or comparing experiences as good examples of what needs to be implemented in the classroom if results have to be obtained. The most important part of tasks, according to Nemat (2011), is that learners are required to participate in processes such as negotiation of meaning, paraphrasing, and experimentation which are all connected to effective language development. Nemat (2011) defends the implementation of a task-based learning approach in EFL environments due to the different advantages it offers. He concluded that TBL gives variety for students. Besides, it also enhances their learning because TBL promotes pupils' involvement and leads to important improvements regarding their language performance, so it gives learners the chance to find enough opportunities to express themselves using the target language.

Task-based learning in Colombia. In a similar study, Córdoba (2016) developed a study with a population of six students from an English as a foreign language in their first semester in the south of Colombia. The main purpose of Cordoba´s study was to analyze the task-based language approach as a manner of helping the learners to improve their communicative competence in English and to integrate the skills needed to cope with the language. The author focused his research on the positive impact of TBL not only on the learning of a second language but also on the development of other cognitive processes. Córdoba (2016) found that TBL provides learners with the opportunity to practice the target language constantly because it promotes and stimulates the integration of skills by the completion of daily life activities that promote communicative competence. The author also highlights that language learning is facilitated by TBL because pupils are the core of the language process. Tasks are seen as crucial components

to facilitate learning and to help develop proficiency of a second or foreign language because they increase students' activity in the classroom (Córdoba, 2016). The findings from this study indicate that TBL was shown to be effective to develop learners' self-awareness and class environment where teachers and students took part in the lessons.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative action research methodology was chosen because the current study aimed to demonstrate and describe the process whereby the students improve their English level through the application of a task-based based curriculum. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the main objective of applied research is to find a solution for a problem being faced by a society or an industrial/business organization. The author also states that the core aim of action research is to find a solution for a pressing practical problem and to draw certain conclusions (solutions) to a social or business problem. Considering that this project is based on collecting and evaluating qualitative data, and it aimed to structure and apply a task-based curriculum as a way to improve students' English level, applied and qualitative research constitute the two most suitable methodological approaches to frame the present study.

The case-study approach was also used as the methodology to develop this research project. Zainal (2007) argues that the case study method allows the researcher to examine the data within a specific context closely. A case study, in most of the cases, selects a very limited number of individuals as the population or a small geographical area. A case study, Zainal mentions, aims to investigate and explore a contemporary real-life phenomena by analyzing a limited number of conditions or events, and their relationships. The case study approach has proven to be especially valuable in those fields known as practice-oriented i.e. education, management, public administration, and social work (Starman, 2013).

The case study approach fits the characteristics of the current research project since the aim is to scrutinize the impact that task-based learning and formative assessment may have in a specific context. Also, as the population is composed by a small group of individuals, and it was necessary to use a research approach that allows the researcher to develop the project to a classroom scale. Finally, case study, as action research, aims to analyze a real life situation in which different conditions, events, and their interaction is being evaluated.

CONTEXT

The current research project was developed with students that are part of the after-school program at Squash Urbano. The program consists of a year round squash practices, English classes, and academic reinforcement sessions held from January to December attended by children from Monday to Friday after school, and on Saturday morning. The population are students who come from the poor neighborhoods surrounding a popular sector of Cartagena known as *Las Faldas de la Popa*. To be specific, the children come from neighborhoods such as

Lo Amador, El Espinal, Nariño, Paseo de Bolivar, La Quinta, among others. S.U.C. is part of a larger organization located in the U.S.A. called SEA (Squash and Education Association), and the programs offered in all the foundations in the United States, Canada, and now Colombia have the same functioning and objectives.

Squash Urbano Colombia Mission. The mission of S.U.C. is to give students from low-income families from Cartagena life-changing opportunities with an after school program in which they practice and learn a sport. Besides, they attend English classes to learn another language to have better studying and job opportunities in Colombia and in other countries, and receive help in their academic responsibilities so that they accomplish all their objective during the school year. By 2022, SUC will be considered a national organization in Colombia serving 240 children around Colombia. Besides the branch in Cartagena, there will be other two branches in Medellin and Bogotá each one with 80 kids.

English program at Squash Urbano Colombia. The English of S.U.C. is a complement to the academic and sport components of the after-school program given to students attending the foundation. Students are divided by grades, and the grades go from 4th grade to students from 11th level grade. The number of English classes varies depending on the grade; students might have from three to six classes every week. The English class length is an hour. Most of the students come to the program with none or a very basic level of English. The students' age range is between 8 years and 18 years.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this project were 25 boys and girls aged 9-18. All the children live in low income families of neighborhoods that are located near the sports center where the after-school program is developed (a 10-20 minute walk). All the participants of the program attend public schools that also located in the neighborhoods (or near) were the students live. The boys and girls attending the program did not have any English knowledge when they first arrived to the English classes offered by the program. They all had an A0 taking as reference the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) The level of the students was determined through a proficiency test they presented before starting the English class.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Due to the qualitative nature approach of the research, the data collection techniques used were a pre and post-test to compare students' entrance level and their exit level, videos and audio of student performances on tasks were also used. The teacher-researcher also collected and analyzed artifacts of student work. Finally, periodic progress reports on students and the program written as part of the teacher-researcher's student teaching practice also served as data inputs for the study.

Pre- and post- tests. Pre- and post- tests were implemented at the beginning and at the end of the year in order to establish a baseline of oral proficiency and then compare results after the implementation of the TBL methodology for formative assessment. The test was an oral interview related to topics appropriate for both A1 and A2 levels, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (See Appendix A).

Test creation. To determine the questions for the interview, the topics proposed by CEFR for the A1 and A2 level were taken into consideration. The CEFR proposes for the A1 and A2 level, and for the others as well, descriptions of language competence, i.e. what the language user knows and knows how to do in the target language.

The teacher-researcher took into account the descriptors available in the CEFR for the A1 and A2 levels in order to design questions that were quite simple yet could form the basis of a continuous interaction in a brief conversations. The information was related to activities from daily life, requiring simple answers. Based on the descriptors offered by the CEFR, four descriptors for the purpose of this study were created to evaluate the performance of the students (see Appendix B).

Application. The test-interview was thought to have a short length due the students' level. The interviews actually took one month to complete due to a series of different events such as vacation time, tournaments, and other special activities with volunteers. Students' absences to class was the main factor that affected the presentation of the interview.

Video and audio evidence of performance. Other data collection techniques that were used were audio and video evidence of student performance. The main objective of these two techniques to collect data was to have some evidence of the tasks in order to analyze student performance and progress throughout the program. Every unit (topic) had a main task to be completed, so the performance of the task was analyzed by teachers and students. Then the teacher gave feedback as well as extra practice or guidance to those with learning gaps in a specific topic.

Artifacts. Some artifacts created by students were also developed and used as one data collection technique. These kinds of artifacts included pieces of writing about different topics that were done in the writing tasks. This instrument served as evidence of students' understanding of the topic when applying it to complete a writing task, and also of their progress of learning how to write simple and short texts, for example an e-mail to the teacher or someone else, a short description of their family, a letter describing their likes and interests, or a short test describing the physical appearance of the members of their family.

Periodic progress reports (and meetings with practicum supervisor). Reports on students' progress and regular meetings with the practicum supervisor were also two instruments that served the purpose of data collection for the current study. This mainly had to do with the analysis of the improvement of students, or in other cases, the steps to be implemented when the results were not the expected ones. The purpose was to have an ongoing evaluation of the teaching practices of the teacher as well.

Teacher reflections. As part of the practicum process, the teacher-researcher was asked to write some reflections during the teaching practicum about different aspects that were observed

in the classroom. Some of these reflections also contributed to the current research project because they were used as guidelines to direct the creation, application, and evaluation of the task-based curriculum.

PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

The pedagogical intervention consisted of the development of a communicative English language program for Squash Urbano that would facilitate the design of a task-based program and the use of formative assessment. The curriculum was based on the descriptors and recommendations of the CEFR, built around what users can do with the language at each level. The curriculum contains a scope and sequence of content for A1 and A2, by topic and skill area/language. The topics are organized from most basic to complex. At the beginning of each topic, or unit, the course introduces the vocabulary, and students practice this vocabulary until it is clear. Then, the grammatical structures are presented and developed through a series of classroom activities and exercises. Afterwards, the classes focus on the four language skills, focusing most on listening and speaking. The content areas move from learning the alphabet, numbers, greetings and introductions, family, personal information, and on into topics like food, hobbies, sports and weather.

The program integrates language skills in order to carry out a task related to a real life situation that students may experience in the second language. For instance, students have to go to a restaurant and ask for a fruit salad, students have to introduce / present their family, they also have to fill in a registration format, among other tasks. All the activities or mini tasks lead to a main task that is usually performed by the students at the end of the lesson. Each topic has a main task that is connected to the topic.

The main objective of having a task that encompasses everything at the end of the topic or lesson is to be able to evaluate pupils' understanding or grasping of the topic, and to identify possible gaps to make decisions about changes, modifications, and extra ways to help students. The expected performance of students in the lesson and the task to be developed is set for each topic and presenting to student so that they can have a clear idea of what is expected from them. Language use and structure as well as attitude, preparation, and compliance of the language function are all part of the final assessment.

Once task-based was chosen as the approach in which the curriculum would be based, the development of the lesson plans took the completion of mini tasks and a main task as the core of program. Therefore, all the lesson plans were task-based, and the evaluation process was also based on the task performed by students. The teacher was able to make decisions taking into consideration pupils' performance of the task and proposed alternatives to deal with difficulties, learning gaps, more practice needed, and extra resources to get to the desired outcome.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Pre- and post- test. In order to put together and analyze the information provided by students, different strategies were used and applied. The interview results of both tests were organized and analyzed using Excel in order to tabulate the data and generate the graphics. Depending on the number of answers giving by students, they were put into a category (A0, -A1, A1, or A2) right after the interview finished, according to the performance and the grading criteria (Appendix B). Then, the data was represented in Excel graphics of the number of students in each category in the pre-test. The pre-test was presented at the beginning of the year. After a period of time of ten months working with students in the English class, the same tests were applied to the same group of students and the results were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using Excel to create the graphics, first in general, and then by grade. Then the results were compared to the ones from the first tests, and some conclusions came out of the analysis of the graphics.

Video and audio evidence of performance. The teacher-researcher recorded samples of student performance on the tasks at the end of the units. These served as informative updates for the practicum supervisor, and also as evidence of students' performance over time as data for this project. The audio and video made possible a comparison of students' mastery of different content over time. The analysis consisted of listening and analyzing if pupils' answers to the task and evaluating them based on a set of mastery criteria written for each task. Students in all the tasks were assessed according to the performance of the task and language use. The three different performance levels were *above*, *good enough*, and *below*. Depending on students' performance of the task, they were evaluated as above (when all the elements were accomplished), good (when the requirements for this level were met) and below (when the pupil struggle to meet the evaluation criteria). For instance, when students completed the task by applying and using the vocabulary, structures, and all the language skills practiced and used on the preparation phase of the task, they were considered in the above level. Attitude, individual and peer work, cooperativeness, and involvement of students in the task was also taken as evaluation criteria for each task or mini tasks. Some students that did not completed the task satisfactorily, and whose attitude, cooperativeness, involvement with the tasks, and individual and group work, were not the expected, so they were evaluated in the *below* descriptor. Given the results, it can be said that cases in which students during the tasks were evaluated in the below descriptor were few. In most of the cases, performance was rated as *above* or *good enough*.

Periodic progress reports (and meetings with practicum supervisor). The periodic progress reports (and meetings with practicum supervisor) were used as evidence since students' progress, lesson plans, and tasks were all analyzed with the practicum supervisor so that an ongoing follow up of students' performance and teaching practices was possible. The analysis essentially consisted of going over the lesson plans, checking the objectives, the vocabulary being learned, the teaching and use of expressions in the classroom, and the appropriateness and relevance of each task. Once the lessons and tasks were discussed with the supervisor, the teacher-researcher used them in separate lessons according to grades.

Reflections. As part of the teaching practicum, the practicum supervisor assigned periodic reports or reflections on the setting, program, students, learning processes, and other aspects

of the experience. These reflections were later discussed and analyzed with the practicum supervisor so that the researcher could improve and enrich the development of the tasks and the classes, and the general outcome of students. The writing of these reflections and the reports themselves could later be analyzed to re-visit key themes.

RESULTS

Analysis of the data collected validates the research hypothesis. Formative assessment based using Task-based Learning had a positive effect on the English level of this population of students. The contrast between the pre and post-test results demonstrates an important increase in the number of students moving from the A0 to A1-, A1, and even the A2 level.

In terms of oral proficiency, it can be concluded that students' level improved thanks to the application of the formative assessment-task-based curriculum. From the video and audio evidences of performance, it is clear that when students first had to do a task related to buying a fruit salad in a restaurant they were not able to complete the task, or in other cases they needed a great deal of time to rehearse before completing the task, and presented more difficulties than when they were asked to undergo other tasks later related to talking about their personal information, families or discussing about events options and which they could go to.

By comparing the interview answers given by students in the pre-test with their responses in the post-test, it can be concluded that there was an improvement in learners' level of English. To illustrate, when the pre-test was presented, most of the students had difficulty to answer most of the questions; however, when they took the post test, in most of the cases they were able to answer the questions accurately. Besides, all the students moved from the A0 level to the A1-, A1, or even the A2 level. This leads to the idea that learners were able to learn the vocabulary, use the expressions, and use the four skills to perform all the tasks that are part of the basic levels of English i.e., A1- and A1.

Below are the results from the pre and post-test, and their comparison.

Pre-test. In the pre-test section, as it was presented in the data collection techniques, all the students from Squash Urbano Colombia had to answer a test answering a set of questions for the A1 and A2 levels. Figure 1 shows the results for the pretest application first in general, and then grade by grade.
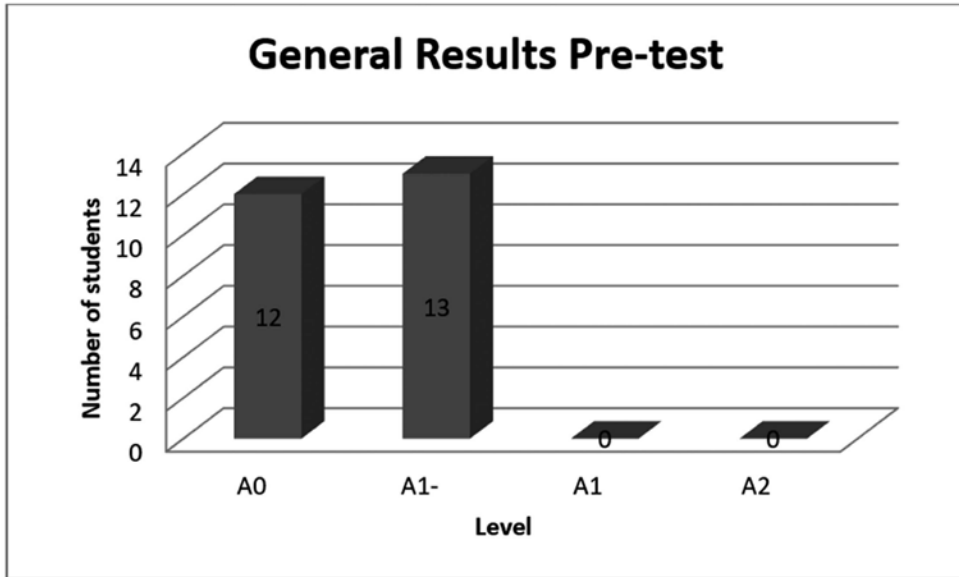
Figure 1. Pre-test. General results.

Figure number 1 demonstrates students' knowledge and skills in English for all the students in Squash Urbano Colombia. As we can see from the figure, most of the students lacked the vocabulary, knowledge, and skills to deal with the topics pertaining to the A1 level of English. Therefore, they also lacked the linguistic and non-linguistic tools to perform the tasks belonging to that level. Students in general terms were not able to answer simple questions related to their personal information, likes, family, the weather, etc. Figure 1 helps to illustrate that at the moment of the pre-test, 25 students of the population were between the A0 and A1- level. It is also clear that none of the students were in the A1 or A2 level yet. Besides, 12 students were in the A0 level. However, it is necessary to mention that at the moment in which the interview was presented, other factors, such as nervousness, affected the answers given by the students. Some of them could not even answer a question. Finally, Figure number 1 indicates that 13 students started with an A1- level which basically means that they have the knowledge and skills to talk about a limited number of topics, but they might have difficulties to talk about most of the topic.

Post-test. After the development and application of a task-based learning curriculum, and as result of a constant formative assessment system, the post-test indicates a significant and clear progress in pupils' English level after the intervention. The results demonstrate that most of the students moved from the A0 level to the -A1, A1, and even A2 levels. Results also show that learners went from not being able to answer any of the questions presented in the interview to answering those posed for the A1 level, and even some could answered the A2 ones. Based on the evidence collected, it can be said that the task-based teaching-learning approach, together with the formative assessment strategies applied, proved to have a positive effect on students' performance on the tasks for the A1 level.
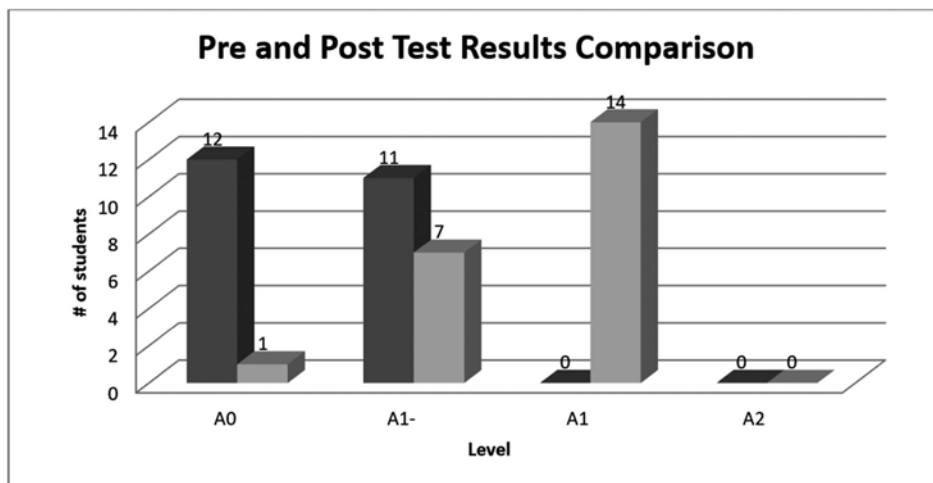
Figure 2. Comparison of pre- and post-test results Comparison

Figure 2 shows the comparison between the results from the pre-test (dark bars) to those obtained after the application and implementation of the formative assessment and task-based curriculum i.e. the post-test (light bars). Generally speaking, most of students move from the A0 level to the A1- or A1 level.

Students' overall improvement. It can be highlighted that students developed other skills along with their language level. Not only did students improve in their English level but also in their learning skills, behavior, attitude, pair work and team work. For instance, in the teacher-researcher's reflection, it was observed that students were book-dependent; i.e. they found it difficult to work without following a textbook. This was perhaps due to the fact that before the implementation of the new curriculum, the curriculum was book-based. In contrast, the task-based and formative assessment curriculum included games and other activities to learn vocabulary and practice simple grammar structures. At the end, it can be said that students learn to retain and practice the vocabulary for the A1 level of English without being attached to a textbook.

Students' creations and artifacts also show pupils' improvement on their writing skills. To exemplify, before starting to write simple and short paragraphs about the topics being studied, students did not know what a paragraph was even in their first language. However, once writing was made part of the class and a short and simple written task was attached to every topic, learners' showed some significant improvement.

Finally, it might be said that students showed some advances in terms of their accountability, behavior, attitude, and willingness towards learning the language and contributing actively in class. That change was possible thanks, among other aspects, to the constant communication between the teacher-researcher and the practicum supervisor through periodic progress reports. The supervisor, together with the teacher-researcher, discussed and analyzed different strategies not only related to the application of the task-based curriculum and/or formative

assessment, but also on different ways to build rapport with students, and to engage them to practice English outside the classroom. An example can be a suggestion given by the teacher-supervisor to try to do at least a simple task per class or when time constrains appear. This recommendation did pay off, and it is reflected on students' overall level as it created a predictable class routine that learners felt comfortable with.

Validation test. In order to validate the information found in the test that students presented in Squash Urbano Colombia, students from 5th and 6th grade took the TOEFL primary version to compare the results. The primary version of the IBT TOEFL test is an exam designed to measure the English level of students from 7- 12 years. It is based on the Common European Framework for Reference, and it measures up to the A2 level. The idea with the presentation of the test was to realize if students were able to undertake all the tasks presented in the A1 and A2 levels of the Common European Framework (CEFR) which includes having the vocabulary, structures, listening skills, writing skills, and reading skills to perform tasks such as talking about students' families, food tastes, personal information, music tastes, and so forth. The TOEFL primary test, as well as the test used as an instrument for the current research project, aims to measure pupils' English level taking the CEFR as the main reference. According to Bordage et al. (as cited in Cumyn and Harris, 2012), the importance of validity is a topic that is present in all the aspects of content definition. For assessment, validity evidence has the objective of giving support to the inference reflected by the examination. Validity, according to the author, reflects the true competence or knowledge of students. Ten students presented the TOEFL test and the results validated those of the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out the effect of formative assessment and task-based learning on the oral proficiency in English of students in an after-school program in Cartagena, Colombia. Generally speaking, it was concluded that formative assessment along with task-based learning did have a positive effect on pupils' learning process. In general terms, the English level of students improved due to the implementation of summative and formative assessment, and due to the implementation of a curriculum in which the performance of students in different contexts using the language was key.

Taking into consideration the findings drawn by the current research project, it was noticed that students bettered their English level. These findings relate to López (2010), Dunn and Mulvenon (2016), and Looney (2002) who argue that when evaluation is considered to be part of the learning process, learning is enhanced and facilitated. Besides, the authors defend the idea that the type of assessment that is formative leads to positive educational outcomes. The study findings also correlates with Pastor's (2003) view of assessment. Pastor (2003) states that assessment is more than focusing on grammar. Speaking, listening, writing, reading and other non-linguistic aspects should also be included in a decent curriculum.

The current research work echoes the research conducted by Gauntlett (2007), who argues that important learning gains are principally possible due to the improvement of educators' formative assessment capabilities. Areiza's (2013) also argues that appropriate formative

assessment in the classroom concentrates teachers' and learners' attention on learning and not on scores or grades. It is rather an attempt to learn how students are learning so that their English level can be enhanced.

Another concluding fact that has to be highlighted is that the task-based learning approach did pay off. Research by Nemat (2011) and Cordoba (2016) defends the idea that TBL has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Nemat affirms that TBL enhances learning because it gives learners the chance to find enough opportunities to express themselves using the target language, English. Cordoba (2016) argues that TBLT facilitates learning since pupils are the core of the language process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though in general terms the objectives of this study were attained, and the hypotheses and research question were proved and answered, there are some limitations to be acknowledged. Absenteeism by students many cases interrupted the flow of the program and made it difficult to move forward; this is mostly true for students in fourth and fifth grades. Another limitation for this research project has to do with the lack of resources to work with students. Although the teacher-researcher created all of the materials and activities, sometimes it was quite difficult to find and create materials appropriate for the language and cognitive level of students. Further, as Squash is primarily a sports program, the English program was frequently interrupted by national and international squash tournaments.

FURTHER RESEARCH

If further research on the effect of formative assessment and task-based learning on students' level were to be developed, it would be important to explore topics and language skills from higher levels, such as the A2 and B1. Additionally, similar studies with larger population are also suggested to check if the results reported here are comparable with other contexts. Finally, there should definitely be further research in other aspects influencing the results. For instance, motivation, autonomous work, and other aspects may had had an impact on some students' level of English.

ACTION PLAN

A proposal for an action plan to follow in order to improve students' learning and teachers' practices is presented as follows:

FOR SQUASH URBANO COLOMBIA

- Give teachers the opportunity to learn about formative assessment and ways to apply it in the classroom. Professional development and staff growth should be a key element of Squash Urbano Colombia, including learning not only about task-based learning its implications, applications, advantages, disadvantages, and possible effects on students in English and other subjects, but also about other methodologies and strategies.

- Squash Urbano Colombia must seek to promote the use of formative assessment in other contexts such as the academic reinforcement sessions received by students and even explore the possibilities and options to adapt task-based teaching-learning to the Squash practices and training sessions.

- Teachers, trainers, and academic staff should include formative assessment in their programs. This will ensure that students receive the right and appropriate sort of evaluation, and feedback for all three program components (English, Squash, and academic reinforcement).

- Develop a curriculum for the academic reinforcement sessions in Spanish, students' first language. These sessions help improve reading comprehension, L1 usage, and mastering L1 topics and skills with which they may have difficulties. In this way, this work may help make the English program be more enriching and satisfactory.

- Give students the opportunity to understand and use formative assessment for their own benefit.

FOR PARENTS

- Always keep contact with teachers and staff from Squash Urbano Colombia to be informed about students' performance, and possible ways in which their children can improve.

- Help teachers and staff members to foster motivation in order to guarantee and promote students' attendance in the program so that pupils do not have their learning process interrupted due to repetitive absences.

- Try to promote students' practice and autonomous learning of the language at home by using the internet and other tools as a way to have other scenarios to learn English.

FOR TEACHERS

- Pursue professional development and continue broadening their pedagogical and educational knowledge so that they can continue learning and applying different strategies to guarantee students' improvement.

- Learn more about task-based learning and other teaching-learning methodologies so that they can have a strong pedagogical and experiential background as a basis for teaching.

- Take into consideration the different principles, stages, and advantages presented as part of the task-based teaching-learning approach to use them as a guiding point for the activities and tasks they undertake in the classroom.

- Carry out action research constantly so that they can evaluate what methodologies, strategies, activities, tasks, and so forth are being useful for their pupils, and which are not giving the best results in order to consider other alternatives.

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APPENDIX A

Pre and Post-test Questions

A1 Questions

Where are you from?

What's your favorite food?

When is your birthday?

How many brothers/sisters do you have?

What's your address?

What do you do?

How do you spell your last name?

How does your mother look like?

What's your favorite day of the week?

What do you do in your free time?

What's your favorite movie?

Which fruit don't you like?

A2 Questions

Where does your family live?

How can I get to the downtown?

How many bathrooms/bedrooms/ does your house have?

Who is your favorite singer?

What kind of movie do you like?

How is your dreamed house? Describe it

What are your father and mother names?

What's your favorite object? ¿why?

What's your favorite animal and why?

What does your father/mother do?

How does the weather look like today?

How does your bedroom look like?

APPENDIX B

Pre- Post-Test Evaluation Criteria

A0

The student cannot participate in a short conversation in which the exchange of very simple information such as personal information is required.

A1-

The student can participate in a short simple conversation in which information about specific topics such as family, food, place of living, and personal information is required. However, the student finds it difficult to talk about other topics such as weather, personal appearance, hobbies or leisure time, among others.

A1

The student can participate in a short simple conversation in which he/she is required to ask and provide information about personal information, family, liked and disliked food, weather, personal appearance, hobbies, occupations among others related to the student's immediate environment.

A2

The student can participate is a short simple conversation in which he or she is required to exchange information about every day activities such as personal information, the weather, food, family, among others. Besides, the s can provide short and simple descriptions of person, places, and objects.

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