

**APPLICATION OF GAMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING SKILL IN  
FOURTH GRADERS FROM REMIGIO ANTONIO CAÑARTE SCHOOL.**

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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito para obtener el título de  
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## RESUMEN

La presente investigación tomó como hipótesis que la implementación de juegos en clase puede afectar de manera positiva la habilidad del habla en el Inglés de estudiantes de 4<sup>o</sup> grado en una escuela pública, principalmente cuando los estudiantes son expuestos a situaciones reales representadas en las actividades que incluyen juegos en clase, y en las que se ven en la necesidad de hablar. Los juegos sirven como una herramienta para poner en práctica el aprendizaje de idiomas. Al mismo tiempo, la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes puede mejorar. Los juegos también dan a los estudiantes la oportunidad de interactuar en el idioma que se está aprendiendo.

La escuela pública Remigio Antonio Cañarte, "El Poblado", ubicada en la ciudad de Pereira; ofreció las condiciones apropiadas para analizar a través de una investigación cualitativa, la reacción de los estudiantes a la implementación de juegos en clase, y la influencia de dichas actividades en los estudiantes. Las observaciones se llevaron a cabo a través de notas de campo, listas, y grabaciones de video. También fue evidenciado en un mayor o menor grado como la implementación de juegos ayudó a los estudiantes a mejorar el habla en la lengua inglesa.

Los hallazgos de esta investigación evidencian que la implementación de juegos en clases de inglés, les brinda a los estudiantes la oportunidad de practicar y mejorar la habilidad del habla. Los resultados de este estudio sugieren que las lecciones que incluyen juegos deberían ser bien estructuradas, ya que este tipo de clases pueden ser algunos de los pocos espacios en los cuales los estudiantes tengan la oportunidad de hacer uso del habla. La respuesta de los estudiantes a los juegos, demostró que los juegos pueden ayudar a los estudiantes a involucrarse en las actividades de clase, y al mismo tiempo que hacen uso de la segunda lengua, el facilitador puede hacer un diagnóstico de la producción oral de los aprendices.

Este estudio sugiere desde el punto de vista didáctico que es fundamental llevar a los estudiantes a hacer uso de la segunda lengua, con el propósito de que alcancen un aprendizaje exitoso. Así mismo el uso de juegos en clase, sirve como una herramienta para tener a los estudiantes haciendo uso de la segunda lengua. Burns (1998) afirma que los aprendices de una lengua deberían afrontar situaciones en las cuales hagan uso de la habilidad oral para poder transmitir un mensaje. Además esta investigación sugiere que el uso de juegos en clase puede motivar a los estudiantes a avanzar a otro escenario en el cual ya no imiten, sino que produzcan.

## ABSTRACT

This research study took as hypothesis that the implementation of games in class could influence in a positive way the English speaking skill of 4th graders in a public school, principally when the students are put into real situations represented on the game-activities, in which they have to speak. Games may serve as a way to put into practice language lessons, and at the same time the students' communicative competence can be improved. Games also give the students the opportunity to interact in the language that is being learned.

The state school *Remigio Antonio Cañarte*, "Escuelita El Poblado" located in the city of Pereira offered the ideal context and conditions to explore through qualitative research, the reaction of 4 students to the implementation of games in class, and the influence that the game-activities had on their speaking skill. Through the use of observations supported by checklists, field-notes, and video-recordings, the participants demonstrated having employed their speaking skill while taking part on the game-activities. It was also evidenced on the participants how to a greater or lesser extent the implementation of games helped to develop their English speaking skill.

The findings of this study indicate that when implementing the use of games in an English class, the students are given an opportunity to practice and improve their speaking skill. These findings also revealed that lessons including games should be well planned and structured, as such lessons are spaces which offer the students the opportunity to interact and speak, and such spaces may be limited in that environment. The participants' response to the game-activities in which they took part, showed us that games can help students to get involved with the class activities, as they are using the language, and at the same time it is an opportunity for the facilitator to make a diagnose of the speaking outcomes of the students.

From an instructional perspective, this study suggests that it is primordial to have the students using the language when they are lead to a successful language learning. And implementing games serve as a tool to have students using the language, as the games are focused on the speaking sill. Burns (1998) asserts that the language learners should be put in authentic situations where speaking becomes necessary in order to transmit ideas or a message. Furthermore this study suggests that carrying out game-activities in class can help the students to motivate to move to another stage. It means that learners can move from the stage of imitation stage to the speaking-production stage.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is focused on describing the influence that the implementation of games has on the speaking skills of English language students. According to Mora & Lopera (2001) the use of games in class contributes to the development of a series of language skills and competencies. They consider that using games in class can be advantageous and essential since games encourage interaction and group work among learners.

Four students belonging to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of a public school were observed and video recorded while performing game-activities inside class. The data for this study was obtained through observations (Sierra & Bravo, 1984), video-recordings, and checklists. The observations were made with the purpose of collecting information which helped us to understand the students' interactions in class, and their reactions to the game-activities that were carried out during the time of this study. Checklists were also used in order to support the observations and to collect data about specific aspects regarding the use of the speaking skill. The role of participant/observer allowed us to get insights about the perspectives of the target population, regarding the implementation of games in class.

By departing from the argument that the implementation of games in class can influence the students' learning, we were interested in exploring the effect that games have on the speaking skill of the participants of this study. After a descriptive-interpretive analysis of the collected data, it was noticed that the games implemented in class by the facilitator had a positive effect on the students, as they had to speak in order to perform the game-activities proposed by the teacher. This study suggests that by implementing games in class, students are provided with the opportunity to practice the

speaking skill, and to improve communication in the target language. It was also found that through the implementation of games in class, students are motivated to participate and to speak, thus allowing the teachers to make a diagnose of the speaking outcomes of the learners. Games may also offer ideal conditions for a class to be students-centered, and then the students can use the target language in a meaningful context.

Although games allow the students to make use of language skills, Vernon (2009) considers that games not always lead the students to use the language, but also serve to keep students entertained, this is why it is important to select and prepare game-activities in which the students use the language oral skills. When implementing games in class, the students' oral production should be supervised, in order to determine what can be improved. The games implemented by the teacher in class during this study required from the students to use their oral skills, and Nunan (2003) considers that when students are put in situations where the use of language is required, then there is a progress in the students' oral fluency. That is why we researchers created situations and designed activities in which it was necessary that learners made meaningful interactions by using their speaking.

This study pretends to raise interest of future researchers towards the application of games for the development of the speaking skill. In addition, researchers may also explore the other language skills related to the English teaching/learning (reading, writing, listening). This study will help to design methodologies and strategies oriented to the development of the speaking skill and help the learners to succeed in the learning of the English language.



## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the project of the Ministry of Education, all Colombians attending formal education are expected to be bilingual by 2019 (Proyecto de Bilingüismo, Colombia Bilingüe 2004-2019). As researchers, we are concerned about how to achieve bilingualism in Colombia, and we consider that as a contribution to reach that goal at least in part, the implementation of games could be a helpful proposal for developing some speaking skills in an EFL scenario in elementary school fourth graders.

The language learning process implies the attainment on the side of the learners, of a set of communication skills (Skehan, 1996), in the case of this research, the four main skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In agreement with Cameron (2001), the speaking skill becomes a priority for the purpose of language learning in children.

According to the Common European Framework of reference for Languages (2001), speaking implies a set of cognitive, linguistic, and phonetic skills. It is how we plan and organize a message which requires skilled cognitive demands, linguistic skills, and phonetic abilities. All of these factors allow accomplishing a successful act of speaking interaction (Khanji, 1996).

Cameron (2001) claims that most of the students of English as a foreign language encounter challenging to improve their English speaking abilities since they are used in their daily life to communicate in their native language (Having few chances to put into practice their EFL learning):

“The central characteristics of foreign language learning lie in *the amount and type of exposure* to the language: There will be very little experience of the target language outside the classroom” (p.11)

Based on Cameron (2001), teachers should provide more strategies, including games, in order for learners to develop their speaking skills during their language learning sessions.

The use of games in teaching is a controversial issue, in view of the fact that some authors claim that games can be a positive and/or negative teaching strategy. First of all, Bruner (1983), Palmer and Rodgers (1983) and Jones (1986) they all agree that the use of games is a positive tool in the learning language process. Rodgers (1981) states that “gaming is competitive...rule-governed.... goal-defined...gaming is engaging” (P.142). In the same way Jones (1986) holds that “A game is played when one or more players compete or co-operate for pay-offs according to a set of rules” and Bruner (1983) discusses the need for teachers to engage in a ‘battle against passivity’.

There are some premises drawn from Khan who considers that games are not serious and therefore cannot be treated seriously as part of a methodology for teaching English. “If children get involved and excited in playing games they will use their first language

and gain no benefit in English” (p.151). “Games are noisy and therefore disruptive” (p.152). The above are some of the affirmations that Khan (1991) made about the use of games in the foreign language learning process.

As researchers we agree with the findings statements in which games seem positive for English learning or teaching. That is why we are interested in exploring all the implications that games bring in order to enhance children speaking skills. Therefore, the purpose of our study is to explore the impact that games have on the development of the speaking skill and the dimensions that need to be taken into account in selecting and organizing games for 4th graders from a State school in Pereira.

Finally, the researchers consider that games can be implemented not only for fun but also to-encourage language learning.

The following research questions will help us to develop this study:

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the impact games have in the English speaking skills of fourth grade students from a state school in Pereira?
- What considerations from the teachers’ game implementation procedure can be drawn from the study?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual background of the relevant aspects related to the use of games in classroom: Speaking, foreign language and motivation, games in the foreign language classroom, advantages of games, how to choose games, when to use games, why using games in class time. Relevant definitions and related studies will be portrayed in this section, as an attempt to explain the influence that games may have on the speaking skill of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Speaking

In order to define speaking it is very important to take into consideration that this skill is a productive one and it is important to bear in mind that this skill is more challenging than it seems, since it is more than just pronouncing words. It also involves interactive situations in which one listens and speaks having the chance to ask for clarification or repetition. According to Bygate (1987), speaking is a skill which deserves attention every bit as much as literacy skills, in both first and second language, Bygate (1987) argues that

“learners need to be able to speak with confidence and fluency not only with the purpose of learning a foreign or second language but also because is a medium to social solidarity, and a vehicle to make or lose friends”(p.1)

Cunningham & Edmonds (1999) believe that speaking is more than producing words. It means that the speaker should know which words should be used at an appropriate moment, the amount of stress and intonation in a sentence, to use grammar forms exactly, to make use of the appropriate lexicon that is comprehensible for the listeners,

to use gestures and body language, to determine the adequate vocabulary, rate of speech, and to check the listeners comprehension of the discourse. This is why speaking is not considered as an act of merely producing words, but a more complex skill that involves many actions, such as turn taking, questioning, adequate use of stress and intonation, etcetera. Luoma (2004) states that speaking contains phrases and clauses, dialogues that were previously prepared, and spontaneous dialogues, also there is a variation in speaking, because there is a difference between formal speech and casual speech. The speaking roles, the purpose of speaking and the context where there is oral interaction may also change. The aspects mentioned before might be the reason why there are different methods used by researchers whether in English as a second language or as a first language to approach the speaking skill.

In terms of teaching speaking, Byrne (1984, p. 9) stated that oral fluency is the main objective when the speaking skill is taught. Aspects related to the oral fluency are: capacity to express, reasonably without hesitation.

### **Teaching speaking to children**

According to the internet TESL journal “teaching speaking” implies to teach ESL learners to generate English oral patterns, the stress and intonation of sentences in the English language, and use language as a means of expression. According to (Nunan, 2003) “teaching a language” involves leading the learner to use the language quickly and spontaneously.

In order to promote speaking among children, activities such as picture describing, picture narrating, story-telling, simulations among others, are implemented by teachers. Baruah (1991) believes that facilitators should focus on teaching speaking instead of taking the students to memorization exercises, so that the activities mentioned previously become meaningful for the students in order to practice the language and to develop the speaking skill.

Fluency is a key component in order to accomplish successful communication, according to Parrott (1993):

“Fluency is the ability to communicate an intended message, or to affect the listener or interlocutor in the way that is intended by the speaker. The accurate use of language is a component in this ability, but over-attention to accuracy in the learning process may actually inhibit the development of fluency. Fluency involves the ability to adjust the message according to the responses of the listener or interlocutor, to construct coherent utterances and stretches of speech, to respond and to speak without undue hesitation. It also involves the ability to use strategies such as simplification, circumlocution and gesture to aid communication when the speaker may not have access to the vocabulary or grammar which would normally be appropriate”. This statement by (Parrot, 1993) explains the importance of focusing on fluency when teaching the speaking skill in order to improve communication.

In a further analysis Judy (1984) claims that fluency requires from the speakers to use the language that they already know, but in an spontaneous way when conversations

appear and speakers find themselves in a situation where they have to listen, comprehend, and to respond spontaneously. Hartmann & Stork (1972) propose that when a person is able to use patterns and units of language at a normal speed in a conversation, and can use structures appropriately; this person is considered to be a fluent speaker in the target language.

### **Foreign Language and Motivation**

As claimed in the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés (2006) a reference for language teachers from the Colombian Ministry of Education, the learning of a foreign language implies:

*“- Apoya a los estudiantes en la práctica de la interacción social y en la negociación de significados. Así mismo, mejora su capacidad para entablar relaciones con otras personas y para desenvolverse en situaciones nuevas”.*

And

*“-El individuo desarrolla mayor conciencia lingüística, lo que se traduce en un proceso de monitoreo de la lengua que está aprendiendo, de los hablantes de ese idioma y de la cultura de donde provienen. En consecuencia, acentúa también la conciencia social que se refleja en la lengua”.*

According to the citations above, the process of learning a foreign language may be a challenging mission for many students. Groccia (1992) illustrates that we must learn to

adapt our natural predispositions to learn. As learning is frequently difficult, especially considering the amount of work necessary to be done, and requires motivation. There might be many good reasons for learning a foreign language, but if a student does not know why he/she is learning, he/she can feel frustrated and even more in the case of learning a foreign language. Gardner (2006) states that students with higher levels of motivation will do better language learning than those students with lower levels of motivation. Lifrieri (2005) asserts that it is undeniable that motivation is indispensable in the process of second/foreign language learning, and Brown (1988) believes that it becomes easier for a person to succeed in learning a second/foreign language when there is the proper motivation.

“Motivation is this energy to study, to learn, achieve and to maintain positive behaviors. Motivation is what stimulates to acquire, transform and use knowledge” Groccia (1992). James & Holton (2000) remarks the importance of motivation in class, because when there is motivation students will accomplish learning at any stage, as motivation catches the students’ attention toward learning and knowledge. If there is not enough motivation the students will hardly achieve the learning goals, because as stated by Harmer (2001) motivation moves people to do things in order to achieve goals. In the case of learning a language students may have several reasons for learning a second language, some of the students might be learning a language because it is a personal goal, but other students might be learning a language because they are on school and they have to pass the subject matter. In agreement with Skehan, (1989), this is a situation where teachers have to take into account the class setting, classroom management, the tasks that are given to the students and methods which make students feel motivated to learn the second language. According to Gardner & Lambert (1972) another important aspect talking about motivation is the kind of material that teachers



present to the students; no matter the presentation of the designing of those tools, if they are not interesting for the students, the teachers' labor will be harder trying to find the right material or strategy for them, looking for interesting, relevant and authentic material for the instructions. The implementation of authentic material may complement English classes by energizing the class and creating a more positive attitude towards learning. One of the strategies that teachers can use in order to create original and engaging material can be through the use of games (Baker, 1992)

### **Games in the foreign language classroom**

According to Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1987),

“Game is a contest played according to rules and the winner is recognized by skill, strength or luck. It is an activity engaged in for amusement. It can also be defined as the manner of playing in a contest, a situation that involves rivalry or struggle. In addition, a game can be defined as an enjoyable activity with a set of rules or terms against each other.” (Webster's New Dictionary, 1994)

Some procedures mentioned by Byrne (1984), which can be taken into account for playing games are the following:

First, choose games on the basis of their suitability in terms of the language the students practice. Second, prepare the games carefully beforehand. Third, explain to the students the purpose of and rules for the games. Fourth, give students one or more opportunities to practice before the games are played. Fifth, involve as many students as possible, dividing the class into teams. Sixth, if games are played in teams, points

should be awarded for each correct answer and the scores written up on the board. (1984, p. 100) Byrne, D. (1984).

Mora & Lopera (2001), in their project called "Games in the classroom: more than just having fun", stress that game and fun activities have always been one of everybody's favorite things to do in class, both for teachers and students since games can contribute to the development of a series of skills and competencies. They think that games in a classroom are useful and even necessary. Games promote socialization, group work, and the creation of values; it implies mutual respect and cooperation. Games in the classroom: More than just having fun.

Wright (1984) states that "*language learning is hard work... effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work*". When teachers have to deal with large groups of children of an age range between 8 – 10 years old, teachers have to be very resourceful, and be prepared in an extensive way all their classes, because this kind of children are very energetic and they are always looking for more activities, explanations and assessment. Along with plenty of other reason that prompt disciplinary issues in the classroom, it is highlighted then the importance of planning as it determines and aids to maintain the classroom appropriate for language learning.

There has been a frequent perception in our classes that all learning should be solemn and serious in nature, and if one is including fun and there is a laughter and hilarity, then learners (children) are not really learning. That is a false impression. It is probable to study and learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time; the best way to feel that is through the games which deal with learning process.

As cited in Wright (1984), Ersoz (2000) states that when games are used properly in class, students feel comfortable to participate and exercise their language skills. Most of students find games fun and entertaining and at the same time games provide the students the opportunity to make use of language during it is carried out. Games also foster and promote collaborative activities. The facilitator must design a plan in order to enrich a lesson in which games lead the students to participate and to be motivated during the activity. In order to get students' attention and involvement in the classroom activities; games work as a tool which provide enjoyment to students' process and at the same time allow the teacher to give the students the information that she/he wants to transmit.

### **Advantages of Games**

According to Kim (1995) some advantages of using games in the classroom are the welcome break from the usual routine of the class, games are motivating, challenging and require effort and practice of the different skills from the students giving them the opportunity to interact and communicate meaningfully in the target language.

To use games in class is an excellent idea from many points of view. First of all, games and activities are exciting for students; applying these techniques teachers may enliven their classes promoting more interest and enthusiasm into any topic they are teaching and also the teacher can use games for changing a little the monotonous classroom atmosphere giving a pleasant and enriching environment to the students for learning easily.

Another advantage of using games is to help the teacher to generate situations and contexts in which the language is practical, useful, functional and meaningful. Students

want to take part in the process because they want to participate and understand what others are saying or have written, at the same time students should speak and write in order to express their own point of view or to attain the goal of the game.

### **How to Choose Games**

To choose the perfect game is invaluable as they provide learners a break and at the same time permit students to put into practice the foreign language. Games are very encouraging and motivating since they are demanding and at the same time entertaining. Furthermore, the teacher could implement through games useful and meaningful language in real contexts. Games can be applied to provide practice in all language skills and are used to perform different types of communication, giving confidence and increasing cooperation.

Students could desire to play games only for fun, but on the other hand, teachers require more persuasive reasons (Richard-Amato, 1996). Hadfield (1990) considers that teachers need to take into consideration which games to use and how, due to different games will benefit students in different manners. One suggestion to accomplish an excellent language game should be to present unambiguous rules, define the ultimate objective clearly and have a satisfying focus not to promote tediousness.

Khan (1991) presents some characteristics which we might think as we choose a game, such as the target language in the game; the skills that will be developed and practiced through it. Also the teacher should analyze if the game is appropriate for the age, needs and interest of the students to obtain from the learners the maximum

participation. As Tyson (2000) asserts: *“the justification for using games in the classroom has been well demonstrated as benefiting students in a variety of ways. These benefits range from cognitive aspects of language learning to more cooperative learning group dynamics”*. In agreement with Tyson (2000), games foster collaborative learning among students while exercising their cognitive skills.

### **When to Use Games**

Kim (1993) considers that games should be implemented as a principal activity when teaching a foreign language, and that it might be inappropriate to implement games as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a class or a lesson. A game must not be regarded as a trivial activity filling in peculiar moments when the teacher and students have nothing better to do.

Games also provide themselves a revision of exercises serving learners a recall of material in an entertaining and pleasant manner. Games could have consequences in both the introverted students, and in the willing ones, that is why teachers should pay attention in the classroom since games tend to encourage motivation in learners generating communicative proficiency.

Games do not have to be used only for simple excitement of the class, but also can be used for the assessment of the students during the language lessons, and as a result of the assessment, bringing in mind a specific goal for the improvement of learners' communicative competence (Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga, 2003)

## **Why using games in class time**

According to (Lewis, 1999) games are really good aids for teachers because with them, a tedious and boring class becomes into a brilliant setting for children, where skills are developed while they are playing. Through games children can discover, experiment and interact with their environment if the teacher exploits the games properly.

By means of games, it is possible for the teachers to include variety to each lesson they prepare, and students' motivation will be enhanced by giving a reasonable incentive use to foreign language. Lewis (1999) asserts that for a lot of children who are in ages between 8 to 10 years old, especially the youngest, to learn a foreign language does not provide enough motivational factors; although the games possibly will stimulate children.

When children play games to acquire the target language, they are contextualizing what they are learning in terms of language because with games children bring out the target language immediately after it is functional for them, and due to this fact, the foreign language is brought to their lives in a meaningful context through the use of games.

With games, even reluctant and shy students want to participate in the activity. Uberman (1994) contributes "they are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunities to express their opinions and feelings". Almost all children like to play games, so that everybody in the classroom will be involved in the activity.

Mei & Yu-Jing (2000) affirm that, when children learn the target language with games, they can learn it in the way they acquire their mother tongue without being aware about what they are studying. So, they are going to learn it without any pressure and stressful activities; for this reason they could learn in a better way.

Philosopher Kelley D (2003) defines the concept of games as a form of recreation constituted by a set of rules that specify an object to be attained and the permissible means of attaining it, the author says “*This cover most cases well, but does not quite fit with things like war games and sports that are often done not for entertainment but to build skills for later use*”. Taking into account that apparently the use of games in the foreign language classroom helps students to develop skills; Wright, A (1984) states that “*Language learning is hard work...Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work*”

Games also help teachers to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners would like to take part of it and in order to do it they must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view, give information or ask for clarification.

According to Lewis (1999) there are some advantages in the use of games in the classroom. The author claims that “*games are fun and children like to play them*”. Through games, children experiment, discover, and interact with their environment. The game context makes the foreign language immediately useful to the children and it brings the target language to life. The game makes the reasons for speaking plausible and students can learn English in the way they learn their mother tongue without being aware they are studying; thus without stress. Another advantage of using games is to

help the teacher to generate situations and context in which the language is practical, useful and meaningful. Students always want to participate especially if they are kids, they also want to understand what others are saying or doing because they want to be part of the game.

On the other hand, the teachers' role is very important and relevant because they have to prepare the materials in sufficient quantities, explaining clearly what is to be done, check answers at the end of an activity, make sure everyone participates and control the time of each game. Also the teacher needs to know what kind of games is going to be chosen because this must be more than just fun.

Nevertheless, there is a wrong conception that the learning should be serious and solemn in nature and that the use of games is just having fun and laughter but this is a misconception. It is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy it at the same time and one of the best ways to do it is through games.

### **Teacher's role when implementing games**

Previous studies have demonstrated that the implementation of games in language classes bring many learning advantages to the students. In order to obtain the benefits that the implementation of games can offer, there should be ideal conditions for the learners to use the language actively when performing game-activities. Pine & Boy (1977) claim that students provided with an ideal learning environment will be motivated to be active. It means that the facilitator must prepare the ideal conditions for the games to be really useful so that students will be engaged with the class. Pine & Boy (1977) also affirm that facilitators should provide students with more opportunities to



use the language actively, as through games learners should find information about the language by themselves. In agreement with Greenall (1984) classes with games allow students to practice what they have acquired, while feeling safe with the atmosphere of games, which means students can act more spontaneously when performing those activities.

### **TYPE OF STUDY**

This is a qualitative descriptive interpretative case study, since it involves the illustration and explanation of all the events that happened in the implementation of some teaching methods.

According to Creswell (1994) “A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex. Holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting”

The selection of the environment is very important too, because students need an excellent atmosphere where they can feel comfortable, in a peaceful environment, and the classroom is the place that we used for the development of the project because it must be suitable with the necessary tools to carry out the required activities. Also the selection of the participants should be made in a very detailed way taking into account ages, levels and preferences of the participants.

Taking into consideration the previous description the researchers want to focus on the necessity of the students to develop or learn the speaking skill (conversational speaking in an academic setting) and in what would be the more helpful strategy to build it up. In this case the researchers believe that one of the most useful strategies is the use of games in the classroom since implementing this they have to be in contact with the participants interacting, observing, and analyzing the process.

### **Descriptive-Interpretative Case Study**

Descriptive studies explain phenomena systematically to reveal patterns and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed. On the other hand interpretative studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meaning that people assign to them (TESOL quarterly, 1994).

The concept of a case study has been variously defined as a process, a unit of study, or an end product (Merriam, 1998). From a process perspective, Yin (2003) has defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Similarly, Scholz and Tietje (2002) define a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary problem within its real-life context” (p. 9). Delimiting the object of study, the case, is “the single most defining characteristic of case study research” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). Assessing the boundedness of the case is to consider how finite the data collection will be, whether there will be a limit to the number of interviews that can be conducted or number of

observations that can occur. If there is no actual or theoretical end to some of these possibilities, the phenomenon is not bounded enough to be deemed a case (Merriam, 1998).

Some scholars, however, argue that “cases are socially constructed and co-constructed between the researcher and the respondent. In this way, cases are not really defined or bounded until data collection—and even analysis—is finished” (Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, & Oakes, 2002, p. 340).

As Yin (2003) and others have articulated, in classic case study research, the case may be an individual, where the individual is the primary unit of analysis. Case study research may also be done on several individuals, or it can be an event or entity that is less well defined than a single individual. Other case study research has examined decisions, programs, an organization, an implementation process, organizational change, a country’s economy, an industry, and policy (Yin, 2003).

## METODOLOGY

### Context

Our study was developed in *Remigio Antonio Cañarte*, a state school in Pereira. There are 19 teachers for all the subjects offered in the school, 11 teachers work in the morning, and 8 in the afternoon. 405 students make part of the school, 244 take classes during the morning, and 161 take classes in the afternoon. The school is located in a neighborhood whose characteristics are those of the so-called economically deprived class in Colombia. That is to say, people have access to current water, electricity, cable television, internet services, etc. Nevertheless, some times the school does not have access to current water, which is vital for the functioning of the school. Another concerning aspect is that some of them had not been exposed to English and even some have literacy difficulties in their mother tongue.

### Participants

Participants in the present study were chosen randomly. Agustin (a1), Bryan (b2), Santiago (s3) and Kamila (k4), and were part of 4th grade taking the English course in *Remigio Antonio Cañarte*, a public school in the city of Pereira; the age of the participants ranges from 8 to 10 years. Four students were selected randomly for this study as our goal was to analyze the influence that games may have on the speaking skills of these (English as a foreign language) participants, and to obtain data from them that could provide us with useful information in order to answer the research questions that were proposed for this study.

## **DATA GATHERING METHODS**

In this study we observed English classes in *Remigio Antonio Cañarte* School. In the observations the researchers included field notes, checklists and video tapes. Eighteen sessions were conducted, two sessions per week, and each session lasted one hour.

The researchers consider that observation is a good method to explore and examine what happens in the context making an analysis of the problem and at the same time collect all the needed data for the study.

### **Observations**

Sierra and Bravo (1984) say that the observation is the inspection and the study done by the researcher through the use of his own senses with or without the help of technical gadgets also that the observation is a visual registry of what happens in the real world it means the empirical evidence so the observation requires the subject of the investigation, the definition of the objectives of the study, determine the unit of observation, the conditions under which assume the observation and the behaviors to be recorded. Also the findings have to be done in the most natural way possible and without influence of the researcher or other factors.

The researchers consider that the observation gives to the study one of the most important tools “The Facts”.

Through participant observation, researchers can also uncover factors important for a thorough understanding of the research problem but that were unknown when the study was designed. This is the great advantage of the method because, although we may get truthful answers to the research questions we ask, we may not always ask the right questions. Thus, what we learn from participant observation can help us not only to understand data collected through other methods (such as interviews, focus groups, and quantitative research methods), but also to design questions for those methods that will give us the best understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

We designed an observation format in order to facilitate the observation of the application of games for the development of the speaking skills of the students. The observation format served as a tool to focus on the teaching activities developed in classroom that contained games oriented to the English speaking skills of the students.

### **Field Notes**

To facilitate observations, field notes were made as a tool to record what was heard and observed in each session. Emerson (1995) presents field notes as an important instrument in descriptive studies because it allows: a better understanding of what occurs in the environment, the social interaction among participants, the activities developed in classroom, the people who take part in the activities, the non-verbal interaction, and to record exact or approximate quotes/comments made by the participants.

## **Video recording**

Obtaining data through video recordings represents many advantages in the field of education. The density of information is one of the advantages provided by the visual recordings (Grimshaw, 1982). Video recording gave us a more complete sense of the class environment, the students, and the type of activities that took place in the classroom during the data collection time. Visual information provided by video recordings allows making a better and accurate differentiation of several verbal messages. However, as stated by (Rosenthal, 1976) video recording also represents some disadvantages such as the quality of sound which may bring difficulties with the audio transcription. Besides (Smith, 1981) argues that the presence of the camera may change the behavior of the students; some students could turn shy, and others may become curious and look at the camera. That is why some other data collection methods are implemented.

## **Checklist**

A checklist was designed in order to collect data about aspects based on the speaking skill (*awareness about the topic, articulation, fluency, voice projection and intonation, student's response to teacher's questions, student's interaction with others, motivation*). The participants' performance regarding the speaking ability was registered on the checklists according to four different marks (*Excellent, Good, Adequate, and Poor*). According to Smith & Ragan (1993) checklists allow teachers to evaluate the quality or performance of students' outcomes

## **ROLE OF THE RESEARCHERS**

In the process we were participant and observer, one of us as participant-observer and the second one as observer. Wallace. M. (1998) argues that as a participant observer, the researcher can describe what goes on, how and where, and also to analyze the events, and relationship among the target people of the study.

The purpose of the observer was to analyze and record the group interactions and behaviors of the participants in an objective way, with the purpose of understanding the effect that games may have in the development of the speaking skills of English language learners.

During this study the participant-observer aimed at learning the perspectives of the target population. According to Gans (1982) a participant observer is the person who has partial participation in a determined social situation where he/she can carry out his/her role as researcher. In order to comprehend the speaking interaction in the participants we considered necessary to combine participation and observation, and this role of participant-observer allowed us to get insights of the influence that games have on the speaking skills of English as a foreign language students.



## **DATA ANALYSIS**

This section is the analysis of the data results obtained from the observations, videos and field notes in the interest of accomplishing a descriptive interpretation of the speaking interaction and performance among the participants during the sessions of this study. Data from the field notes and observations formats were constantly compared to classify the findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The analysis started by building codes and categorizing the data (Charmaz, 2006), coding and categorizing the data was essential to place and identify the speaking interactions performed by the students after taking part of the games offered by the facilitator. When there are no new codes it becomes necessary to start simplifying data in order to make it more understandable, then theory can be related to the data and explained.

### **Conventions for the study**

The following abbreviations were used in order for the readers to understand the collected data: for Agustín (A1), for Bryan (B2), for Santiago (S3), for Kamila (K4), and for the facilitator (F). These abbreviations will be found along the findings of this research project.

## FINDINGS

Qualitative reports from the four participants (Agustín, Brayan, Santiago, and Kamila), and the facilitator are contained in this section. This section will reflect the results of the interaction among the participants and the facilitator, the impact that classroom games can have on the speaking skills of English language students, and the considerations that can be drawn from the implementation of games in an English class by teachers.

After analyzing the data from the different instruments in relation with our first research question (*What is the impact games have in the English speaking skills of fourth grade students from a state school in Pereira?*) we found the following results:

### **1- Students' interaction and communication encouraged when using games**

The use of the language through interaction and communication among students is fundamental to develop the speaking skill (Judy, 1984) and (Ersoz, 2000) asserts that the implementation of games in class promote the use of the language skills. This finding reveals how the students' interaction and communication is fostered through the application of games.

On this session the facilitator gives the class to the students and presents the topic and the instructions for a class activity which offers the students the opportunity to interact and to practice the speaking skill.

The following data belongs to the field notes taken during a class in March 3/2011:

*Taken from the field notes:*

*The teacher delivers to the students pieces of paper where they have to write down their names, age and hometown, following the teacher dresses up as an FBI agent, wearing cap and carrying handcuffs and acts as if she was standing in the entry of a night club. Ten students line up to get into the club, and for this they must present their I.D's that were made by themselves, only adults can get into the club.*

*A1 looks around and stands up several times from his desk while B2 seems to be confused and asks “profe, ¿qué es lo que tengo que hacer?” (teacher what am I supposed to do?), his partner next to him explains him in Spanish. K4 is done with her exercise and practices orally what she just wrote with her fellow.*

As we can see in the data above, the activity proposed by the teacher offers to the students the opportunity to practice the speaking skill and interact. When the facilitator gives the instructions for the activity to the students, and when they do not understand one or some of the instructions; questions start to emerge. Before starting the game the students start to interact orally as they start to make questions in order to perform well the activity, then we could say that from the beginning the game started to have some influence on the speaking of the students, although not all the students interacted with the teacher (some students asked questions in Spanish and others in English).

As soon as the students start the game, some of them do not know what to do because either did not pay attention to the instructions or did not understand what the teacher said, regardless the reason, students formulate questions again in Spanish. On the piece

taken from the field notes above we can see that B2 asks a question to the teacher, and his partner next to him tries to answer again in Spanish. We can also notice that K4 starts reading aloud what she wrote with her fellow.

The following image corresponds to the checklist format used to collect data:

Bryan (B2) 9 years old  
 Santiago (S3) 8 years old  
 Kamila (K4) 8 years old

	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5
	Excellent					Good					Adequate					Poor				
1-Speaker demonstrates awareness of the topic	✓	✓	✓						✓											
2-Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)			✓			✓														✓
3-Speaker is fluent							✓													
4-Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation						✓	✓												✓	✓
5-Speaker responds to teacher's questions	✓	✓	✓																	✓
6-Speaker interacts with others		✓				✓		✓												✓
7-Speakers shows	✓	✓	✓												✓					

The references “*excellent, good, and poor*” mentioned on this finding, are contained on the checklist format which was used for the data collection.

According to the checklist for the same class documented on the field note sample, the participants showed excellent and good awareness of the topic (three participants excellent, and one good). In the other features analyzed in the checklist (speaker’s articulation, fluency, voice projection, response to teacher’s questions, interaction with others, and motivation) one participant (k4) demonstrated a poor performance in most of the aspects, while three of the participants showed good and excellent performance regarding oral production in most of the aspects contained on the checklist.

From the data collected on the checklist it is noticed that although K4's participation was not frequent and active in terms of the speaking skill, the students' response to the teacher's instruction in general was positive, because participants A1, B2, and S3 were excellent and good in most of the items related to the speaking skill during the game activity proposed for this class.

Offering ideal conditions for practicing the speaking skill is something that concerns to English language teachers. As noticed in the game proposed by the teacher, the activity had a positive effect on the oral skills of the students, because somehow they were in a position where they had to speak in order to make questions, besides an environment for interaction was facilitated as other students were willing to respond the questions.

In this particular finding we aimed at describing how the students communicated, and their reaction when participating of games in class. It was found that through the implementation of games, the students were provided with the opportunity of interacting and speaking, as they had to formulate questions and communicate with the other students, and according to Ersoz (2000), games permit students to exercise the language skills. Nevertheless, Vernon (2009) asserts that games sometimes do not imply the use of specific skills, and that some games are merely to have fun and fill some stages of the class where the students will be occupied and entertained. Schwartzman (1997) also believes that if games are not well planned, may result distracting for the students. Therefore, it is important to select cautiously the games that are going to be used in class. Still Mora & Lopera (2001) state that games are activities that both, the facilitators and the learners always enjoy doing, and thus, contributing to the

development of skills and competences. In that sense this finding demonstrates that games can motivate students to participate of the class, which implies that the students have a positive attitude toward learning.

## 2- Games as a tool to improve the speaking skill

Games can be used in order to assess the students' oral production and consequently there is an improvement on the students' communicative competence (Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga, 2003). This finding explores how the learners' speaking skills is improved through the use of games in class.

For this activity the facilitator drew a map on the board which contains different places of the city, such as the bank, police station, zoo, among other places. Students were given small toy cars and the facilitator asked them to go in front of the board, and they will have to drive the car on the board to the places which another partner will tell them, the student who tells the place where the car has to go, must use directions.

The image below is a sample that corresponds to a video recorded during the game activity:



On the activity recorded on the video, A1 has to give directions to his partner, so that his partner can drive the car to a specific place (the super market).

The following is part of the dialogue that took place on the video, this interaction was transcribed:

F: *Go to the super market*

A1: *Go up*

F: *Stop*

A1: *Turn left*

F: *Go...*

A1: *Go down!*

F: *And...*

A1: *Turn left*

F: *That's it; there you go, very good!*

It is noticed in the data obtained through the video that the facilitator intended to help A1 with the directions, at the same time it is noticed that despite A1 received help from the facilitator, he had to make use of the speaking skill in order to guide his partner on the map drawn on the board.

One of the purposes of this game activity was that one learner could orient other learner by giving directions. In order to accomplish the purpose of giving the directions to his partner, A1 had to speak, and although A1's partner did not speak, at least A1 had the opportunity to make use of the speaking skill. A1 had to choose the right words to describe the directions to his partner, and the facilitator's words in the last line of the transcription above "*That's it; there you go, very good!*" allowed A1 to find out that what he said was correct, from what we may assume that this game activity offered to A1 an opportunity to practice and improve his English through speaking.



On the video recording for the game activity proposed by the facilitator it is perceived that A1's speaking skill is not of an advanced English learner, but this game activity was a space which offered him the chance of improving the English speaking skill.

The following image corresponds to the checklist used for the same class in which the game activity of directions was developed:

	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	
	Excellent					Good					Adequate					Poor					
1-Speaker demonstrates awareness of the topic						✓	✓	✓	✓												
2-Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)						✓	✓	✓						✓							
3-Speaker is fluent																					
4- Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation	✓						✓						✓	✓							
5- Speaker responds to teacher's questions						✓	✓	✓	✓												
6- Speaker interacts with others																					
7- Speakers shows motivation		✓	✓	✓							✓										

The image above for the checklist shows us that in the “*Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation*” item, A1’s mark was “Excellent”, and for the other item “*Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)*” his mark was “Good”. From the A1’s marks for those items, it can be assumed that A1 responds to the activity, which demonstrates that the game activity makes A1 put in practice his speaking skill, thus giving him more probabilities to improve his English. B2’s marks for both items of the checklist were “Good”. S3’s mark was “Good” for the “*Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)*” item, but it was “Adequate” for the “*Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation*” item. K4’s marks for both items were “Adequate”. Although K4’s marks were not either “Excellent” or “Good”, her participation was “Adequate”. However students’ participation was “Good” in general terms.

In order to put learners into practicing speaking and to promote participation, game activities should be planned and structured, in which exposure is a determinant factor that must be taken into account because outside the classroom setting, and even inside the classroom there will always be few times when the students will have chances to exercise their speaking. The use of games is a strategy that the facilitator brings to class in order to provide to the students an activity in which they can practice their speaking, and thus to improve communication.

This finding explored how the facilitator got the students speaking through the use of games in the classroom setting. The results demonstrated that when Agustin took part of the game activity proposed by the teacher, he increased the possibilities of improving his English speaking skill, and in agreement with Kim (1995), games provide the students with the opportunity of having a meaningful interaction in the target language. Even so, Mei and Yu-jing (2000) believe that if not well planned, games can become distracting for some students, taking into account that not all the students have the same

learning styles, and deflecting some learners from the goal of putting in practice the speaking skill. By having the students speaking in game activities, the learners face more spontaneous situations, and according to Judy (1984) spontaneous situations allow the speakers to use language that they already know.

With the purpose of answering the second research question (*What considerations from the teachers' implementation procedure of games can be drawn from the study?*) we separated the following findings:

### **1- Reasons to use games in class**

Using games in class can bring many advantages and benefits, such as creating a meaningful context for the students where language is useful (Lewis,1999). For this finding we focus on explaining some reasons why games should be implemented in English classes.

The participants of this study took part of some games during the classes, and it is worth mentioning some advantages that were noticed during the implementation of the games by the teacher.

The sample below corresponds to the field notes taken during a class, in which before implementing a game, the facilitator gives an introduction of the topic in English:

*“The teacher introduces the topic in English, however the students complain and they claim not to understand.....The teacher gives examples of how to ask the time by drawing a clock on the board”*

The information above from the field notes was taken in a class where the facilitator introduced the topic of “*Time*”. We may assume from this that the learners tried to comprehend what the teacher was explaining, but it was difficult for them to understand.

The following are some extracts from the field notes for the same class: *“Agustin participates actively wanting to go in front of the board, and raises his hand all the time”*.

*“Santiago pays attention to the class and takes note of what is written on the board without asking questions, Camila does the same”*,

*“Camila seems to be paying attention and taking notes, but she seems distracted because when the teacher encourages her to participate, she refuses”*

The samples from the field notes above may led us to assume that A1 was very motivated to take part of the activity implemented by the facilitator. S3 paid attention to the class, but did not participate, and K4 apparently was paying attention but she rejected the teacher’s request to take part of the activity.

*“The time”* activity implemented by the facilitator did not manage to get all the students participating, and even one of them did not pay attention to the topic that the teacher was introducing. It is to be remarked that the activity implemented by the teacher was not a game-activity, and it was a stage of the class previous to a game activity. The teacher’s goal with this activity was used with the purpose of introducing the topic of “time” and to teach the students how to ask for the hour, and how to say the hour in English. Subsequently a game was implemented as a way to complement the topic of the class.

The extracts below are part of the field notes of the same class. The teacher proceeded to implement a game related to the same topic that she introduced to the students (time and hour):

*“The teacher divides the group into 3 teams, each with 4 or 5 students, each team must make a row, and the rows must be placed in parallel. The teacher draws an imaginary line of arrival which the students must reach only if they mark the time that the teacher tells them correctly”*

*“The students line up and seem excited because they know that they’re going to take part in a game. Agustin, Bryan, Santiago, and Camila make part of the row number 3, and they all want to participate all the time during the game”*

We can see that the reaction of the participants when the game is developed is a very enthusiastic attitude. Regarding the previous activity to the game, S3 and K4 who were not very active, now they seem much more activated and willing to participate of the game. We may reason out from S3 and K4’s response to the game that the facilitator’s implementation of the game apart of serving to change the pace of the lesson, also served as a complementation to the class. The game also offered motivation to S3 and K4, who did not get involved with the previous activity, in which in order to participate they had to do it alone, and maybe that was the reason why they did not dare to raise their hands or to speak.

The following are samples taken from the field notes for a game that was implemented in a different class. The topic of the class was “*clothes*”:

*“The teacher gives each student a paper doll and a sheet with different clothing. Students must choose the clothes with which they want to dress their dolls and go in front of the board to describe their dolls”*

*“when students finish pasting the clothes on the paper dolls, Bryan is the first one who goes in front of the board and describes his doll, "jeans and blueshirt he is wearing, black boots and cap", he makes a slow description but with good pronunciation, while looks at the vocabulary on the board. Santiago rushes to describe his doll and goes in front of the board, however he makes a mistake and says "I am wearing" instead of saying "he is wearing," referring to his doll”*

The data above taken from the field notes shows us that B2 is willing to participate, and that makes a description for what he makes use of his speaking skill. Although S3 made a mistake, he also was willing to participate and made use of the speaking skill. Both, B2 and S3 were in a meaningful context where they could speak, but before speaking they had to make use of their cognitive skills, because they have to choose first the appropriate vocabulary for the description that they were going to do for their paper dolls.

Games in class demand from students to think before they come out with answers, and although the goal of the activity was to make the students speak in order to make descriptions, thinking was implicit, thus increasing also vocabulary. The students' speaking outcomes during such game activities, whether are mistakes or correct, allow the teachers to make a diagnose of the students' pronunciation and speaking. The implementation of games led us to think that may serve to arouse the students' if they are bored, also to improve the speaking skills of the students because they are practicing, and to make a diagnose of the students' current speaking performance.

In agreement with Khan (1996), one of the advantages of using games in class, is that when planning the games, the game can be addressed to the development of one specific skill. For this study, the facilitator focused on the speaking skill, and it was

noticed that the students had to make use of their cognitive skills before speaking. It means that they had to think what they were going to say, and implicitly improving their vocabulary. Tyson (2000) points out the relevance of using games in class, as it has diverse benefits, in which we can find the cognitive aspects of language learning. This finding also revealed that the students' speaking outcomes serve as a tool for the teacher to diagnose the students' pronunciation and speaking, and according to Cunningham (1999), facilitators should supervise the students' oral output, as a way to detect what needs to be improved.



## **2- Using the language as a result of the implementation of games**

Pine & Boy (1977) affirms that teachers should facilitate classes with the purpose of having students using the language in an active way. On this finding we aim at explaining how the implementation of games lead the students to use the language actively.

While gathering data for this study A1, B2, S3, and K4 were in situations where they had to make use of their oral skills. Games were implemented by the facilitator, so that the students could be on those situations of making use their oral skills.

The data and the image below correspond from a class game that was documented on the field notes, and also was video recorded:



*“Each group must choose a leader who is given a sport flashcard, the leader tells his team the sport flashcard that he was given and they have to go in front of the class and do the mimics. The remaining groups start asking eg Are you swimming? (depending on what he is doing). The leader responds yes, we are, or not, we are not. The fastest guess wins”*

The activity depicted on the data above shows us that the students were given the opportunity to communicate among them using the English language. First the leader of the group (on this case participant K) had to tell to her fellows what she saw on the flashcard, and it demanded from her to speak in order to transmit meaning. When the groups had to ask questions to the student doing mimics, and when the student doing the mimics had to answer, it demanded again from them to communicate by speaking.

The need to provide students with opportunities where they can put into practice the target language, makes facilitators to reflect about creating spaces that offer students enough exposure to authentic language situations (similar to the real life) where they can be in real communication. When students are put into authentic communicative situations, apart from being motivated, it is also a chance for the facilitator to monitor the students' progress in the target language. Getting the students using the language in a meaningful context also allows the class to be students centered as the facilitator only gives some instructions of the games in order to have them speaking and interacting. Teacher centered classes may distract students to interact with each other, while a student centered class can help them to be active and motivated participants, enabling them to use the language to communicate effectively. And games may create the appropriate environment for a class to become students-centered.

According to the collected data during this study, it was found that the activity proposed by the teacher, required from the students to use the language, because they were put in a real situation where it was necessary to speak. Burns (1998) states that learners should be put in situations where speaking is seen as useful and necessary in order to transmit a message. When being exposed to games during this study, the students were put in authentic situations in which they had to make use of L2. Game activities in class may also put the students in situations where they have to use the language promptly, thus developing oral fluency as a consequence of using the language (Nunan, 2003).

## **RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Research implications**

This study describes the application of games for the development of speaking skill in students of 4th grade in a public school in Pereira. It could catch the attention of future researchers to find out about the application of games in other courses in public Colombian schools (higher and lower grades), and not only the application of games for the development of the speaking skill, but also the other skills concerned to the English teaching-learning (writing reading, and listening). This way, teachers might get wider knowledge on how to develop strategies to facilitate the practice of the speaking skill for the students not only through the implementation of games, but also researchers may also be interested in strategies that may improve the speaking skill in L2. Another factor which is worth being explored contends the relation between class activities and the development of the speaking skill of the learners, and how this could help them to improve their oral productive skill.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The general perspective of this study suggests that facilitators should concern more about helping students to develop their oral production and interaction, by designing syllabus which contains activities where the learners have the opportunity to practice speaking, besides improving their English. It is also important to point out that integrating the four skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) will help the students to have a more successful learning of the English language. Then, we consider

that this study motivates facilitators to plan courses in which learners will face situations where they will have a meaningful use of the English language.

We also conceive games as activities that should be taken into account when designing syllabi in order to improve not only the speaking skill in the second language, but also the other skills.

## CONCLUSIONS

To achieve the goal of having the students using their speaking, the students had to move from the stage where they merely imitate a model or respond to cues to the point where they could use the language to express their own ideas. Interesting games were used in the project in order to motivate and help students move from the imitation stage to the production stage.

The findings of this study show that it is fundamental to have students using the language in order to have a more successful learning, and the implementation of games for the speaking skill, allows the students to put in practice the speaking skill, and also to improve the listening skill of course, and it is also important to say that using games to trigger 4th graders speaking skills is one interesting strategy to be implemented in an EFL classroom scenario.

We faced some difficulties when conducting this study, as students were not always willing to cooperate with the activities that we pretended to develop in class in order to collect data for this research. When leading the game-activities some of the students argued with other students, and other students made fun of the other students' mistakes. Nevertheless it was not an obstacle for our research.

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## APPLICATION OF GAMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPEAKING SKILL

Date:  
Session Number:

School:

Implementer:  
Session Time:

Observer:

Speakers:

	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5	A1	B2	S3	K4	C5
	Excellent					Good					Adequate					Poor				
1- Speaker demonstrates awareness of the topic																				
2-Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)																				
3-Speaker is fluent																				
4-Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation																				
5-Speaker responds to teacher's questions																				
6-Speaker interacts with others.																				
7-Speaker shows motivation																				

### CRITERIA

<p><b>1- Speaker demonstrates awareness of the topic</b></p>	<p>The speaker participated actively in the game by writing, speaking and listening. He/She is able to follow instructions and works cooperatively to achieve the objective of game.</p>
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<p><b>2-</b> <i>Speaker articulates clearly (accuracy)</i></p>	<p>The speaker is able to produce the sounds of the English language in order to make him/herself understood.</p>
<p><b>3-</b> <i>Speaker is fluent</i></p>	<p>The speaker is able to produce connected sentences without much hesitation in order to make themselves understood.</p>
<p><b>4-</b> <i>Speaker shows suitable voice projection and intonation</i></p>	<p>The speaker's voice projection allows him/her to be heard in the activity.</p>
<p><b>5-</b> <i>Speaker responds to teacher's questions</i></p>	<p>The speaker is able to answer the questions in the target language with all the features of pronunciation that allows to be understood.</p>
<p><b>6-</b> <i>Speaker interacts with others</i></p>	<p>The speaker is able to engage in a game and works cooperatively with the partners to achieve the aim of the task</p>
<p><b>7-</b> <i>Speaker shows motivation</i></p>	<p>The student is engaged with the activity or game and is willing to achieve the aim of it.</p> <p>She/he displays positive characteristics towards learning such as: He/she follows instructions, reacts to the prompts of the teacher, works collaboratively and cooperatively, displays autonomous behavior.</p>