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DESCRIBING TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN PEREIRA RISARALDA

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ABSTRACT

Communicative competence and assessment are significant terms in the English language teaching field; in Colombia these two elements are part of the curriculum in schools and universities. Our research was aimed to get further information in these matters. For the data collection we used interviews, observations and an analysis of the guides teachers used in their classes. The results demonstrated that teachers emphasized more linguistic and pragmatic competence; therefore, sociolinguistic competence received little attention. Consequently, the connection between teaching and assessment procedures has a relevant bond for our study; in terms of assessment procedures, it was evidenced main emphasis on direct and continuous assessment, teachers emphasized the use of quizzes and notebooks grading, they also took into account the students' performance during classes and their behavior. Assessment was carried out according to the information seen in class. In conclusion, communicative competence and assessment were present in the observed classes; even though some communicative and assessment elements were more evident than the others.

RESUMEN

La Competencia Comunicativa y la Evaluación son términos importantes en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés; en Colombia estos dos elementos son parte del currículo en escuelas y universidades. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo proveer más información acerca de estos temas. Este estudio fue realizado en un colegio público en Pereira Risaralda, Colombia; para la recolección de datos, fueron utilizados entrevistas, observaciones y un análisis de las guías usadas por los profesores en sus clases. El resultado demostró que los profesores hacían más énfasis en la Competencia Lingüística y en la Competencia Pragmática; sin embargo, la Competencia Sociolingüística fue poco remarcada. En consecuencia, la conexión entre los procedimientos de enseñanza y evaluación tienen una conexión relevante en nuestro estudio; en los procesos de evaluación se evidencio un mayor énfasis en la evaluación directa y continua, los profesores se enfocaron en el uso de quices y notas del cuaderno, además tuvieron en cuenta el comportamiento de los estudiantes y el trabajo durante la clase. La evaluación se llevaba acabo de acuerdo a la información vista en clase. En conclusión, la Competencia Comunicativa y la Evaluación fueron evidentes en las clases observadas; sin embargo algunos elementos de la competencia comunicativa y la evaluación fueron más notorios que otros.

<u>DEDICATION</u>

This work is mainly dedicated to all of the teachers of the Licenciatura Program who have contributed the pieces of the knowledge we have used to carry out this research, we also want to thank our families and our great advisor Frank Giraldo who has been very supportive during this long process; and last but not least we want to mention somebody who has never left us and has guided us for being who we are now, thanks Jesus Christ for all your love and help.

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>

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1. INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of the study was to describe how three teachers, from different grades (ninth, tenth and eleventh), helped students develop their communicative competence, as well as how teachers used assessment instruments to collect information of students' development in communicative competence. In order to do this, it was also necessary to describe the assessment instruments that were applied, so that we could reach the research objective.

Our research is a qualitative and descriptive case study; it was conducted in a public high school in Pereira (Risaralda), in which the researchers were complete observers. In addition, data was collected through interviews, observations, guides analysis and a checklist in order to report assessment procedures; the data was analyzed considering the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Our main participants were three English teachers, one per each grade, 9th, 10th and 11th. We also wanted to explain how assessment was aligned with teaching procedures.

This research project was inspired by institutional, academic and research oriented reasons like committing to our country's purposes of being bilingual, having an idea of how teachers deal with the request of the National Ministry of Education about including the Common European Framework guideline for teaching English and getting to collect information of our interest. In order to be a source of information in the language teaching field, we described what is happening in the classroom in terms of communicative competence application and assessment procedures.

Therefore, in the conclusion of our study, we determined educators effort to apply communicative competence through the making or designing of guides centered on the

CEFRL and on Colombian's standards for foreign language teaching (Guide 22 El Reto); we also noticed that teachers are not totally aware of assessment implications and instruments; nevertheless they utilized some types of assessment (consciously or unconsciously).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Colombia, the National Ministry of Education (NME), in view of the necessity to achieve the bilingual program's goal of promoting a higher quality in English teaching programs, the NME launched 'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence' (El Reto, Guide 22) which is a guide that stipulates what students should know and what they should do with the knowledge of the language that is specified in the standards.

In the following part, we are going to show an example of a standard that is expected to be common in an English class.

> *1. Comprendo el sentido general del texto oral aunque no entienda todas sus palabras.*
>
> I understand in a general way a spoken text even when I am not familiar with all of the words. (Grades 10 to 11)

The standard presented above, in a communicative competence view, involves linguistic competence, since the students are confronted with well-formed and meaningful messages; it also embraces sociolinguistic competence, since students can be listening to a text where social expressions and folk-wisdom are included; and finally it includes discourse competence (which is part of the pragmatic competence), since the spoken text is sequenced and coherent.

NME established the parameters and standards that every institution in Colombia should apply. In this way, teachers must follow 'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence' as a guide to know what their students are expected to know in each grade.

In view of the communicative competence that students should achieve, it is significant to check on students' progress through assessment; hence, Watson (1995) states that assessment should always be viewed as information to improve student's progress, and she also highlights that assessment has to be focused on the proficiency levels where each grade is placed.

McMillan, (2003), refers to classroom assessment as a wide variety of strategies employed by teachers to give students feedback about how they are experiencing the learning process. Therefore, in the classroom practice assessment plays an important role and should be carried out. In this way, assessment can be used to improve classroom practice, plan curriculum, and research on one's teaching practice. Of course, assessment will always be used to provide information about learning progress (Badders, 2000).

In addition, the CEFRL established a number of important distinctions or types of assessment that we explain later on in this study and as the 'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence' include the CEFRL it is meaningful for English teachers to include assessment in their teaching. Hence, this study also attempts to describe assessment and assessment instruments that teachers use within the classroom.

In the English teaching field, it is valuable to conduct researches in communicative competence and assessment because these terms are included in the Common European Framework as the core of the learning and teaching process, and it is important to highlight that in Colombia the National Standards on Foreign Language Competence were adapted from the CEFRL. It is also relevant for language teachers to be aware of

the importance of communicative competence and assessment in order to follow the country's requirements set in the Guide 22 El Reto.

Now that we know what should be done, in our research study we wish to describe what is really done and what is really happening inside the classroom regarding the concepts mentioned above.

With this study we hope to contribute in a modest way to the research on the 'teaching of communicative competence in high schools' and in the way teachers facilitate the students' development of it. It is vital to clarify that our study does not pretend to generalize a process related with English teaching in Colombia but we do want to describe a specific educational community.

We intend to make readers aware of the reality in foreign language classes (in one community) showing them the evidence that can be found in a normal classroom environment.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the teaching procedures used by three teachers from 9th to 11th grade in a high school in Pereira?

- What are the assessment procedures implemented by these teachers?

- How are the teaching and assessment procedures aligned?

3.1 Research Objectives:

- To describe teachers' teaching procedures in relation to communicative competence.

- To describe assessment instruments used in class and their relation to communicative competence.

- To describe how teaching and assessment procedures align in relation to communicative competence.

4. TEORETHICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following section the reader will find the definition of communicative competence and Assessment including their components and sub-competences, according to different linguists, authors and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) is a guideline used to describe achievements of foreign language learners. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies to all languages. The CEFRL sets up systems of validation of language ability. The six reference levels of proficiency specified are used for grading an individual's language proficiency.

'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence' is a guide that foreign language teachers from Colombia should use; according to the parameters set up by the National Ministry of education, the guide mentioned above which is also called Guide 22, adopted and adapted the proficiency levels stipulated in the CEFRL and organized them in a chart according to each grade.

GRUPOS DE GRADOS	NIVELES MCE		
Décimo a Undécimo	B1	B 1.2	Pre intermedio 2
Octavo a Noveno		B 1.1	Pre intermedio 1
Sexto a Séptimo	A2	A 2.2	Básico 2
Cuarto a Quinto		A 2.1	Básico 1
Primero a Tercero	A1	A1	Principiante

The chart presented above shows the specific levels that students must achieve during the process of learning a foreign language in the Colombian context. Moreover, National Standards on Foreign Language Competence unified criteria concerning

English language teaching contexts, which allows the teachers to have a clear set of standards about what students should know regarding English language and how they can use this knowledge in countries where English is spoken.

Considering the importance that all competences have in the process of learning a foreign language, 'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence' strive for developing and implementing the communicative competence, which according to Canale & Swain (1980) has four components; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. These components are a guide for the teacher to develop a classroom curriculum and to structure the teaching practice, for this reason, the NME states that communicative competence should be the core of language education in the classroom practice in Colombia.

Definitions of communicative competence according to different linguists and researchers:

In 1960s when the Communicative Approach in language teaching began to be established, British applied linguistics focused their attention on the communicative proficiency and they questioned the teaching method that only implemented grammatical structures; therefore, linguists eagerly began to examine language communication.

Chomsky (1965) was one of the first linguists to start giving meaning to what it is today 'communicative competence'; he affirmed that a language user should have the capacity to produce correct and well-formed sentences in a grammatical view.

Chomsky's definition was complemented by Hymes, Halliday and Widdowson, their definitions embrace not only the grammatical issues as Chomsky said, but also function of the language, culture, purpose of the speech, and language use.

Halliday (1970) believed that communicative competence was an overview of language functions; Halliday described language functions as classified into *instrumental function, interactional function, heuristic function* among others; Halliday described instrumental function as the ability to use language in order to get things (a favor, an answer, an object, etc); interactional function is the ability to use the language to interact with others; and heuristic function is the ability to use the language to learn and discover.

Through the development and definition of language teaching, linguists like Hymes (1972) described communicative competence as what a learner should have in order to deal effectively with language within a communicative culture; it means that the language user should have knowledge of the language and ability to use it.

Different theorists have contributed in some way to this definition; for instance, Widdowson (1978) proposed a relationship between linguistic systems and communicative values, which is the ability to use language for different purposes.

Furthermore, Savignon (1983) mentioned that there are five communicative competence characteristics; those are:

- Communicative competence is dynamic rather than static concept. The Author states that it depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system.

- Communicative competence applies to both written and spoken language, as well as many other symbolic systems.

- Communicative competence is seen in specific contexts. Communication takes place in an infinitive variety of situations, and the success in a particular role that depends on one understanding of the context and on previous experience of a similar kind.

- Competence is defined as a presumed underlying ability, and performance as the overt manifestation of that ability. Competence is what a person knows, and Performance is what a person does.

- Communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) language knowledge embraces more than abstract grammatical knowledge. Accordingly, in the CEFRL communicative competence is the ability to interact well with others; it embraces a variety of capacities that a learner must have in order to deal effectively with communicative events, to have a conversation successfully or to use reading and writing skills in a fluent way.

Communicative competence is composed of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence; according to the CEFRL;

Linguistic competence is related to the knowledge and ability to use formal resources from meaningful messages and the way sentences are assembled and formulated. But it

does not only refer to the learner's ability to apply and use grammatical rules in an specific context, but also to form correct utterances, and know how to use these utterances appropriately, (pag 108).

Sociolinguistic competence is associated with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimensions of language, it deals with linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences and dialectic and accent. (pag 118).

Pragmatic competence "is concerned with the user/leaner's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are organized, structured and arranged. Messages are used to perform communicative functions. (pag 123).

Assessment theories in language teaching:

Assessment of any module or program is about making a judgment, identifying the strengths and weaknesses, the good and the bad in some cases. Assessment is more than simply giving marks or grades, although that may well be a part of it. In fact, it is because it involves making a judgment it will almost inevitably include an element of subjectivity by the assessor.

During the 70's, the ideas of communicative competence began to be incorporated into discussions about validity (Validity: defined as the degree to which the instrument measures what it's supposed to measure. If an instrument is not reliable, it cannot be valid (Mason & Bramble, 1989)) in language assessment.

McNamara (1999), states that variables in performing assessment can inform teachers about the condition of the competence; indeed according to Brindley, (2003) the object of assessment is to identify the components of language ability and perceive the shortcomings.

McMillan (2003), refers to classroom assessment as a wide variety of strategies employed by teachers to get feedback from students about how they are experiencing the learning process. Classroom assessment is also known as teacher-made assessment or alternative assessment; as the name implies, "teacher-made assessments are assessments made by a teacher or group of teachers for a specific set of instructional outcomes and for a particular group of students" (Hughes, 2003).

Badders (2000) explained assessment as "a continuous, ongoing process that involves examining and observing students' behaviors, listening to their ideas, and developing questions to promote conceptual understanding"(methods of assessment). In this way, assessment can be used to improve classroom practice, plan curriculum, and research on one's teaching practice. Of course, assessment will always be used to provide information about learning progress.

The CEFRL established a number of important distinctions that can be made in relation to assessment. The following chart shows us the types of assessment established by the CEFRL:

Achievement assessment	Proficiency assessment
Continuous assessment	Fixed assessment points
Formative assessment	Summative assessment
Direct assessment	Indirect assessment
Performance assessment	Knowledge assessment
Subjective assessment	Objective assessment
Rating on a scale	Rating on a checklist
Assessment by others	Self- assessment
Holistic assessment	Analytic assessment

Achievement assessment is focused on specific objectives. This kind of assessment encompasses what has been taught. Therefore, it relates to the week's/term's work, the course book, the syllabus, among others. Achievement assessment is also oriented to the course in process (*CEFRL page n°183)*.

Proficiency assessment on the other hand, is assessment of what someone can do/knows in relation to the application of the subject in the real world. It represents an external perspective (*CEFRL page n°183)*.

Continuous assessment is done by the teacher and possibly by the learner of class performances, it concerns pieces of work and projects throughout the course. The final grade thus, reflects the whole course/year/semester (*CEFRL page n°185*).

Fixed point assessment is when grades are awarded and decisions are made on the basis of an examination or other assessment which takes place on a particular day, usually the end of the course or before the beginning of a course (*CEFRL page n°186*).

Formative assessment is an ongoing process of gathering information on the extent of learning about strengths and weaknesses of the students, in which the teachers can provide feedback to their learners. Formative assessment is often used in a very broad sense so as to include non-quantifiable information from questionnaires and consultations (*CEFRL page n°186*).

Summative assessment takes place at the end of the course with a grade. It is not necessarily proficiency assessment. Indeed a lot of summative assessment is norm referenced, fixed-point, achievement assessment (*CEFRL page n°186*).

Direct assessment is assessing what a learner is actually doing. For example, a small group is discussing something, the teacher observes, compares with a criteria grid, matches the performances to the most appropriate categories on the grid, and gives an assessment (*CEFRL page n°187*).

Indirect assessment, it uses a test, usually on paper, which often assesses skills.

Indirect measures, may imply that learning has taken place (e.g., student perceptions of learning) but do not specifically demonstrate that learning or skill (*CEFRL page n°187*).

Performance assessment requires the learner to provide a sample of language in speech or writing in a direct test (*CEFRL page n°187*).

Knowledge assessment requires the learner to answer questions which can be of a range of different item types in order to provide evidence of the extent of their linguistic knowledge and control (*CEFRL page n°187*).

Subjective assessment is a judgment by an assessor. What is normally meant by this is the judgment of the quality of a performance (*CEFRL page n°188)*

Objective assessment is in where subjectivity is removed. What is normally meant by this is an indirect test in which the items have only one right answer, e.g. a test with multiple choices (*CEFRL page n°188.*

Rating on a scale: it is mainly focus on judging that a person is at a particular level or band on a scale made up of a number of such levels or bands (*CEFRL page n°189.*

Rating on a checklist: evaluating a person in relation to a list of points deemed to be relevant for a particular level or module. In 'rating on a scale' the emphasis is on placing the person rated on a series of bands (*CEFRL page n°189).*

Holistic assessment is making a global synthetic judgment. Different aspects are taken into account or consideration intuitively by the assessor (*CEFRL page n°190).*

Assessment by others: it depends on judgments by the teacher or examiner (*CEFRL page n°191*.

Self-assessment: are judgments about your own proficiency. Learners can be involved in many of the assessment techniques outlined above. Research suggests that provided 'high stakes' (e.g. whether or not you will be accepted for a course) are not involved, self-assessment can be an effective complement to tests and teacher assessment
"The main potential for self-assessment, however, is in its use as a tool for motivation and awareness rising: helping learners to appreciate their strengths, recognize their weaknesses and orient their learning more effectively" (*CEFRL page n°191*).

Furthermore, CERFL defines assessment as a procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitudes or skills of a learner or groups or learners. CEFRL, also states that assessment in ELT means to discover what the learners know and can do at a certain stage of the learning process and also what they need to improve.

Assessment is embedded in the learning process it is strongly interconnected with curriculum and instruction. According to Manitoba (2007), as teachers and students work towards the achievement of curriculum goals, assessment plays a constant role in informing instruction, guiding the student's next steps and checking progress and achievement. Teachers use many different processes and strategies for classroom assessment, and adapt them to suit the assessment purpose and needs of individual students.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Related studies in communicative competence:

Different studies have insisted on finding evidence, sequence, results or activities in communicative competence; we are going to present some of the most relevant researches conducted in Colombia. To start we are going to show Gonzalez Pelaez (2008) who piloted a research in Bogotá (Colombia) with two English teachers from an extension program to establish the relation between what teachers understand about communicative competence and what they actually apply in the classroom practice.

Gonzalez Pelaez, (2008) observed and described two English teachers who got their undergraduate degree at the National University in Bogotá. Interviews and observation sheets were used to collect the data. Regarding interviews, the format employed was based on Seidman's proposal (1998) about the use of the three-interview series (sets of interviews) designed by Dolbare and Schuman (Schuman, 1982,cited by Sleidman, 1998); The researcher found that developing communicative competence in students implied more aspects than of the language itself. Teachers focused on students' needs, interaction in the classroom and materials for every class**.**

Teachers also based their classes on what they believed the students should know and on how to teach them what they should be taught according to the institution's curriculum or according to the course's English proficiency levels. The two observed teachers also subscribed to the belief that for the students to achieve communicative competence easily the teacher must create a confident environment. Teachers started their classes by greeting the students and asking them how their day was, in order to make the students feel comfortable.

At the end of the study, the observed teachers were interviewed and they declared that it was complex for them to define what communicative competence was, even though they said it was a macro concept in which it was difficult to work all of its elements and to assure that a teacher was really working on its development.

Communicative competence is also described by teachers as related to functional issues in terms of having language use in mind when teaching language structures to students. This is closely related to the fact that teachers consider communicative competence a context-based issue. Nonetheless, participants think that nowadays teachers do not take into account all of its components when they work on the development of the Competence during the class activity.

The participant teachers think that communicative competence development depends on classroom atmosphere, classroom organization and the use of extra-materials. They asserted that its development implies thinking about the students themselves as well as the way they interact in the classroom.

Additionally, another of the researches that leads to an understanding of what communicative competence is and how it is improved in Colombia, is a study conducted by Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchia (2004), which focuses on elementary English language instruction; the methodology of the project includes a profile of the 12 teachers who were participating in this study, and an analysis of their class methodology in terms of activities, materials, as well as teacher and students' roles are reported.

The authors explained that, although previous studies have explored how English language teachers are in different contexts and the limitations they have, there is a need

to conduct more studies to explore the reality of teaching English in public, and elementary school classrooms In Colombia.

The researchers, who designed the project, divided it into stages. In the first stage, researchers began to analyze important documents related to foreign language instruction. They read and discussed 'Lineamientos Curriculares' to find out how the Ministry of Education is promoting the teaching of English as a foreign language in public and elementary schools. In addition, they started to review the literature related to early foreign language instruction. The next stage consisted of observing and interviewing teachers about their classes. Every teacher was observed 3 times in different grades, reaching a total number of 63 observations.

Researchers found that most of the class period was spent on activities that are either organizational (giving instructions or disciplinary actions), presentational (introducing the lesson topic) or affective (warm-ups). Even when giving instructions and organizing children is relevant in an elementary school context, these activities were done in Spanish; therefore children were more exposed to Spanish than to English in class. Teachers used the target language only when presenting a topic or reviewing vocabulary with children in class.

On the other hand, another common characteristic that was noted during the classes was that teachers' presentation of activities mentioned above, often took place in the middle of the class period and was not usually accompanied by practice or application exercises in the same lesson. A very common strategy for presentation of topics or related vocabulary was the use of flashcards and translation at the same time. The authors also

explained that translation seemed to play a very important role in these classes. It was used as a strategy to present new material, to explain content, or to check comprehension.

Moreover, activities were not frequently used or at least were not noticed in the number of observed classes; games and singing songs were not frequently used by the teachers. There were only two games with an affective purpose; the first one as a practice activity, and the second one as an application activity. Singing songs was used as both, practice and affective activities.

Other activities that were not frequently used by teachers include role-plays, story-telling, question-answer exercises, meaningful drills, problem-solving activities, and information exchange activities, etc. This might be due to the fact that most of these activities were so specifically related to the field of foreign language teaching that probably the teachers participating in this study were not familiar with.

Finally, Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchia (2004) analyzed the activities in terms of language skills and sub-skills; they could see that classes are mainly focused on vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Reading and writing are seen as recognition of words and copying them down. In very few cases there is comprehension of oral or written texts.

The researchers concluded that even though some public elementary schools in Colombia have adopted the new education act, their teachers who are willing, enthusiastic and committed, require encouragement and support in this endeavor. The

authors affirm that teachers with either limited or unrelated educational preparation, and insufficient training and target language preparation are working against all odds.

"Educational processes in Colombia need to be observed from a reflective perspective that will lead to a determination of characteristics of such a process, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement" (Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchia, 2004).

In order to show the reader more evidence on studies conducted on communicative competence (Colombia), there is one other important investigation in this field which was conducted by Alvarez Valencia (2007), in Universidad de la Salle in Bogota Colombia. This investigation attempts to find the bases of the didactic sequences in English classes and to justify its selection and development.

According to Comenious (1986) (cited by Alvarez Valencia) didactics is the art of teaching, but throughout time different authors have given diverse definitions; for instance, Rosales (1988), another author cited by Alvarez Valencia, stated that 'didactics' is the science of a systematic teaching process which leads to learning, a comprehension of this term embraces three dimensions, 'epistemological, educational and philosophical'.

Alvarez (2001), Vez (2002) and Kostina (2005) state that didactics in foreign language is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and multidimensional character and it encompasses lexical, morphological, pragmatic and different components which make up the communicative competence; besides, didactics join together these components with the pedagogical knowledge in the teaching process.

Zabala Vidiella (1997) says that a didactic sequence is a set of organized and structured activities in order to get some educational objective. In foreign language teaching, the content has determined the didactic sequences of the methods that have emerged. However, the new views of the diverse linguistic, psychological, anthropological and sociological sub-disciplines have made a change in the content of the foreign language teaching, because there has been a transition from the linguistic and grammatical consideration of teaching to a communicative view and language function.

For this study, the data collection was through class observation, interviews and class recordings provided by the teachers. The study was qualitative and descriptive and aimed to observe a didactic sequence, the participants were English teachers from first, third and fifth semester with a degree in La Universidad de la Salle. In total there were six participants (two from each course).

In the findings the author stated that the text book was an important part in the teachers' didactics. The participants said that the book was like a guide for them because the book had the course contents, but the teachers affirmed that they do not use the book for every class.

It was found that the teachers' didactic sequences were determined by the concepts of the language skills; the classes were structured in different sections, for example, listening, speaking, reading and writing, in these sections the teacher used diverse activities and that generated a didactic sequence.

Some other researchers like Velasquez and Holguin (2012), led a study here in Colombia related to communicative competence which was aimed to describe the instructional designs of two English teachers and their relation to the Colombian standards set for learning and teaching English; for the data collection, the researchers used interviews, observations and an analysis of the school's English language curriculum. As contributors, two English language teachers from a public school in Pereira participated in the study.

The researchers used an observation format that was designed by them; the first part no the format was to fill in the 'language related aims for each lesson'. The second part included elements of the 'method design' explained by Richards and Rodgers (1999): classroom procedures and activities, learner's roles, teacher's roles, and the use of materials. And the third part of the observation drew the theory about 'approach to language' and 'approach to language learning' (Richards and Rodgers, 1999). Based on instructional design and English learning standards observed in class, authors classified which approach to language was linked to the lesson and they devised the conditions for language learning.

In addition, the authors stated that the data collected through the observations led them to suggest that both teachers planned activities for learners to develop linguistic competence first and foremost. There was some work on pragmatic competence and none on sociolinguistic competence.

Velasquez and Holguin (2012) found that grammar was the fundamental topic in the sessions observed since teachers emphasized this complementary skill or micro-skill (Hernández and Faustino, 2006). Also, during the observed sessions there were no

activities with a communicative purpose. However, there were some classroom procedures which denoted real use of language, but there was no emphasis on them.

As stated before, major emphasis was given to grammar items; in second place the researchers found an emphasis on linguistic competence in the area of vocabulary. Nevertheless, practices on this complementary skill were not profound because of the greater attention to grammar.

On the other hand, the authors affirmed that there was also as slight emphasis on pragmatic competence since teachers provided students with sample sentences where cohesion can be important, which is part of the pragmatic competence. In the functional aspect of the pragmatic competence, they found four language functions: *offering something (food)*, *making predictions*, *talking about the future*, and *describing procedures*. In one of the observations, there was an activity in which students needed to understand a written text, this reading exercise was more related to *discourse competence*, which is the second sub-competence of pragmatic competence.

From the results of their data analysis, the researchers could note that for the teachers, communicative competence includes grammar, lexis, functional aspects and the four language skills. Velasquez and Holguin (2012) perceived communicative competence as a functional issue, this correlates to what they encountered, since the teachers who were part of this study said they based their teaching on a communicative approach, even when they gave students grammar explanations and exercises most of the time.

In conclusion, the authors affirm that the types of objectives in the lessons are mostly focused on objectives related to grammar topics, and that high school's curriculum

objectives are mainly communicative. As a result, learners improve linguistic competence more than the pragmatic or sociolinguistic competence.

Related studies in assessment procedures:

There have been some researches in Colombia aimed to identify the way teachers assess students' performance in the language, to know if they have reached a determined level in communicative competence (as stated by El Reto, Estandares Basicos De Competencias En Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés, for Colombia).

One of the researches piloted in Colombia was conducted by three teachers of a public university (Armstrong, Marin & Patarrollo (2004), it was focused on the analysis of 'Assessment Instruments' used in foreign language teaching. The study had diverse components: analysis of documents such as course programs and assessment instruments, interviews with teachers and students and workshops with participating teachers.

The study was conducted in two public universities with different English teachers; the aim was to identify and describe the assessment procedures and practices of English teachers to improve their assessment of student's performance. In the same way, the study analyzed assessment instruments and their characteristics.

The authors of this study described two types of assessment instruments, 'hard' and 'soft'; they refer to "Hard assessment" as a traditional way and purpose of assessing which emphasizes objectivity, precision, reliability, and focuses on product rather than on process; "soft assessment", on the other hand, deals with a natural, alternative way and purpose of assessing, (Carroll, 1993). Bustos (1997) describes this new tendency as

a type of assessment that, by being continuous, takes into account the student's learning process in order to promote it.

Furthermore, Bustos(1997), Jorba and Casellas(1997) discussed that proponents of "soft" assessment value its formative character and its authenticity. The purpose of portfolios and self- and peer-assessment is to make students critically aware of their own learning process, since it assesses in an ongoing manner, the students receive timely feedback on their performance. On the other hand, the purpose of papers, in-class tasks and role-plays is to provide students with more authentic alternatives to show their progress in language learning, because they are carried out on a regular basis to assess everyday activities, they focus on both process and product.

Despite all the advantages of assessment, Armstrong, Marin & Patarrollo (2004) found that quizzes were generally used to assess only one aspect of language (grammar), one receptive skill (reading or listening), or one unit of a textbook or program. Quizzes and drills were part of continuous assessment to see if students were appropriately acquiring the linguistic competences.

In the findings, the authors discovered that assessment in foreign language teaching becomes complex, since it involves aspects like: student's knowledge of the language, knowledge of the topic and strategic competence. In this study, the researchers explained that the instruments teachers used to assess their students were mainly of a "hard" type, like quizzes, exams, and drills; few teachers provided instruments for "soft" assessment.

Likewise, the researchers stated that "soft" assessment is starting to be often used; however they did not see clarity regarding the definition of the process and the criteria used to assess students.

In this study Armstrong, Marin & Patarrollo (2004) found that the most of the assessment instruments provided by participant teachers belonged to "hard" assessment, i.e., teachers provided thirty-nine quizzes, twenty exams, and thirteen drills for five different courses.

In addition to the previous study, there are some other studies aimed to find information about assessment and assessment instrument in Colombia. Mendoza and Arandia (2009) conducted a research on teachers' perceptions about language assessment and the way they use language assessments in their classroom. The study was piloted in public and private universities in which the participants were eighty-two English teachers who taught in different levels (primary school, secondary school, university, technical institutes or language institutes).

As part of the data analysis, Mendoza and Arandia examined similarities and differences between perceptions from teachers with training in language assessment and teachers without training. The findings suggested that there is a significant difference in the perceptions depending on the training level that teachers have in language assessment.

Mendoza and Arandia (2009) stated that in some language classrooms, assessment is not a continuous process and it tends to be more summative (summarizes the development of learners at a particular time) than formative. In this way the only feedback students get is their grades (López, 2008). Authors also affirm that assessment is not generally used appropriately.

Likewise, they found that language testing is not given the importance it should have. An example of this is that teacher-training programs in Colombia do not offer extensive

training in language assessment. The authors also expressed that, as a result of this lack of assessment procedure, tests and testing systems are often subject to abuse because test scores and test interpretations are put to a host of different uses (Hamp-Lyons, 1997).

In addition, Mendoza and Arandia stated that unfortunately, not many language teachers in Colombia are trained to make assessment decisions to engage, motivate and enhance students' learning. They affirm that the main goal of their study is to create awareness among the language teaching community in Colombia about the importance of adequately and effectively using assessments in the classroom to promote language learning.

Muñoz, Palacio & Escobar (2011) led a research in Colombia which focused on teacher's beliefs about assessment in an EFL context in. There were sixty two (62) participant teachers who work in the LC's *(Language Center)* adult English program. Participants were asked about their beliefs on assessment. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions about assessment in general, and in particular, about their beliefs and practices in regard to the oral and writing assessment systems developed at the language center of a private university in Medellin, Colombia.

In the study, the survey was aimed to explore beliefs about oral and writing assessment practices. It included 21 statements for which respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale in terms of their agreement (which ranged from *totally agree* to *totally disagree*).

Based on the results, authors affirm that there is a tendency to relate assessment to summative purposes. Nonetheless, the percentages of teachers who agreed to the summative approach were lower than the percentages of teachers who viewed assessment as a tool to be used for formative purposes, which was revealed by the responses to the statements:

• Assessment determines if students meet course standards

• Assessment provides feedback to students about their performance

• Assessment results modify teaching practices

• Assessment helps students improve their learning.

Taking these responses into consideration, authors could say that the belief that assessment serves for formative purposes is stronger than the belief that assessment is about summative decisions.

In the research, authors found that the 62 teachers cited three basic reasons for having changed their assessment practices: professional development, self-discovery, and institutional policy. Muñoz, Palacio & Escobar (2011) argued that a total of 69% of the responses correspond to a change, due to professional development programs such as in-service workshops, seminars, conferences, and scoring sessions.

Teacher's assessment of student behavior and performance, among others, are shaped by the theories they have in relation to teaching, assessment and the nature of learning. Therefore, visible attention devoted to the beliefs teachers have and the way in which those beliefs influence teaching are central for professional development. (Borko, Mayfield, Marion, Flexer, &Cumbo, 1997)

The researchers stated that the LC *(Language Center)* teachers believe that teaching and learning can improve with help from assessment and, as a result, they reject the conception of assessment being irrelevant. Although teachers acknowledge the importance of assessment for accountability and certification purposes, they mainly view it as a mean of academic improvement; In fact, it is clearly a belief among teachers that assessment serves as formative purposes.

Assessment is viewed as a process of educational regulation in which teachers recognize the changes that need to be made to improve their teaching practices, and in which they introduce more meaningful learning activities. However, the authors highlight that, even though the conception of assessment for improvement is a strongly manifested belief, there is a tendency towards using summative procedures in the classroom as evidenced by both teachers' comments on the use of traditional assessment techniques and a lack of ability in applying assessment results for improvement purposes.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Type of study

This was a qualitative research. Its goal was to discover patterns which emerge after close observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis of the research topic. 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".

6.2 Context

The study was conducted in a public institution in Pereira; the institution covers most of the students in the zone with an active population of approximately one thousand students in elementary, middle, and high school grades.

In terms of human resources, the school has 29 educators for elementary education, 35 teachers for middle and high school, and 4 administrators. With respect to physical resources, the institution has 22 classrooms, 6 computer rooms, 2 laboratories, 1 library and 20 sanitary units.

Teachers in this high school do not use a text book as a guide, but they follow a guide of their own design, which was made taking into account the Common European Framework and El Reto 'National Standards on Foreign Language Competence'

6.3 Participants

The participants were three English teachers from 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, one of them had a degree in foreign language teaching and the other two teachers taught different subjects in the same school; the students involved in the classes are between 15 to 18

years old and each group has between thirty and forty students to be handled by one teacher during one or two hours.

The number of participants were considered taking into account that for this kind of studies, it is necessary to have a "purposeful sampling" as stated by Patton (1990 cited in Merriam, 2002), which means that the sample, rather than being just random, provides a perspective gathered from a significant population from the setting.

6.4 Methods for data collection:

For collecting data we used:

- *Observations:* gathering firsthand information is one of the observation process characteristics, since the observer is in contact with the environment and the participants. In this observation we were *complete observers*, (Merriam, S, 1998), thus we did not need to intervene with the natural flow and setting in the classroom. In order to gather information we conducted 2 observations per teacher.

- *Interviews:* in order to complete the necessary information for analyzing the data and getting to a conclusion, we interviewed the three teachers. This interview was a semi-structured interview that according to Bernard (1988) is often preceded by observation, informal and unstructured interviewing in order to allow the researchers to develop a keen understanding of the topic of interest necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions. The questions were piloted with a teacher of Universidad Tecnologica de Pereira

with the intention and purpose of getting involved in the answers given by the interviewer.

- *Guides' analysis:* (Worksheets and copies given to students) we analyzed the guides designed and used by the three teachers during the classes. These guides were explored in a communicative competence and assessment view.

6.5 *Data analysis:*

For analyzing data we applied grounded theory, which may be defined as 'the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research' (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 2). During this section, we collected the evidence through interviews, observations and guides analysis. The second step was to classify information with codes of similarity; in this case we used codes to know if a piece of information is an observation (OB) an interview (INT) or if it is from the guides. Thereafter, we also separated the data into the different categories, which were assessments types and communicative competence divisions. And finally, we compared and contrasted the information gathered for getting to a terminating conclusion.

6.6 Researchers' roles

Our roles during the observations were of complete observers (the observer is hidden from the group or in a completely public setting; Merriam, S (1998), within the classroom context. We observed events like classroom activities, classroom material, assessment procedures and the teachers were our main participants.

7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To complete the study properly, we tried to be as ethical and carful as possible with the procedures to be done before conducting the research. Since one of the aims was not to cause problems or intrusion at high school, a letter (see appendix 4) asking for permission to conduct the study was delivered to the principal of the school. Once there was approval from the principal, the teachers in charge of the ninth, tenth and eleventh grade already selected for our study, were asked for permission to observe their classes and then to conduct an interview.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the analysis, we attempted to compare the similitude and contrasts of the evidence found during the observations, the interviews and the guide that teachers followed in classes. In the information below the reader will get to know how communicative competence, assessment and its instruments were applied in a public school in Pereira. The results are supported with the evidence and with linguists or authors that have researched in the field.

The organization of the findings will be developed into the following steps; the headline comes first, then a brief description of the use and instruments of the competence during the classes is going to be provided, followed by the evidence found and finally the explanation supported by authors and academic papers on the field.

Teachers focused their classes in pragmatic components

We could observe that teachers tend to encourage the development of discourse and functional competences in written production as in reading comprehension. This occurred when teacher asked students to read a dialogue or a specific text and then they had to answer some questions.

In terms of pragmatic competence the observations, interviews and guides were strongly connected, the evidence reveals that teachers focused their classes on discourse and functional competence; in addition in the interviews teachers confirm what we observed and the guides are designed to work on those specific competences as well.

Observation 1 teacher 1:

- *Discussion activity: teacher encourages students to comment about the reading Natural disasters), and share ideas or points of view about it.*

- *Reading activity: students have to read about natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. then students had to answer questions about what they read: e.g. have you ever experienced an earthquake or a hurricane? If not, how would you expect to feel?*

In the sessions observed, it was noticed that teachers worked on and mainly emphasized pragmatic competence (the user's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are organized, functional and well designed), since they asked students to read a text and then answer questions by reading comprehension. In addition, according to the guides that teachers used in class, they provided the students with samples of conversations and readings that may be applied in a natural context.

Interview teacher 1:

- *trabajamos mas es lectura y escritura.*

Interview teacher 3:

- *Aquí tenemos como propósito leer, a la final eso es lo que le conviene a los de once, cuando lleguen a once leer un poquito aunque no hable mucho.*

The teachers expressed that the classes are mainly focused on reading and writing (as we show in the 'Guides used in class' section since it would be more useful for the

students in terms of academic purposes. Besides, the teachers explained during the interviews that the easiest way to assess students is through reading and writing.

Guides Used in Class:

In the exercises, the teacher reads the dialogue aloud and students repeat word by word. Teacher also stops at specific lines in order to ask some students the meaning of the word in L1. E.g.: What is 'dance'?

In the reading exercise, students had to answer several questions previously prepared by the teacher according to that text; the students answered the questions copying exactly everything and not paraphrasing the answers.

Notice how the questions ask about comprehension, which is discourse related, a component of pragmatic competence.

> *Hello!*
>
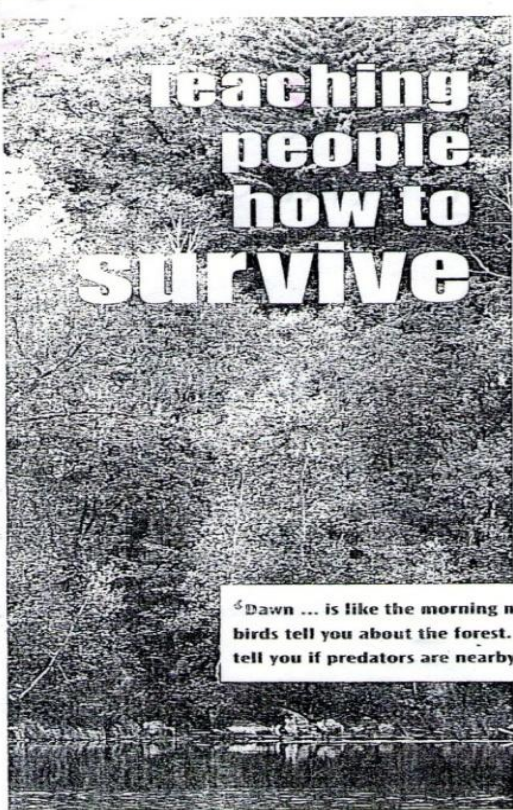> *My name is Clara, I am American, and I am 11 years old. I love music, I like playing tennis butI don't like football, I hate football, I prefer to dance, and you? How old are you? What is yourname? Do you like dancing? Do you prefer practicing sports? Good bye. Clara.*

> *Good morning!*
>
> *I am tom, I am Canadian, I love playing football and rugby, but I hate judo, I prefer karate andyou? Bye.*

Describing Teaching and assessment procedures

16 Skills Framework : Survival school

Teaching people how to survive

1 _____

Bill Jackson is an instructor in a tracking and wilderness survival school. He learned about tracking from Flying Eagle, an Apache elder. Flying Eagle believed that we are losing touch with the Earth. He thought it was important that we remembered the old skills and beliefs. He taught Bill about the natural world, how to read its signs and survive in the wild. Bill has travelled to the wildernesses of North America, South America and Canada, and now teaches the old skills in a survival school in Quebec.

2 _____

'Dawn is my favourite time with the light, the smells and sounds of the forest, especially the birds. It's like the morning news – the birds tell you about the forest. And they tell you if predators are nearby.'

3 _____

'I work as a teacher at the school, and teach all kinds of people from college students to businessmen. The school also trains police officers and soldiers from all over the world. Sometimes I am a volunteer for the police if there is a missing child or hiker. It's a horrible part of my job because sometimes the people don't survive. I follow their tracks using their shoes so I can match the tracks. Tracks tell you a lot – they tell you if a person or animal is tired, anxious, or hungry.'

'Dawn ... is like the morning news – the birds tell you about the forest. And they tell you if predators are nearby.'

Answer:
- is Bill an instructor?
- Does he teach to track?
- Did he learn from an Indian?
- Did he believe that we are losing touch with Earth?
- has he travelled through America?
- is morning this favourite time?
- Does he work with all kind of people?
- Is he a volunteer for the school?
- Does he follow tracks for finding people?
- Do students learn to cook in a survival school?
- Do they use gadgets?
② Do they collect bananas or stones?
- has he travelled to Asia or South America.
- Did Bill work in USA or Canada?
- is dawn or dusk his favorite part of day?
- Does he teach to students or to indian?
- Do people often or never survive?
- Does Bill follow tracks or people?
- Does he meditate at dawn or dusk?
- Does he use computers or knives in the wild?
③ - what does Bill read in the wild.
- where does Bill teach?
- when does he work for the police?
- why does he consider to be a volunteer is sometimes horrible?
- how do they get food in the wild?
- when can he meditate?
- why are birds so important?

This finding replicates Velasquez and Holguin (2012) finding in terms of functional aspects of communicative competence, since in one of the observations, there was an activity in which students needed to understand and analyze a text and then answer some questions, these questions were not multiple choice or true and false, students were supposed to write an answer. This reading exercise proposed by the teachers we observed is more related to discourse competence, which is the second sub-competence under pragmatic competence. However, in our study there were at least three exercises or activities related to pragmatic competence, in contrast to Velasquez and Holguin (2012) that noticed there was a minor emphasis on this competence in their study.

Teachers proposed a number of exercises related to linguistic competence (especially grammar and pronunciation exercises)

From the collected data resulting of the observations, interviews and documentary analysis (guides), we can say that classes were mainly keened on the pragmatic competence; however, the second place was for the linguistic competence.

If we connect the evidence we have in the observations and align it with the guides and the interviews, we could notice that in the observations teachers focused the most on pronunciation while in the interviews they would claim to emphasis more the grammatical competence. On the other hand, in the guides the exercises were also mainly focused on pronunciation (phonological competence).

Observation 1 teacher 2:

- _"Teacher asked students to pronounce the numbers used in the mathematic operations and their results; for instance, 14 + 85 equal 99"._

- *"Working on numbers: In the guide there is a list of numbers and their cardinals, then teacher asks some students to participate and students have to pronounce each number".*

Observation 1 teacher 3

- *"Teacher asks some students to pronounce some words like "Engineer" while he is reading a dialog".*

Interview teacher 1:

- *Tratamos al máximo de pronto de que vayamos pronunciando y diciéndole de pronto esporádicamente a uno, dos, o tres.*

This teacher used a list of ordinal and cardinal numbers to emphasize a little his students' pronunciation using 'listen and repeat' or 'listen and write'

Interview teacher 1:

- *"once ya es mas como repaso, porque ya deben tener las estructuras que se les ha machacado y durante todo el bachillerato"*

Interview teacher 2:

- *"de pronto ellos entienden un poquitico más la gramática".*

Interview teacher 3:

- *"Si vamos a mirar tiempos de verbos, yo ya les expliqué a ellos".*

During the interview, the teacher showed us evidence on the use of grammar and verb tenses during his classes, he also claimed that when students were supposed to know something dealing with grammatical features he did not explain again what students had to know, according to the grade they are doing.

Guides Used in Class:

The image presented below, is one of the guides used in class that were provided by the teachers, and contains a list of cardinal and ordinal numbers that the teacher used to ask students to pronounce each number. We classify this exercise as phonological competence which is part of linguistic competence. However, in terms of grammatical competence there was not a guide which teachers worked on during classes.

Estrategia taller

Mira los números ordinales y cardinales, pídele a tu profesor que te indique la pronunciación y apréndel memoria.

Cardinal numbers		Ordinal numbers	
1	one	1st	first
2	two	2nd	second
3	three	3rd	third
4	four	4th	fourth
5	five	5th	fifth
6	six	6th	sixth
7	seven	7th	seventh
8	eight	8th	eighth
9	nine	9th	ninth
10	ten	10th	tenth
11	eleven	11th	eleventh
12	twelve	12th	twelfth
13	thirteen	13th	thirteenth
14	fourteen	14th	fourteenth
15	fifteen	15th	fifteenth
16	sixteen	16th	sixteenth
17	seventeen	17th	seventeenth
18	eighteen	18th	eighteenth
19	nineteen	19th	nineteenth
20	twenty	20th	twentieth
21	twenty-one	21st	twenty-first
22	twenty-two	22nd	twenty-second
30	thirty	30th	thirtieth
40	forty	40th	fortieth
50	fifty	50th	fiftieth
60	sixty	60th	sixtieth
70	seventy	70th	seventieth
80	eighty	80th	eightieth
90	ninety	90th	ninetieth
100	a/one hundred	100th	hundredth
101	a/one hundred and one	101st	hundred and first
200	two hundred	200th	two hundredth
1.000	a/one thousand	1.000th	thousandth
10.000	ten thousand	10.000th	ten thousandth

Our first finding is similar to the finding in Velasquez and Holguin (2012) study on the teaching practices of two high school teachers. In the authors' study, both teachers focused classroom activities on the development of linguistic competences. As we have shown in our evidence, the three teachers we observed also showed evidence on this.

Also during the observed sessions there was not a real emphasis on speaking purposes or situations where students could use real language in a conversation; in addition, there was a major focus on pronunciation of items (words).

In addition, our findings also resemble the study guided by Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchia (2004). They encountered that classes strive to be mainly oriented towards vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar; reading and writing are seen as recognition of words and copying them down.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) said, 'the knowledge of a language embraces more than abstract grammatical knowledge'. This is a theory supported by CEFRL, where communicative competence is defined as the ability to interact well with others; to have a conversation successfully or to use reading and writing skills in a fluent way. Nevertheless, teaching procedures were also focused on grammatical competence.

We found little about sociolinguistic competence in classes.

During the observations, we did not find enough evidence to support that teachers use sociolinguistic competence in their classes; we could only notice one activity that we classified into this competence.

Observation 1 teacher 2:

- *The teacher asks what is the difference between 'hello' and 'good morning' (he asks in Spanish) then some students say 'que uno es formal y el otro es informal' the teacher says: Depende del lugar y las personas que se saludan, se usa 'hello' or 'good morning'.*

We could classify this into Linguistic Markers of Social Relations, which is one component of sociolinguistic competence.

Our finding resembles to the presented in Velasquez and Holguin (2012) study, since in the lessons they observed, sociolinguistic competence was almost nil. Nonetheless, authors said they cannot conclude that teachers do not use sociolinguistic competence only based in the observations they made.

4 types of assessment were identified during the data collection:

According to the information found, in terms of assessment procedures and instruments, teachers tend to use direct, subjective, self and continuous assessment in their classes in order to report students' progress and giving grades at the same time. Through the observations and interviews we could see that these types of assessment helped teachers to mainly give grades, however checking students' learning progress was in second place because it was slightly advancing.

In the following paragraphs we are going to present evidence taken from the observations and interviews:

Direct assessment:

Observation 1 teacher 1:

- *Teacher is also checking some of the answers of the activity in progress (natural disasters) by monitoring them and asking some questions. E.g.: what is an earthquake?*

Observation 1 teacher 2:

- *Teacher is revising students notebooks calling them one by one (teacher is revising the notebooks putting ticks and then giving grades.*

Interview teacher 3:

- *Bueno yo los evaluó con mucha frecuencia, por no decir todos los días, yo estoy mirando cómo van avanzando en las guías.*

It is seen how the teachers assessed students about what they were doing at the moment. For example, when small groups were discussing something, the teacher was observing or asking question in order to check understanding.

Continuous assessment

Observation 2 teacher 3:

- *At the end of the class teacher collected students' papers (answers about a reading comprehension exercise- questionnaire), in order to correct them, and give the grades.*

Interview teacher 1:

- *Entonces uno trata más bien que sea todo a partir de lo que trabajan en la clase o lo que participan o lo que aportan.*

- *Monitoreo a mis estudiantes cuando me entregan los trabajos.*

The teachers monitored students according to what they work in class (papers, guides, worksheets, performances, pieces of work and projects throughout the course. etc) and what they do outside, such as homework; they expressed that they followed and monitored students' progress frequently. It is also seen that the final grade thus reflects the whole course/year/semester.

Subjective assessment:

Interview teacher 1:

- *Yo los evaluó por las ganas de trabajar, no si saben o no saben.*

- *yo veo que está queriendo trabajar, ese nunca se va a quedar.*

According to the CEFRL subjective assessment is a judgment by an assessor, what is normally meant by this is the judgment of the quality of a performance. In concordance with the previous statement, during the interviews teachers affirmed that in some cases they assessed students from their point of view and opinion, they take into account the effort of the students is even more important than the knowledge or the performances itself.

Self-assessment:

Interview teacher 2:

- *yo no los evaluó, ellos mismos se evalúan*

- *Ellos mismos empiezan ya a analizar y me dicen que nota se merece cada uno.*

Our finding replicates the finding in Armstrong, Marin & Patarrollo (2004) because in their study, the researchers found that the instruments teachers used to assess their students were mainly of a "hard" type, like quizzes, exams, and drills; few teachers provided instruments for "soft" assessment.

In our research project, we found that teachers used the same instruments that were generally applied to assess only one aspect of language (grammar and pronunciation), one receptive skill (reading or listening), or one unit of a textbook or program; quizzes

and drills were part of continuous assessment to see if students were appropriately acquiring the linguistic competences.

Mendoza and Arandia (2009) stated that in some language classrooms, assessment is not a continuous process and it tends to be more summative than formative. In this way the only feedback students get is their grades (López, 2008).

The way teachers' assessment procedures were connected with competences they used in class.

The following information is a connection made between some of the evidence taken from the observations and interviews from the assessment part, and their application in communicative competence according to objectives and topics set by the teachers:

- *Teacher is giving grades for the pronunciation exercise (pair work dialog about presenting people.(observation 2 teacher 2)*

The evidence above is classified as direct assessment, which was used to check on Pronunciation that corresponds to the linguistic competence. In this case, teacher was working on a dialog that was mainly focused on student's production of the sounds.

- *At the end of the class teacher collected students' papers (answers about a reading comprehension exercise- questionnaire), in order to correct them, and give the grades. (observation 2 teacher 3).*

The evidence presented above is classified into continuous assessment; it was used to report the students' progress about pragmatic competence because they had to read and answers questions about specific information 'Teaching people how to survive'.

- *Yo hago que el estudiante reflexione o caiga en cuenta de los errores, ejemplo: 'profe es que en los superlativos uno tiene que agregarle ER', ¿así? 'entonces ¿Cómo es en los comparativos?; y entonces por medio de las mismas preguntas yo voy a hacer que el mismo estudiante se dé cuenta de los mismo error es que está cometiendo, y a lo último pues ellos ya terminan diciendo 'a no profe es que era de esta manera por esto y esto'.*

This is Self-correction evidence, which was applied to assess linguistic competence emphasizing on the grammatical sub-competence; since students are dealing with grammar rules and are being pushed for the teacher to find the correct answer themselves.

9. Research and Pedagogical implications

Finishing this research study, we want to express some of the ideas that resulted during and after the project; we would like to suggest and encourage other partners from the career and from different fields related to the English teaching to seek for the realization of communicative competence in their classes and to include assessment of language proficiency, as teachers will find it useful for their students' learning at all levels.

Teachers must improve their professional development regarding assessment and communicative competence. Perhaps, they do not have the preparation to conduct assessment procedures in s proper way.

The findings of this study could help and contribute to further researches on language teaching programs. However, it is important to highlight that in the collected data and evidence showed, we cannot affirm that all teachers focus more in specific competences or they do not take into account communicative competence and assessment procedures; for this reason we do not intend the reader to take our study as an overall answer, because this study was only limited to a single public school in Pereira and the participant teachers were only three; therefore this research project could be carried out in different contexts, if conditions are met, an further studies like this could corroborate or not our descriptions.

Some of the issues that emerged during the realization of the study, were for example to observe a class where the teacher was sitting down throughout the whole class and the

students were supposed to be working in groups but they were not doing that, therefore we felt like we did not get enough evidence from that class.

Another issue was setting for how long we should observe every teacher and how many observations per each one of them.

10. Conclusions.

After having all the data collected, classified and analyzed, we can conclude that the lessons were mostly focused on objectives related to reading comprehension and pronunciation topics (linguistic and pragmatic competence). However, teachers did not go deep into other sub-competences. It was also noticeable that teachers would work less on sociolinguistic competence, for we did not find enough evidence during the observations and interviews.

On the other hand; assessment implied the use of different instruments like notebooks, copies, quizzes, role plays, and behavior and so on. In addition, teachers did not always provide or use a specific division of percentage in order to give a grade, but they mostly use they sense and opinion to deliver a grade for their students. Assessment is used by teachers as a way of collecting information about students' progress; in addition, it was observed that they used at least three types of assessment proposed by CEFRL.

In the English teaching field, it should be important to conduct researches in communicative competence and assessment because these terms are included in the Common European Framework as the core of the learning and teaching process, and it is important to highlight that in Colombia the National Standards on Foreign Language Competence were adapted from the CEFRL; therefore it is pertinent for language teachers to be aware of the importance of communicative competence and assessment in order to follow the country's requirements.

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Appendix 1:

Checklist used to report assessment purposes in class:

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	YES	NO	PURPOSE
ACHIVEMENT ASSESSMENT		X	
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT		X	
CONTINUOS ASSESSMENT	X		Teacher used this kind of assessment in order to follow and monitor students' progress; also teacher gives some grades and accumulates them through the whole course for a final grade.
FIXED ASSESSMENT POINTS		X	
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT		X	
SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT		X	
DIRECT ASSESSMENT	X		Teacher asks the students to do something (pronounce, write down or answer questions,etc.) according to

		previous information given in class; the teacher wants to see if students were paying attention or if they understood well.
INDIRECT ASSESSMENT		X	
PERFOMANCE ASSESSMENT		X	
KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT		X	
SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT	X		Teacher used this kind of assessment from what he/she considered was well done by the students, teacher also took into account their grades according to their responsibility and effort; in this kind of assessment teachers consider that knowledge is not relevant.
OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT			
WRIING ON A SCALE		X	
WRITING ON A CHECKLIST		X	

ASSESSMENT BY OTHERS		X	
SELF ASSESSMENT	X		Teacher asks students to give themselves a grade according to what they consider they deserve.
HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT		X	
ANALITIC ASSESSMENT		X	

Appendix 2

Preguntas de la entrevista.

1. ¿Qué actividades trabajan en clase?

2. ¿Podría describir una de sus clases?

3. ¿Qué nos podría decir en cuanto a las habilidades comunicativas (habla, escucha, escritura y lectura, pronunciación, vocabulario y gramática)?

4. ¿Cómo evalúa usted a sus estudiantes?

5. ¿Qué instrumentos utiliza usted para evaluar a sus estudiantes?

6. ¿De qué manera monitorea usted el proceso de aprendizaje de sus estudiantes?

7. ¿Qué criterios utiliza al momento de calificar a sus estudiantes?

8. ¿Qué propósitos tiene el proceso de evaluación?

Appendix 3.

OBSERVATION FORMAT:

Date: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Physical settings:
Teacher's instructional design (activities, student and teacher actions) **1** 2 3 4
Students' Reactions: 1 2 3 4
Subtle Factors:
Materials and their purpose:

Describing Teaching and assessment procedures

Teacher's use of English:
Assessment (instruments):
Observer'sComments/ réflections on lesson:

Appendix 4

Pereira, 28 de marzo de 2012

Señor Rector

xxxxxx

xxxxxx

Pereira

Cordial saludo:

El programa de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, pretende formar profesionales capaces de estudiar y desarrollar todos los aspectos relacionados con la actividad pedagógica, por tal razón, de una manera muy respetuosa les solicitamos su colaboración con el fin de que los estudiantes Ricardo Tapasco Perea, código 1088282165 y Jenny Viviana Grajales López, código 1088261765 puedan describir e interpretar la manera en que el idioma inglés se enseña y se percibe en los grados noveno, decimo y once de su institución a través de las siguientes actividades:

Observaciones de clase (grados 9, 10 y 11).

Una entrevista dirigida al profesor del área de inglés.

El objetivo de este ejercicio, es abrir un rango de experiencias y procesos que puedan convertirse en material útil para los futuros profesionales aportando a su crecimiento y desarrollo profesional.

Los estudiantes que realizarán este proceso se identificarán con el carnet que los acredita como miembros de nuestra institución. De antemano reciba nuestros agradecimientos por la colaboración al respecto, con la cual contribuye al logro de nuestros objetivos académicos.

Atentamente

XXXXXXX

Coordinador

Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa