

THE STATE OF THE ART OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THREE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PEREIRA

YULI VANESSA CASTAÑO GÓMEZ
NUMAR DANIELA MAYORAL MILÁN
YESSICA PULGARIN SOTO

UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA DE PEREIRA
FACULTAD DE BELLAS ARTES Y HUMANIDADES
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA
PEREIRA

2013

THE STATE OF THE ART OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THREE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PEREIRA

YULI VANESSA CASTAÑO
NUMAR DANIELA MAYORAL
YESSICA PULGARIN SOTO

Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el título de Licenciados en
Lengua Inglesa

Asesor: Ronald Alan Perry

UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA DE PEREIRA
FACULTAD DE BELLAS ARTES Y HUMANIDADES
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA
PEREIRA

2013

AKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to dedicate this; first to God for giving us persistence and wisdom to complete this project. Second, we sincerely thank our families whose love, support, and motivation made it possible for us to come true this important goal in our lives.

Also, we want to express deep regards to our research project advisor Ronald Aland Perry for his valuable guidance and constant encouragement. The time invested by him and his significant ideas allowed us to improve the quality of our study.

Finally, we want to thank the community of three public schools in Pereira who opened their doors and minds to contribute in the development of this project.

We sincerely thank our family, teachers, and friends, who provided advice and financial support. The product of this research project would not be possible without all of them.

“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment; full effort is full victory.”

Mahatma Gandhi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Abstract	7
(Resumen).....	9
2. Statement of the Problem	11
3. Research Questions	15
4. Theoretical Framework & Literature Review	16
5. Methodology	30
5.1 Type of Study	30
5.2 Context and Setting	30
5.3 Participants	31
5.4 Researchers Role	31
5.5 Data Collection Instruments	32
5.6 Data Analysis	34
5.7 Ethical Considerations	36
6. Findings & Discussion	37

6.1 Teachers made extensive use of techniques associated with the Grammar Translation Method	37
6.1.1 Classroom methodology focused on translating from L2 to L1	37
6.1.2 L1 was used extensively in the English classes	40
6.2. Teachers' use of Grammar Translation Method was conscious and purposeful.....	44
6.3. Teachers used a limited variety of resources in a limited variety of ways	47
6.4 Students' unfulfilled expectations toward the English lessons correlate with low motivation	50
6.4.1 Extrinsic motivation prevailed in the English class.....	50
6.4.2 Students expressed a desire for more interesting and authentic materials	55
6.4.3 Students expressed a desire for more oral activities	57
6.4.4 Students expressed a desire for more guidance from the teacher	61
7. General Discussion.....	64
8. Limitations of the Study.....	66
9. Research & Pedagogical Implications	67
10. Conclusions	69

11. References	71
12. Appendices	77

1. ABSTRACT

The present research project is intended to explore the realities of teaching and learning English in three public schools of Pereira city. The project also seeks to contribute to a diagnosis of the methods that English teachers use in class and the way in which their teaching practices correspond to the principles established by the National Ministry of Education with respect to the teaching of English in Colombia; and finally, to identify factors that influence the English learning process. The study was conducted with the participation of students from sixth to eleventh grade chosen randomly and six language teachers of three public schools in Pereira, one of them belonging to a rural zone. The instruments used to gather information were observations, field notes, interviews and questionnaires.

The outcomes of the research indicate that some techniques associated with the Grammar Translation Method were used by the English teachers we observed since their classes were focused on the study of grammatical rules and the translation of texts from the target language to the mother tongue. Also, it was observed that the English language was not employed for communicative purposes but was only used in specific situations such as the practice of short commands, presentation of grammatical rules, and the pronunciation of isolated words which give few opportunities for students to develop receptive as well as productive skills. During the classroom observations and interviews of teachers and learners, it was evidenced that the need of a communicative approach to practice the target language based on real situations affected the students' motivation for the English class. Learners expressed their desire to include more communicative activities with group work, role plays and didactic resources. On the other hand, the comments made by English teachers suggested that the lack of communicative activities was due to a shortage of

pedagogical resources. Teachers said that the resources of the schools are not enough to the amount of students per class.

The present study attempts to provide some recommendations that can help learners and teachers to develop English communicative competence. First of all, it is necessary to help students see the importance of learning English not only as an academic requirement but also as an opportunity to learn and communicate with other cultures. This can be achieved through the appropriate fostering of learning contexts where students can be exposed to content that interests them and by means of which they can use the foreign language as a tool for developing new knowledge. Likewise, the facilitator role of the teacher is essential since students require support and guidance that help them to accomplish the classroom activities accurately.

This project seeks to contribute to further research into the processes of English language learning. The phenomena under observation has to do with the methods language teachers use in class, the didactic resources schools have, and the students and teacher's perceptions towards the English lessons.

RESUMEN

El presente proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo principal explorar las realidades de la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en tres colegios públicos de la ciudad de Pereira. De igual forma, el estudio busca contribuir en un diagnóstico acerca de los métodos que los docentes de inglés utilizan dentro del aula de clase y cómo sus prácticas se relacionan con los principios establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional sobre la enseñanza del inglés en Colombia. Finalmente el estudio pretende identificar los factores que influyen en el proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. El proyecto se llevó a cabo con la participación de estudiantes de sexto a once grado elegidos aleatoriamente y seis profesores del área de inglés de tres colegios públicos de Pereira, entre ellos uno perteneciente a la zona rural. Para la recolección de información se utilizaron observaciones, notas de campo, cuestionarios y entrevistas.

Los resultados de la presente investigación demuestran que algunas técnicas asociadas con el Método de Gramática y Traducción son utilizadas por los profesores de inglés participantes de este proyecto ya que las clases se enfocan en el estudio de estructuras gramaticales y en la traducción de textos de la lengua de estudio a la lengua materna. Igualmente se observó que la lengua extranjera no se utiliza para propósitos comunicativos sino en situaciones puntuales tales como: el uso de comandos cortos, presentación de reglas gramaticales, y en la pronunciación de palabras aisladas lo que limita la oportunidad de que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades tanto receptivas como productivas en la segunda lengua. En las clases observadas y en las entrevistas a profesores y alumnos se hizo evidente que la carencia de un enfoque comunicativo en el que se practique la lengua en situaciones de la vida real afectó la motivación y el interés de

los estudiantes por la clase de inglés. Los estudiantes expresaron el deseo de implementar clases más comunicativas con trabajo en equipo, juegos de rol y recursos didácticos. Por otra parte, los comentarios dados por los profesores de inglés revelaron que la falta de clases más comunicativas se debe a la escasez de recursos pedagógicos en las instituciones. La cantidad de estudiantes por salón es más alta a los recursos que se les facilita a los profesores.

El presente estudio pretende proveer algunas recomendaciones que permitan a estudiantes y profesores desarrollar las competencias comunicativas en la lengua extranjera. En primer lugar es necesario que los estudiantes vean la importancia de aprender inglés no como un requisito de estudio sino como una oportunidad de comunicarse y aprender de otras culturas. Para que lo anterior se lleve a cabo, las instituciones y los profesores del área de inglés deben fomentar espacios de aprendizaje donde los estudiantes estén expuestos a contenidos de su interés que les permita adquirir nuevo conocimientos y practicar la segunda lengua. Igualmente, el rol facilitador del profesor en las clases de inglés es indispensable puesto que los estudiantes requieren apoyo y dirección para que las actividades de clase se realicen satisfactoriamente.

Este proyecto buscó contribuir a futuras investigaciones que busquen explorar los procesos de aprendizaje en una segunda lengua. Los fenómenos observados tienen que ver con los métodos que los profesores implementan en las clases, los recursos con los que se cuentan y las percepciones de estudiantes y profesores hacia la clase de inglés.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Languages: English, published by the Colombian Ministry of Education, state that being bilingual is essential in a globalized world. Thus, a person who speaks English, is not only able to get better academic and labor opportunities but also to contribute to the development of his/her country by helping national companies and institutions to be more competitive in the international context. According to the MEN, teaching English in Colombia has evolved over the past ten years, and many people from all social status have been involved in the process of learning, teaching, and assessing the English language competences of the Colombian population.

Consequently, the Colombian government and local institutions have made significant efforts to improve the teaching of English as a foreign language in the country. The Government, through the MEN (2004) formulated the program “*Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en Lengua Extranjera*” to carry out the following actions:

- Implementing the standards of competence in English language through innovative educational approaches.
- Encouraging English teachers training strategies.
- Integrating new technologies as well as other resources for teaching and learning English.
- Developing regional projects to extend English learning to diverse populations.

At the local level, the Municipal Secretary of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Municipal* -SEM) has been developing two projects. To improve the methodological and linguistic competences of the teachers, the first project is about professional development courses which have been offered to in-service-teachers. Those courses have been oriented by educational institutions with wide experience in the teaching of English. The second project has targeted the students; the program called “*Jornada Escolar Extendida*” (JEEEX) provides students of non-certificated towns the opportunity to take part in an English program. In year 2010, 330 students took part of the program and 2430 students in the year 2011.

However, apparently the efforts made by the Government and the local entities previously mentioned did not have the expected impact. An English Proficiency index test made to voluntary adults from Latin America who wanted to rate their English proficiency in terms of grammar, vocabulary, reading, and listening comprehension skills, which was made by the International Private Education Company, known as Education First (2011), revealed that Latin America obtained the lowest results in this test placing Colombia in the last position with a very low proficiency English level.

Also, the MEN revealed some statistics related to the English level of the Colombian population in which they affirmed that just 1% of the inhabitants achieved a B1 level and hardly the 0,08% obtained a C1 level of competence. These results demonstrate that despite the ten years that have passed, and the efforts carried out, teachers and learners still require developing linguistic competences in the English language which are not being achieved in the current educational system. In addition to this, others statistics provided by the “*Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior*” (ICFES) and supported in yearly tests taken by students of 11th grade, point out

that the population tested during the period 2007-2010 reached barely the A1 level of competence. The “*Proyecto de Ordenanza*” evidenced the low performance in English of students from 11th grade in the ICFES test in Risaralda. The statistics showed that approximately 54% of these students achieved an -A1 level, 32.4% reached the level A1, only 7% obtained an A2, 5% got a B1, and just a 1.6% actually achieved a B2 level according to the standards proposed by the MEN.

More evidence that points towards the lack of improvement in the educational field of English as a foreign language is the fact that the Ministry of Education, in agreement with the British Council, tested, in 2006, seven public schools in Risaralda in relation with the students’ mastery of English. These schools were selected because their “*Proyecto Educativo Institucional*” (PEI) had an emphasis on communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language. The results showed that 98,5% of students did not reach further than the A1-A2 level (45,7% belonged to an initial -A1 level, 39.4% A1, 13.4% A2) and only the 1.6% of the students achieved B1 level.

Risaralda teachers of English were also tested to find out their level of competence in English. According to the results of the test, only 12% of them reached a B2 level. These results were taken as a base for the development plan “*Risaralda: Sentimiento de todos, 2008-2011*”, in which the Secretary of Education in Risaralda has carried out different actions with the aim of training both teachers and learners in English as a foreign language.

These statistics gave a general view of the proficiency level in English of teachers and students in the Risaralda region. In the capital of the Department, Pereira, the ICFES test of the period 2007- 2010 showed that 7.8% of students reached an A2 level; 32.9% of them were placed in an A1 level; 52% of students obtained an A-; and only 5.5% of

students achieved a B1 level; it is important to highlight that only 1.5% of students achieved the level B+.

A possible cause for the poor results mentioned could be the implementation of traditional teaching methods which are not appropriate for the development of students' communicative competence in English, since according to Walia (2012) traditional methodology focuses and emphasizes mainly the grammatical competence and the acquisition of vocabulary and does not pay much attention to the improvement of fluency or communicative skills. For this reason, this study endeavors to describe the realities of the English teaching in three public institutions in Pereira with the purpose of establishing a diagnosis that may guide the formulation of new projects and solutions to the current situations in the field of English language teaching. Furthermore, this study will inform readers about the methods and approaches used in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Pereira.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What features characterize EFL lessons in three public schools in Pereira?
- What are the perceptions of students with respect to these EFL classes?
- What are some of the factors that affect the implementation of these EFL lessons?

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conscious of the importance of learning foreign languages, the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) initiated in 2004 the project called “*Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de las Competencias en Lengua Extranjera*” in an effort to raise the level of quality of English teaching in Colombian schools.

Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés ¡El Reto!

Through the textbook “*Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés ¡El Reto!*”, MEN establishes standards for the teaching of English in public schools and states the English proficiency levels that Colombian students should be able to reach at the end of each grade or program (*see appendix E*). These standards are designed to help teachers to form Colombian citizens capable of communicating in English – in other words, citizens who possess communicative competence. “*Lograr ciudadanos y ciudadanas capaces de comunicarse en inglés, de tal forma que puedan insertar al país en los procesos de comunicación universal, en la economía global, y en la apertura cultural, con estándares internacionalmente comparables*” (Ministry of Education, *Estándares básicos en Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: El Reto!*, 2006)

According to “*¡El Reto!*” (2006) communicative competence includes linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; 2001) is presented in “*¡El Reto!*” as a guideline for the establishment of English proficiency standards in these different competences. The CEFR describes in a comprehensive way what learners have

to learn to do to use a language, including the knowledge and skills they have to develop with respect to the cultural context of the language. In addition, the CEFRL provides an ascending series of common reference levels for describing learner proficiency. These levels are represented on a vertical scale, while a horizontal scale presents a set of descriptive categories made up of parameters of communicative activity and communicative language competency (*see appendix F*). Consequently, the CEFRL contributes significantly to an understanding of the problems in the professional language teaching field and emphasizes the importance of incorporating a communicative approach that fosters the language learning competences.

Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative approach to language learning pays special attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. As it is expressed by the CEFRL (2001) learners have to develop different skills in order to learn to use the language to communicate real messages in genuine, specific situations. It has been our perception, and that of several researchers (Lorduy, Lambraño, Garcés & Bejarano 2009; Velásquez & Holguín 2012) that in many Colombian schools, English teachers focus on abstract grammatical skills and neglect the application of these to real situations. In other words, they tend to focus on the structural aspects of the language to the exclusion of the functional aspects.

Before explaining what the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT) is, the terms “approach” and “method” will be clarified. According to Brown (2001), “an approach is related to theoretically well-informed positions and beliefs about the nature of

language and language learning” whereas Anthony 1963; cited in Brown (2001) defines a method as “an overall plan for systematic presentation on language based upon a selected approach”, that is to say, a set of choices made around the particular skills to be taught the content, and the order in which this content will be presented (Anthony 1963; cited in Richards and Rodgers 2001).

CLT is an approach that emphasizes the development of the communicative competence, especially, the productive skills: speaking and writing. (Bachman1990; cited in Hernandez & Rodriguez, 2002). Similarly, Brown (2001) points out that one characteristic of Communicative Language Teaching is that classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. According to “*¡El Reto!*” the communicative competence includes the development of the following competences:

- Linguistic (knowledge of grammar, orthography and semantics and their appropriate application in different contexts)
- Pragmatic (functional use of language and discourse)
- Sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of sociocultural factors which are implicit in languages).

Thus, the development of the communicative competence helps learners to increase their knowledge about the world, develop their social skills, and become more familiar with cultural aspects of the target language. (Ministry of Education, *Estándares básicos en Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: El Reto!*, 2006).

It is therefore important for language teachers to realize that in order for students to communicate in a foreign language effectively, it is not enough to focus exclusively on grammatical competence. Widdowson (1974) claims that teachers cannot think of language only in terms of sentences, we must also consider the nature of discourse and how best to teach it. That is why teachers need to bear in mind the necessity of preparing varied activities that help learners to acquire the skills necessary to communicate in real life situations.

Grammar Translation Method

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has many features which have been criticized as ineffective in enhancing learners' communicative ability in language since it has to do mainly with memorizing rules of the foreign language. GTM is a way of studying language through a detailed analysis of grammar rules in order to translate sentences and texts from the native language to a foreign language and vice versa (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 5). According to Prator and Celce-Murcia 1979; cited in Brown (2001), classes using this method are taught in the mother tongue with little use of the target language and often the drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue. Hence, Grammar Translation Method has as focus on the explanation and memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary.

In a qualitative case study developed in five public high schools in Monteria (Colombia) by Lorduy, Lambraño, Garcés & Bejarano (2009) it was found that Grammar Translation Method was a widely used method to teach English since some teachers' answers to interviews were that they believed in the positive effect of using GTM in class

since they had learned effectively the target language through this method. It was reported in the observations that most of the activities teachers assigned to students were related to translation of sentences, vocabulary, and expressions from Spanish to English and vice versa through memorizing vocabulary, repetitions, and giving explanations of grammar rules. Because of the comments given by teachers, researchers conclude that teachers see grammar as one of the main aspects when teaching English even when they do not recognize that they are using the Grammar Translation Method in class.

The prevalent use of the Grammar Translation Method has long been criticized for its lack of communicative activities that could empower students to acquire the competences required to convey messages in real contexts.

Communicative activities

In English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, communicative activities should be integrated into the lessons as a means of providing learners with opportunities to develop their language skills, and communicate in situations that they are likely to encounter in real life. As said by Moss & Ross-Feldman (2003):

“Communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the program and community. Communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, break down barriers, talk about self, and learn about the culture. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes”.

Communicative activities foster rapport between learners and in this way provide language practice focused on real purposes. Rojas (2008) defines communicative activities as activities designed specifically to encourage students' linguistic production; these involve students in comprehension, production, and interaction in a foreign language. In other words, communicative activities focus more on discourse than on the production of isolated words or sentences.

A research project carried out by Monsalve & Correal at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2006 called "Children's Oral Communication in English Class Activities: An Exploratory Study" was concerned with explaining the development of children's oral communication in English, and how classroom activities and the role of the teacher affect children's learning. This study involved in-service teachers and fifteen students between eight and ten years old who were exposed to English courses on Saturdays given by the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. They collected data by means of audio and video recordings, field notes, and interviews. To measure children's oral production in English class activities, researchers used materials such as posters, and activities based on real and imaginary situations given through written and oral input. It was found that these kinds of activities helped students to trust their prior knowledge in order to have real oral communication. Besides, this previous knowledge helped the teacher to encourage learners in the development of their language skills. Lastly, the use of activities which involved students' real life situations stimulated their creativity. The students improved the use of oral skills through real, purposeful activities and the continuous process of practicing. Besides, the students' interaction allowed having a good atmosphere in the classroom due to the fact that self-esteem and self-confidence increased.

To sum up, the use of communicative activities give language teachers the possibility to use a set of authentic resources to help learners think of language learning as a meaningful experience. The CEFRL (2001) argues that teachers should reflect upon the communicative needs that learners have in order to use specific communicative tasks which are carried out through communicative activities. Besides, educators and learners have found these highly concrete tasks very meaningful and motivating as learning objectives (CEFRL 2001, p. 53). Therefore, communicative activities not only are a means to increase oral communication but also to raise motivation, confidence, and self-esteem in learners.

Language teaching materials

To help learners developing different skills in foreign language learning, materials are considered as a means for students to practice and to use the target language for real situations. Tomlinson (2003) defines materials as “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language”. Kitao (1997) lists some kind of materials including textbooks, video and audio tapes, computer software, and visual aids; technology such as slides, video and audio tape recorders, video cameras, and computers which can be used in class to support the students’ English learning process.

Currently, language teaching materials need to be focused on communicative competence and knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts of different kinds like defining, classifying, describing, reporting and so on (Hymes, 1971; Campell & Wales 19 cited in Brumfit & Johnson 1979). For this reason, authentic materials are helpful tools to be used in language teaching in order to expose learners to use English for real purposes. García Arreza (1994) defines authentic

materials as samples of language in written or oral form which are produced for communication among native people. Authentic materials are created to contribute to the real use of the language since these do not only provide information about the linguistic system but also socio-cultural details of its context.

In an ethnographic research project carried out by Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchía (2004) in seven elementary schools in the metropolitan area of Medellín involving twelve teachers facing the task of teaching English to children. During the analysis of their classes' methodology in terms of activities, materials, teachers' and students' role through observations and interviews, the results showed that because of scarcity of resources, teachers used a textbook as basis of their courses. Teachers relied on the textbook to establish the sequence of contents, the structure of the lessons, and the design of activities and to choose the interaction patterns, exposing children only to isolated words. That is to say, teachers' materials focused only on the teaching of linguistic patterns as presented in EFL textbooks. According to Brumfit & Johnson (1979) teachers should consider the selections of teaching resources not only in terms of linguistic structures but also in terms of communicative acts.

Considering the changes brought by technology in the world, education also has to drive technology in order to adapt itself to the current context. Teachers should not only have knowledge of some technological resources, but also being clear about the principles of designing good teaching and learning by knowing what education needs from technology (Laurillard 2012, p. 22). Therefore, technology is also a key tool in the EFL classroom due to the fact that learners are more attentive when it is used. Therefore, teachers can consider students' needs and interests when planning classes since with the use of technology, students can access an extraordinary wealth of information. Laurillard

(2012) highlights that teachers should become, firstly, fluent users of digital technologies for education, and secondly, study effective uses of technology for learning. Brown (2001) suggests that, aside from computers, there are other technological aids which are available for language teacher such as commercially produced audiotapes and videotapes, self-made videotapes, and overhead projections (Brown 2001, p.144).

To conclude, language teaching materials contribute to the development of the four skills taking into account linguistic factors (materials focused on introducing linguistic patterns of a language); and socio-cultural factors (authentic materials that met the need for using authentic language). Besides, technological resources (e.g. computers, video-beams, audio tapes) produce students' interests when these are used meaningfully to teach English.

Students' motivation

Students' motivation towards the English class is a main factor that influences the language learning process. Harmer (1991) explains motivation as the "internal drive" that pushes somebody to do something. If people think that their aim is worth doing and attractive for them, then, they will try to reach that objective; this is called "the action driven by motivation" Harmer (1991, p.3). Similarly, motivation has been defined by Gardner (1985) as "the combination of effort plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language". It means a favorable attitude motivates learners to reach their learning goals. Arnold (2000) classifies motivation into two main categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. The author refers to extrinsic motivation as the desire to get a reward that comes from outside the learner such as homework or grades. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation refers to learning itself having its own

reward. Namely, learners are willing to learn what they think it is worthwhile or important for them. Lightbown and Spada (1999) mention that teachers do not have much effect on students' intrinsic motivation since the students are from different backgrounds, and so the only way to motivate them is by making the classroom a supportive environment (Lightbown and Spada 1999, p. 56-57). Thus, Harmer (1991) cites the physical conditions of the class, the way learners are taught, and the level of challenge of the activities as some of the crucial factors that affect students' motivation (Harmer 1991, p.4).

In an exploratory study titled: 'Motivating students in the EFL classroom: A case study of perspectives' (Bahous, Bacha, Nabhani) interviewed students and surveying teachers in an EFL program in order to ascertain their perceptions of the problems that hinder these students' learning in the English classes with respect to motivation. The study was conducted by the Department of Education at Lebanese American University in 2011. The study included the participation of thirty students who were given semi-structured interviews and teachers who were given questionnaires. The findings showed that learners were not motivated to learn English because the class had an over- focus on writing skills with little in the way of new learning experiences, and uninteresting materials. The results also indicated that teachers complain of unmotivated students and syllabi that offer less the opportunity for the use of communicative methodologies.

Therefore, teachers in the foreign language classroom need to be aware of the kinds of motivation the learners bring with them, but they also have to be aware of the possible factors that are involved in motivating students such as: a relaxed atmosphere, rearranging the layout of the room, the inclusion of learning activities that interest students and promote communicative competence in the target language, and the interaction among teacher and students.

Classroom interaction

Classroom interaction is a key to achieve the primary aim of learning a language respecting to know to use the language in communication in its written or spoken forms. For this reason, language teachers face the challenge to design activities that promote the interaction between the teacher and the learners, and the interaction among learners themselves. Robinson (1994) describes interaction as follows: “Interaction is the process referring to ‘face-to-face’ action. It can be either verbal channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through proximity, eye-contact, facial expressions, gesturing, etc.”(Robinson 1994; p. 7). Through interaction learners can increase their language vocabulary store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even output of their classmates in discussions, problem- solving tasks, etc. In interaction students can use all the existing knowledge they have learnt of the language in real life exchanges (Rivers, 1987).

According to Richards (2006) Communicative language teaching proposes the participation of learners in classroom activities based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Harmer (2001) expresses that group work fosters cooperative activity in which the learners involved work together to complete a task allowing teachers to have time to work with one or more groups while other learners continue working. In fact, cooperation in groups helps students to participate more actively, and also contributes to a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the classroom (Ur, 1996).

Giraldo and Velez (2010) conducted a case study called “Las interacciones Comunicativas en la Educación Básica Secundaria: Un estudio de caso” this study was

concerned with finding out the kinds of communicative interaction between teacher and students in the classroom at the public school “Institución Educativa Colegio Antonia Santos” in Manizales. The research included observations in which it was possible to analyze the verbal and non-verbal communicative practices inside the classrooms. Moreover, it was done a semi-structured interview to the teachers in order to know their statements about what was currently happening in those learning scenarios, and finally a group of students were chosen randomly to know which their perceptions to the same aspect under research were. The findings showed that an “affective communication” in which the teacher has eye contact and rapport with the learners provokes a positive response among the learners; that is, when the teacher establishes a good rapport in the classroom by interacting with the learners, and listening carefully to their uncertainties, it promotes interest in and students’ self-confidence. Learners had a feeling of belonging for the class by considering that the teacher thought of their opinions as meaningful contributions.

To be brief, cooperative work benefits the learning process of a language because of the spontaneous communication, the share of knowledge provoking rapport between learners themselves and teachers whose role is a key factor into the classroom interaction to have feel students comfortable into the practice of the communicative activities.

Teachers’ role

In teaching- learning situations, the role of the teacher is central to the way in which classroom atmosphere evolves. It is understood by role as “the part taken by a participant in any act of communication” (Ellis & McClintock 1990; cited in Richards & Lockhart,

1996). Roles such as authority figure, leader, knower, director, manager, counselor guide, prompter, and even friend, confidant, and parent are more predominant than others depending on the country, institution, type of course, and learners' attitude, (Brown 2000, p. 419).

In traditional language teaching, teachers play more dominant roles since they tend to be “controllers” in the classroom. According to Harmer (1991), the teacher as controller has the control not only on what the students do, but also what they speak.

Although teachers' role can vary depending on several factors (as noted before), teachers are expected to assume a facilitator role that promotes communication and real interaction. Bree & Candlin (1980) explain that one of the roles that teachers play when using the Communicative Language Teaching approach in class consists of facilitating the communication between all learners:

“The teacher has two main roles: the first is to facilitate the communication between all participants and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as independent participant within the learner teaching group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. A third role for the teachers is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities” (Bree & Candlin 1980:99 cited in Richards & Lockhart 1996).

Therefore, a foreign language classroom requires teachers who facilitate the communication and interaction between learners rather than controlling what students have to talk, teachers should play guide roles in order to accept students' opinion, and to be tolerant of errors learners make while attempting to communicate. Thus, teachers play the role of “facilitators” by focusing on the principle of intrinsic motivation since they allow students to discover language through using it in context (Rivers, 1987).

In the aforementioned research project carried out by Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchía (2004), it was also evidenced through observations that the teacher was mainly the model, class organizer and class controller since children usually repeat individually or chorally after the teacher, answering the teachers' questions or responding to the instructions teachers give. In other words, interaction between students were not evident due to the fact the teacher only asked them what they have to do without offering opportunities to use language to talk about themselves or different issues; in consequence, communication was not facilitated when learners required this help.

In view of English teachers' role can perform a great service to learners and to the overall learning process, they need to become more critical about the context and real needs of the learners in order to know what role is the most appropriate to use in the learning scenario.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Type of study

This project was a qualitative research project, since its main purpose was to collect data about the realities of English teaching and learning in three public schools in Pereira. Van Maanen (1979) cited in Merriam (2009) defines qualitative research as “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (p.520).

The qualitative data was gathered through non-participant observations, audio recorded interviews, questionnaires, and field notes focused on the teachers’ behaviors, beliefs, and methodologies regarding English teaching in their particular context. The researchers also focused on the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the English class. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explain, “qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meaning people bring to these settings.” Thus, the observations were done in the natural classroom setting to observe how English classes were conducted in terms of students and teacher interaction, pedagogical resources, and methods and approaches used.

5.2 Context and setting

This research project was carried out at three public schools of Pereira, Risaralda. One of the three schools was located in the rural zone of Pereira, and the other ones were located in an urban zone in the same town. The institutions were surrounded by

neighborhoods where the general socioeconomic status of the community was low and medium. In terms of human resources, the three schools had 147 teachers for middle and high education. There were approximately 4.080 students in the morning and in the afternoon shifts with a range of age between eleven and seventeen years old. Seven teachers belonged to the area of English, and five of them were "Licenciados en Ingles". In these schools, the English teachers were in charge of teaching English as a subject to students from 6th to 11th grade. There was an average of forty students per class, and they received the English class two hours per week. Concerning the school resources, each institution had approximately forty classrooms, a library, a cafeteria, and a computer room.

5.3 Participants

The participants in this study were four students from each grade and their English teachers. The students, randomly chosen, were in a range of age between 12 to 17 years old. They were firstly informed about the objective of this study in order to help us collect pertinent information respecting their English learning process, and their perceptions towards the English class.

The second group of participants was six English language teachers from those three public schools. Five of them were females and one was a male. Their ages ranged from 33 to 48 years old. Most of them had a bachelor degree in the teaching of modern languages, and had more than ten years of work experience as language teachers.

5.4 Researcher's role

The three researchers in the present study played the role of interviewers and non-participant observers since it was significant to gather first hand data about the approaches

and methods used in the English class, and the factors that influenced the language teaching and learning. Berg (2001) states that non-participant observation involves the researcher getting into situations where behavior, interactions, organizational practices can be observed first hand without taking part of them. The researchers did not interact with learners or the teachers in the class; they did not interfere in the lessons, and finally, they did not join to the classroom activities.

5.5 Data collection instruments

Several qualitative research techniques such as questionnaires, observation, field notes, and interviews were used in this study in order to gather information about the English educators' methodologies implemented in their English courses, and how these affected the students' language learning. Besides, information from students was required in order to know their perceptions towards the English class.

a) Observations

Observation was used as the first tool for collecting data during this research study. According to Merriam (2009), observation is a primary source for qualitative research, which consists of the complete analysis of people's behavior, attitudes, perceptions and assumptions to obtain data from the field that is under research. In this study, the researchers acted as non-participant observers since they merely observed and analyzed what was happening in the classroom without being involved in the activities carried out for the English teacher and learners.

With the aim of collecting meaningful data, a total of 19 non-participant observations were conducted from sixth to eleventh grades in the regular English class for

approximately two months. Each classroom observation lasted one hour per class and field notes were always used during this time for recalling data. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) explain field notes as a written account derived from data taken through the observations and are generally descriptive in order to provide an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Moreover, the researchers followed a structured observation format to collect information about important classroom events related to classroom organization, giving clear instructions, teacher and students' attitudes and role, patterns of interaction, lesson plan, among others (*see appendix B*).

b) Questionnaires

For this research project, the questionnaire included twenty-seven closed and open questions with the purpose of collecting teachers' answers with regard to their academic backgrounds, methodologies used in class to teach English, their perceptions about students, material used to guide English lessons, and the most frequent problems found in class (*see appendix C*). In accordance with Esposito (2002) "Questionnaires help gather information on knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, facts, and other information".

c) Interviews

De Marrais (2004) defines an interview as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study". Merriam (2009) shows that there are two forms to carry out interviews. The first one is the person-to person encounter, and the second one, is the group or collective interviews. In this research, students were interviewed collectively, and the teachers were interviewed face to face.

A semi-structured interview was used since there was a mix of more and less structured questions in the interviews, and these were asked in a random order so as to be more like a conversation. Merriam (2009) lists some characteristics of the semi-structured interviews: the questions are more flexibly worded even though specific information is usually required from the interviewees. She adds “this format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to the new ideas of the topic”.

- Students’ interview: we interviewed four students from 6th to 11th grade chosen randomly. The interview with the students had the purpose of gathering information about their perception towards the English course, the pedagogic resources used, and aspects to improve in the class. The interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes with each grade (*see appendix D*).
- English teachers’ interview: after finishing the observation process, the English teachers were interviewed to obtain information with respect to the methods and approaches they considered in their classes, their opinions about the students’ attitudes towards the class, and their awareness of the principles established by the Ministry of Education (*see appendix D*).

5.6 Data Analysis

After having collected the data from the four instruments employed (interviews, observations, field notes, and questionnaires), we started the process of data analysis by identifying segments of information which helped in the response to our research questions.

Aspects such as students' and teachers' behavior and attitudes, classroom management, the use of L1 and L2 among others were incorporated into an observation format as the main unit of this study (*see appendix B*). Field notes were also used to record and remember classroom activities, events and other features during the observation setting.

We compared each piece of information by following grounded theory, which is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In order to do this, we transcribed the data gathered from the instruments implemented. Thus, the audio recordings of our interviews, our field notes, and questionnaires given to the students and teachers were transcribed digitally. After finishing the step of transcription, we started with the coding process. We used colors to identify common patterns in the information gathered from the four instruments. For instance, the color green was related to the use of L1 and L2 in the lessons, orange to patterns of interaction, and purple to the codes related to the students' attitudes.

We continued the analysis process with data triangulation in order to establish the validity of data. According to Merriam (2009), triangulation refers to the pattern wherein two or three measurement points enable convergence on a site. Our triangulation was made by taking the most common repeated patterns from the codes created and displaying them as evidence in the categories of the findings they belonged to.

Finally, we created some codes with the purpose of citing information in the findings. This process was carried out in all the instruments following this procedure. To illustrate this, the codes were represented as follows:

Observation	IBO7-1	<u>I</u> nstitution - <u>B</u> - <u>O</u> bservation - <u>7</u> th grade- Observation <u>1</u>
Interview	ICI6-3	<u>I</u> nstitution- <u>C</u> - <u>I</u> nterview- <u>6</u> th grade- student <u>3</u>
Questionnaire	IAQET-1	<u>I</u> nstitution- <u>A</u> - <u>Q</u> uestionnaire- <u>E</u> nglish <u>t</u> eacher- teacher <u>1</u>

5.7 Ethical considerations

We had to consider some ethical aspects in order to collect information and develop this project appropriately in three public schools of Pereira. The school principals and English teachers from some public schools were invited to a presentation about the current study in order for them to be informed about the purpose of our research and the role of the researchers during the data collection process. Once school principals and teachers were told about the nature of the study, the coordinator of the English language Program sent a consent letter to the school principals asking for permission to conduct the research. Also, a letter was signed by the English teachers who expressed a desire to contribute with respect to the observations of their classes, the interviews, and the questionnaires. The students interviewed were selected randomly, and before they agreed to participate in the interviews, the purpose of the investigation was explained to them. Finally, codes were used to protect the participants' identity.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 TEACHERS MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF TECHNIQUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

Observations of English classes, questionnaires made to the English teachers and interviews to some of the learners and teachers indicated that traditional grammar teaching methods still prevailed in language teaching practice in these schools. Language structures were presented on the board, and students practiced them in the form of translation exercises.

6.1.1 Classroom methodology focused on translating from L2 to L1

We observed that students at English class were presented with activities such as answering questions in the target language based on their understanding of reading passages, fill-in-the-blanks exercises, translation of isolated words and texts, and writing short compositions. Learners frequently used bilingual dictionaries, and translated the reading passages from L2 to L1 and wrote them in their notebooks.

Sample # 1 from teachers' observations

IBO7-1: "The teacher writes on the board a list of English vocabulary related to some classroom supplies. Example: classroom, board, table, chair, eraser, etc. The teacher says that students have to look up the vocabulary in the dictionary and write in front of that vocabulary list the corresponding word in Spanish"

IAO7-1: *“The learners; working on a photocopy, have to fill in the gaps with the correct verb ‘to be’ by following pictures about a person’s daily routine. Then, they are asked to translate every single word of the exercise in their notebooks.”*

These two samples indicate that students were engaged in the study of vocabulary lists, and written translation activities. Students had to look up the words in the bilingual dictionary and write the corresponding translation in their mother tongue. One of the characteristics of GTM listed by Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979; cited in Brown, 2000) is that class exercises focus on translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue, either in oral or written form.

Sample # 2 from teachers’ observations

IBO8-2: *“On the board there is a sentence which was written by two students, the sentence is: ‘The technology’s house will be very advance’. The teacher asks the two girls: ‘¿Cómo se traduce literalmente?, eso está mal escrito porque quiere decir que la casa de la tecnología, pero bien traducido debería ser la tecnología de la casa’”.*

The above example shows how the girls were asked to translate orally the exercise written on the board. Giorgiana Voicu (2004) argues that when L1 is used to teach EFL students, errors may emerge due to L1 transfer. For example, one student wrote ‘the technology house’ instead of ‘the house’s technology’ which evidences the transfer from L1 in terms of the syntactic structure of the sentence. One of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that GTM can negatively impact students’ learning because they translate literally when they do not have a deep knowledge of both languages:

Sample # 3 from teachers' interview

ICIET-3: *“negativo, la dificultad que es traducir como sabemos la traducción es una cosa muy profunda que requiere un conocimiento avanzado de la lengua y desde luego el muchacho no tienen estas herramientas y lo hace de forma literal.”*

The data shows that students were generally presented with grammatical rules and with translation exercises from L2 to L1. In the interviews, several participants affirmed that these traditional teaching practices routinely took place in the English class:

Sample # 4 from students' interview

ICI6-3: *“Casi siempre él nos pone a aa ¿qué? Aaaaa buscar palabras en el diccionario y a y a escribirlas en el en el en el cuaderno. Nos pone a traducirlas de inglés a español y las escribimos.”*

ICI8-2: *“Llama a lista, mm pregunta por el diccionario, explica que vamos a hacer y pone los temas en el tablero, nos pone a traducirlo, y ya...”*

ICI9-3: *“Traducir y seleccionar la la opción correcta.”*

IAI11-2: *“La gramática es lo que más se ve en la clase...pero como muy repaso de todo los grados anteriores”*

The frequent use of the dictionary to translate words was confirmed by the students. Richards & Rodgers (2001) define Grammar Translation Method as a way of studying language through a detailed analysis of grammar rules in order to translate sentences and texts from native language to a foreign language and vice versa (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 5). Giorgiana Voicu (2004) argues that translation exercises should only be considered when there is a grammar point which is causing trouble to students. In

other words, the use of GTM in class can be helpful only when students find difficulties in understanding certain points of grammar or some complex ideas. This data indicates that the emphasis of the English lessons was limited to some linguistic aspects of the language such as the study of vocabulary and grammatical rules. We observed that teachers did not include in their practices activities related to the pragmatic or sociolinguistic competence which are also important to help students in their learning of a language. We considered that a possible reason why the teachers taught in such a traditional way is because they have not been updated in more modern methodologies which could be used in the classroom to more effectively develop communication skills.

6.1.2 L1 was used extensively in the English classes

Analysis of classroom observations and interviews to students indicated that the most spoken language in the English classroom was L1. The teacher's instructions, explanation of word meaning, and grammar points were usually done in L1. Teachers generally used L1 for clarification purposes and comprehension checks due to the fact that after they attempted to communicate ideas in L2, many students appeared to be confused.

The following samples taken from class observations illustrate this:

Sample # 1 from teachers' observation

ICO6-1: *"The teacher writes on the board: 'there is and there are some' and he says: ¿Qué significa some? Some students answer: 'algunos'. Then, the teacher continues explaining: 'There are some' es usado para plural y 'there is' es usado para singular. Later, the teacher writes and says: 'There are some pencils and there is a notebook', como ya*

habíamos explicado este tema y basados en el ejemplo ahora con la lista de vocabulario que tienen en el cuaderno van a construir oraciones usando 'thereis and there are' teniendo en cuenta el plural''.

The above sample shows that students' exposure to L2 was mostly limited to isolated English sentences and brief presentations of grammatical rules (which were then repeated in L1). As explained by Tang (2009), L1 should serve in a "supportive and facilitating role in the classroom and not as the primary language for communication". Similarly, Harmer (2009) argues that one way to use L1 without denying the use of L2 is by giving instructions since these can be presented in the foreign language and then, a student can be asked to repeat the instructions in L1. Although such a general use of L1 did not provide learners with real opportunities for communication in L2, it served teachers and students as a strategy for reinforcing comprehension of topics. For this reason, it seems probable that teachers drew on the extensive use of L1 in order to save time and to insure students' understanding.

Sample # 2 from teachers' observation

ICO11-1: *"The teacher writes on the board: 'simple present and present continuous'. She asks: ¿Cuándo utilizamos estos tiempos? students do not answer. Then, the teacher explains the topic using Spanish. One student says: Profe el 'ing' va en continuous. The teacher says: ajá y qué mas? Other students answer: the verb to be''.*

Thus, comprehension checks were another way of using L1 for both teacher and learners. In the following excerpt, the teacher corrected and checked student's comprehension using L1:

Sample # 3 from teachers' observation

IBO7-2: *“The teacher walks between rows and check the students' work. One girl answers a question about writing the pronoun 'I'. The teacher corrects: ¿por qué 'I'? ¿Le están preguntando a usted o a quién? Tengan en cuenta el auxiliar y el pronombre para responder muchachos”.*

In these samples, it was evidenced that teachers not only used L1 to explain a topic or to give instructions but also to check students' performance and comprehension. In other interviews, some students told us that the predominant language used by the teacher in class was Spanish, whereas, other learners stated that English was used in the same percentage as Spanish. We observed that there was a misconception concerning the use of English language in class since during the English class some students believed that it was the primary language spoken simply because of the use of standard phrases such as “repeat after me”, “sit down”, and “silence please”. For instance, one student stated that the teacher always spoke in English because during the class she said “good afternoon” and “very good. Giorgiana Voicu (2004) states that the use of L1 can be helpful to teach grammar but it should be used only when it is necessary.

As the following samples show, some students agreed that Spanish was the language most used by both teachers and students:

Sample # 5 from students' interview

IBI8-4: *“Para mí se utilizaría más español”*

ICI11-2: *“yo creo que el porcentaje es 80 vs 20, 80% español 20% por ciento ingles porque lo único q ella nos dice en inglés es el vocabulario”*

On the other hand, some students claimed that English was the main language spoken in the classroom:

Sample # 6 from students' interview

ICI6-1: *“Es más inglés, es más inglés que español...pues si porque uno le pregunta algo, quizque no, esto es clase de inglés y no de español, pero siempre habla en español”*

IAI9-3: *“Para uno preguntarle algo le tiene que decir a la profesora en inglés: ‘teacher’...ella me responde en español”*

Our data indicates that L1 was commonly used for the presentation of new topics, for giving instructions, for reinforcing students' comprehension, and for saving time. In our opinion, some reasons why teachers and students overused the L1 were to avoid lengthy explanations in the target language and to avoid students' disruption. Harmer (2009) argues that the use of L1 can be beneficial when some instructions are complicated to give and when students need individual help or encouragement. It is known that learners and teachers can benefit from using L1 judiciously since it has some advantages such as saving time when instructions are hard to explain, when grammar points are complicated, when certain kinds of vocabulary are taught, when comparing languages in terms of vocabulary and grammar, and for controlling discipline (Georgiana Voicu 2004, p.214- 215).

6.2 TEACHERS' USE OF GTM WAS CONSCIOUS AND PURPOSEFUL

The data analysis provided a great deal of insight into the extent that English teachers made conscious use of the Grammar Translation Method and their reasons for doing so. A number of teachers reported on the questionnaires that GTM was highly used in their classes. Also, they indicated that the main aim of the classes focused on reading and translating texts from L2 to L1.

Sample # 1 from teachers' questionnaire

19. *¿Cuál de los siguientes métodos utiliza usted en clase?*

Método de gramática y traducción x **(4 teachers)**

22. *De los siguientes objetivos señale en orden de importancia (1-2-3-4-5-,etc. Siendo el 1 el mayor y el 5 el menor) los planteados por usted en el programa.*

 Comprender correctamente la lengua hablada

 Entender un texto escuchado, con un tema con el cual esté familiarizado

 Participar en conversaciones sencillas sobre los temas estudiados

 Escribir el idioma con corrección y seguridad

 x *Leer y traducir con precisión el material escrito en inglés, de manera comprensiva, analítica y crítica* **(five teachers)**

 Leer comprensivamente con el fin de captar el sentido general de un texto y extraer la información específica

Teachers gave some reasons for employing GTM such as controlling discipline and giving students tasks that required little effort. Their comments revealed that they realized that using this method gave students little opportunity to develop communicative competence:

Sample # 2 from teachers' interview

“¿Profe eeh que tan frecuente es el uso de gramática traducción en su clase?

ICIET-2 “... en octavos si los uso con mucho más frecuencia debido a que a veces si tengo horas simultáneas entonces tengo que dejar algún taller o texto para que ellos trabajen mientras yo no estoy.”

IAIET-1 “...a los estudiantes no se les puede exigir, por eso uso siempre grammar para obtener buenos resultados.”

Sample # 3 from teachers' interview

“¿Profe cómo cree Ud. que este método influye en los estudiantes?

ICIET-2: “Positivamente, pues digamos que al menos están utilizando el diccionario para traducir, están repasando las estructuras gramaticales que uno les enseño y no es que aporte mucho a la parte comunicativa como tal que es de lo que se trata”

The first two answers from the teachers interviewed shows that the GTM was used regularly in order to make students work quietly and because teachers seemed to believe that by using this method students got better results in their grades. The third answer shows that even though the teachers believed that their students could benefit from this method, in terms of learning grammatical structures, they recognized that it offered students little opportunity to develop their communicative competence. Brown (2001) points out that one characteristic of Communicative Language Teaching is that classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. One teacher argued that her decision to use traditional methods was

because of the conditions in which language was taught and the lack of resources to carry out suitable lessons. In other words, this teacher argued that despite her knowledge of current approaches and methods, she felt that these would not work in her classroom due to conditions at the school and the limited teaching resources.

Sample # 4 from teachers' interview

ICIET-3: *“pues bueno la verdad es algo tradicional lo que yo hago más tradicional, ante todo yo conozco lo del lesson plan y todas esas teorías al momento de aplicarlas no le funcionan a uno y pues tampoco cuento con muchos recursos”*

The teachers reported that the use of traditional methodologies was an important part of their English teaching practice, since their classes focused on explanation of grammar structures, translation of words, sentences, or short passages translated orally or in written form from L2 to the mother tongue. Our data also shows that GTM prevailed in the language learning context with little evidence of communicative activities. Teachers argued that factors such as students' attitudes, the environmental context, and the scarcity of teaching resources did not provide conditions for having a more communicative English class. According to Diaz, Martinez, Roa & Sanhueza (2010) *Los docentes están conscientes de sus creencias; sin embargo, la complejidad del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, les impide, muchas veces, que ellas se condigan con su actuación en el aula. El docente sostiene una creencia respecto a alguna variable didáctica del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Esta creencia puede provenir de la teoría; sin embargo, la realidad educativa la confronta y, es aquí, donde el docente atraviesa por una serie de tensiones que, en ocasiones, no sabe cómo resolver”*. We could see that in spite of what the

teachers mentioned about the limited resources and the unfavorable conditions at schools were true, it was also evidenced that they did not take advantage of their knowledge to go beyond of these limitations.

6.3 TEACHERS USED A LIMITED VARIETY OF RESOURCES IN A LIMITED VARIETY OF WAYS

It was evident that authentic material and technological resources were not used very much as complementary tools for instruction. We observed that most of the educators did not include any technological device in their teaching. The board, markers, notebooks, bilingual dictionaries, and in some cases, photocopies and teachers' books were the elements mainly used in class.

Some participants provided insights about the materials that were regularly used in English lessons:

Sample # 1 from students' interview

¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en la clase?

IAI9-4: *“cuadernos, lapiceros, a veces lleva libros, otras veces diccionario”*

IAI10-2: *“si fotocopias y diccionario”*

ICI6-1: *“Mmm... más que todo el diccionario”*

In the following quotes from two class observations, the permanent use of the bilingual dictionary was evidenced:

Sample #2 from teachers' observation

IBO8-1: *"There are 29 dictionaries in the classroom. The teacher reminds students to bring the bilingual dictionary. The teacher has students look up the verbs related to the daily routine."*

ICO6-1: *"The teacher has students to take out their bilingual dictionaries to look up the words written on the board"*.

These samples suggest that English was not presented as authentically as it could be; the nonuse of materials such as real newspaper, reports or real magazine articles made it more difficult for students be exposed to the real language. English teachers told us that learners did not have a textbook; rather teachers had to use their own resources or recycled materials and photocopies from previous school years. Teachers reported that the institutions do not supply them with the essential teaching materials.

Sample # 3 from teachers' questionnaire

¿Los estudiantes tienen texto guía? Sí ___ No () Si la respuesta es No ¿Qué materiales utiliza?

IAQET-1: *"Diccionario, flashcards..."*

ICQET-3: *"Diversos libros y materiales recaudados en los anteriores años"*

IBQET-2: *"Libros de texto, imágenes, diccionarios, eeh básicamente eso porque la institución no tiene los recursos económicos para brindarnos apoyo para materiales didácticos"*

The lack of resources to guide the English class was considered by teachers as the main problem they face daily. Data sample below portrays this issue:

Sample # 4 from teachers' questionnaire:

15. Mencione los problemas más frecuentes y críticos que actualmente enfrenta en la enseñanza y en el aprendizaje del inglés en el bachillerato. Enumérelos en orden de importancia según el grado de seriedad.

ICQET-2: "Escasez de materiales"

IBQET-1: "Material de apoyo"

Statements made by students contradicted since they stated that although the institution counts with a computer room, the teacher almost never takes advantage of it.

Sample # 5 from students' interview

IAI11-2: "libro, ahh... y hay veces computador, Esa profesora es muy chichipata, nos llevó a la sala una vez nada más"

IAI11-3: "Noo, pues en este año solamente ha pasado una vez, que teníamos que resolver lo de una página y estaba ya en el... en el computador..."

One student argued that one of the reasons why the teacher did not allow students to use technological resources in class was that they probably did other different things that were not related to the English class:

Sample # 6 from students' interview

IAI7-4: *“La profesora, ehh de pronto no nos deja ir a internet porque si pilla nosotros nos metemos a Facebook (risas)”*

We can see from these samples that classes tended to rely on traditional resources, such as bilingual dictionaries, rather than on the use of authentic materials and technological resources. Data suggests that the activities proposed with the material tend to be repetitive, traditional, without much variety which might imply that teachers are not well acquainted with strategies for teaching the different skills in the classroom, and they stick to the same type of exercises with the same material. Brown (2000) says that teachers should encourage learners to avoid the overuse of their bilingual dictionaries since they do not internalize translated words for later recall or use due to the fact that they only get an instant response when they look up the translation of the word. Furthermore, Tamo (2009) states that bringing authentic materials into the classroom can be motivating for the students, as it adds a real-life element to the student's learning experience.

6.4 STUDENTS' UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS TOWARD THE ENGLISH LESSONS CORRELATE WITH LOW MOTIVATION

6.4.1 Extrinsic motivation prevailed in the English class

Most of the learners interviewed agreed that their motivation came from more functional or external needs, such as the need to pass an exam. The following quotes illustrate this:

Sample # 1 from students' interview

IAI7-2: *“a mí no me gusta casi el inglés, pero ya que sea obligación que por ejemplo una tarea, ohh... cualquier cosa así pues obligatoriamente toca hacerla porque eso es responsabilidad, no pero no, en un colegio que todo sea inglés no me gusta.”*

IAI7-3: *“no me gusta, yo le pido copia al de al lado”*

In the following excerpt, one student shows his interest in getting a good grade:

Sample # 2 from teachers' observation

IAO9-3: *“The teacher greets students in English “good afternoon” and she says “hoy como muy bien saben hay examen de ‘superlatives’...está muy fácil para hacerlo a cuaderno abierto”. Some students start complaining. Then, the teacher says “tienen que hacer mínimo tres oraciones y máximo cinco” To what one student asks “¿el que haga las cinco le pone un cinco?” and the teacher's answer was “sí, pero tienen que estar correctas.”*

Regarding learners' external incentives for learning a foreign language, findings showed that the highest motivation learners had for the English class was having good grades instead of learning a language because they really liked it. When some students were asked about their English knowledge, two students said:

Sample # 3 from students' interview

IBI6-1: "a pues si yo creo que aceptable porque, porque yo siempre por ejemplo que el profesor me revisa, en el cuaderno casi nunca me han puesto notas malas y todo bien si y nunca he perdido inglés en en ningún año y si me va bien"

IBI6-3: "ni bien ni mal, porque vea pues a mí nunca me han puesto un cero, pues como le digo yo, yo traduciendo que pa' decir pa' decir algo en inglés que él me ponga casi no soy capaz, pero que hacer ejercicios o que él explique si soy muy buena en eso, pero que pa' hablar noooooooooooooooooooooo, eso eso no me gusta"

In these interviews, several participants affirmed that their main interest in learning English was just for passing the subject without seeing the importance of developing language knowledge to be socially and personally successful. When students were asked to say how they rated their own English knowledge, they just mentioned it was good because of their good school grades, but not because they felt they were developing communicative competence in the target language. Students, in general, were more extrinsically motivated to learn English. We consider that this motivation could be associated with the educational system since the fact of receiving two hours of English class per week does not allow students to see the importance for learning the language. Another factor related to this has to do with the lack of well –trained teachers who can design dynamic classes in which do not involve just listening to the teacher, but in which they consider students' interventions and needs. Arnold (2000) states that extrinsic motivation could negatively impact students' learning because they do not learn with strong intention or will but they study it because they are pushed by the interest in external outcomes such as rewards.

Teachers who were interviewed told us that students were not motivated for the English class since they did not consider the learning of English as a positive and rewarding experience; hence, they made no effort to learn it.

Sample # 4 from teachers' interview

¿Qué puede percibir usted como docente ante la actitud de los estudiantes en clase?

ICIET-2 “...ellos no le ven la importancia de aprender inglés; no le ven el para qué y además ellos tampoco le ponen esfuerzo para aprender le da lo mismo si pasan la materia y si no”

IAIET-1: “Los estudiantes tienen apatía e indiferencia por la clase...aprenden solo para un momentico, solo se interesan por la moda, el maquillaje...”

ICIET-2 “... Algunas veces son reacios a la clase y reacios al objeto de estudio ya que muchas veces, dado que ellos sienten que no tiene importancia bueno no ven, ¿y bueno yo para qué esto si no voy a ir a la universidad? ¿Si no voy a salir del país? Entonces es básicamente lo que ocurre con ellos y muchos dicen ‘es que no me gusta’. Y no se dan la oportunidad de descubrirla. Simplemente no me gusta ¿y por qué no me gusta? Eeee porque yo no, yo no lo voy a usar entonces no le prestan atención, entonces no me interesa.”

Despite the high number of students extrinsically motivated, it is relevant to say that there were other learners who expressed an intrinsic desire to learn English. Some of our participants were eager to engage autonomously in English learning.

Sample # 5 from students' interview

LAI10-4: "me encanta el inglés...es como una pasión, escuchando música, viendo películas..."

LAI6-2: "a mi si me gusta, no porque es que yo sé que para un futuro es importante, si uno quiere especializarse en algo tiene que saber inglés"

IBI8-4: "yo pienso que el mío es muy bien porque a mí me gusta mucho el inglés y cuando a mí me gustan las cosas a mí me entran fácil"

We observed that there were few students intrinsically motivated to learn a foreign language who expressed their own interest in doing some activities such as watching movies or listening to music in English.

The comments made by the interviewees in response to our questions as to whether they enjoyed learning a foreign language indicate that the students were more extrinsically than intrinsically motivated with respect to the English class. Most of the students said that they only did homework because it was a requirement for passing the subject or to have a good grade, and a small group of learners expressed their own willingness to learn another language by doing certain activities outside the classroom. Harmer (1991) argues that learners who are intrinsically motivated or with high aspirations learn faster than learners who need external incentives. We observed students learning process could be affected because they only want to have good grades without internalizing the knowledge of the language. Students copy from other classmates but they do not make their own effort to develop autonomously the activities suggested by the teachers. Wright (1987) states that

learner's enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence is the key determinant of success or failure.

Through the analysis of interviewing students and class observations, it was found that the students' interest to learn English seemed to be significantly influenced by factors such as classroom activities, students' interaction, and teachers' role. Most of the students said that tasks involving role plays should be done more frequently, with greater participation of the teacher by guiding, explaining, and making corrections to improve students' performance.

6.4.2 Students expressed a desire for more interesting and authentic materials

A number of students interviewed expressed the desire for having in class dynamic materials that could help them in their understanding of the language:

Sample # 1 from students' interview:

ICI6-3: *"... me gustaría a mí o que hicieran una sala donde fuéramos y el profesor por ejemplo nos mostrara las partes del cuerpo, como se dicen, que hubiera algo así como como el que hay en *** que es una, un, un, cuerpo que uno puede desarmar y ver las partes y todo y sabe cómo se llaman, eso sí me gustaría..."*

ICI6-4: *"Mejoraría el nivel... A mí me gustaría mucho una, un salón que tuviera en la pared o en todo cosas de inglés para aprender, o sea que dijera algo en inglés y el profesor ya nos explicara..."*

The above samples show how learners wanted teachers to use authentic material that would help them to improve their language comprehension since the teacher could take advantage of these resources to explain linguistic patterns of the English language as well as sociocultural aspects. García Arreza (1994) defines authentic materials as samples of language in written or oral form which are produced for communication among native people and which can be used for the teaching and learning of the target language contributing to the real use of this.

The data collected shows that those students have been exposed to very little authentic material, limiting their opportunities to practice the English language and acquire communicative competence.

Finally, it is pertinent to describe the perceptions of the students who expressed a great interest in incorporating technological resources into the classroom since some of the participants felt that computers allow learners to have access to more comprehensive sources of information:

Sample #2 from students' interview

“¿Qué aspectos mejoraría de la clase de inglés?”

ICI9-4: “El uso de tecnología, por ejemplo, a veces el diccionario no nos da a veces para complementar bien las frases entonces nos enredamos, mientras que con un poco de tecnología y... creo que con internet por parte del colegio podríamos mejorar un poco el inglés.”

IAI7-3: “... y también con la ayuda de la tecnología, computadores así más de seguidito yyy... por ejemplo que nos lleven asi... como algo, pues como pa’, en los computadores...”

From all these samples, we perceive the considerable lack of pedagogical resources these three public schools have, which not enough are considering the number of students per class. The participants of the study provided a diversity of answers related not only to the lack of authentic materials and technological resources, but to their discouragement with the English classes since in almost every lesson they did not use materials other than the bilingual dictionary and photocopies. Students indicated that they would like to use materials different from the usual ones; materials that could help them to comprehend diverse aspects of the target language. Data also suggests that language skills were not adequately developed and real language communication did not occur in the classroom due to the fact that English teachers could not provide learners with the appropriate pedagogical support since they required professional development courses. Authentic materials are useful tools to help in the development of communicative competence since these expose learners to the authentic use of language for real purposes (Hymes, 1971; Campell & Wales 19 cited in Brumfit & Johnson 1979).

6.4.2 Students expressed a desire for more oral activities

It was found that the methodology of the English classes played an important part on the students’ motivation when learning a foreign language. When students were asked about the aspects to improve in the class, most of them mentioned the emphasis of the class

was on writing and reading skills. Students added that the classroom activities should be more oral and group work oriented.

Sample #1 from students' interview

IAI9-3: *“pues que la profesora hiciera mmm...como más ejercicios en grupos”*

IAI11-1: *“mmm yo creo que le mejoraría mucho habla este... la profe maneja mucho gramática, que veamos mucho habla, escucha, y escritura”*

Most of the participants told us that they preferred more communicative approaches when learning English. Here are other samples that reveal the students' desire and suggestions towards having a more communicative English class:

Sample # 2 from students' interviews:

IBI6-3: *“que cambiara pues lo, lo, lo que él siempre hace porque él siempre nos coloca a escribir y escribir y escribir...”*

IAI10-2: *“cambiar la dinámica de la profesora... que sean más conversaciones”*

IAI6-1: *“cuando hay que dramatizar es bien, por ejemplo ella nos puso, de una bruja, hay q llevar unas cartas, y decir en ingles que le va pasar en el 2018. Nosotros nos lo inventamos”*

Students seemed disappointed with the English class since they wanted to integrate all the communicative language skills. Communicative activities contribute to whole-class participation and help learners develop the communicative ability; this is supported by Littlewood (1981) when he argues that dialogues and role-playing activities open up a rich stimulus for communicative interaction by involving students in situations where they can

see the relevance of what they are doing or learning. Thus, the data analysis suggests that the lack of communicative activities denied learners the opportunity for spontaneous interaction, chances for negotiating turns to speak, and incentives to try out communication in the target language.

Some students interviewed said that when the teacher grouped them or when they had to play a role, they found the class enjoyable. The opinions given by some participants revealed a desire to have activities with real purposes.

Sample # 3 from students' interview

IAI9-3: "Ehhh, en estos días nos puso un trabajo ahí en el tablero que decía de dos, dos personas en inglés y nosotros teníamos que decir lo que estaba ahí en el tablero pero en inglés pero sin mirar del tablero, nos lo teníamos que aprender de memoria..."

IAI9-2: "...me gustó, había que decir cómo se llamaba ehhh...la persona, el apellido, donde vivía, el correo electrónico, el número de celular, el nombre de la mamá. Yo hacía del papel del que tenía que responder"

During a class observation of sixth graders, the students showed a positive response to group work. All of them made their own contributions to the task assigned by the teacher, and the classroom seemed to have a good climate of learning. Also, it was found that group work could contribute to comprehension and communicative competence when they interacted with each other:

Sample #4 from teachers' observation

IAO6-2: "the learners, working in small groups, are explained that they have to describe a partner from another group by using the adjectives written on the board. The teacher chooses one student randomly to say aloud the description of one of her classmates. The student says "she have glasses" and other student corrects "nooo, es con has".

These samples show that students' interest in working in groups was a factor that increased their motivation towards the class. Students' comments indicated that patterns of interaction such as group work made of them active participants who were more willing to engage in tasks. We also observed that classroom activities tended to be limited to grammar and vocabulary instruction; and little or no systematic attention was paid to the use of the target language in real life situations. Students indicated that they would like to have more varied lessons that target other skills and involve other resources. Littlewood (1981) claims that communicative activities such as discussions and role plays provide opportunities for positive personal relationships to develop among learners, and between learners and teachers, which can in turn support individuals in their efforts to learn.

In conclusion, the above finding shows that learners preferred working in groups to exchange ideas and to increase their comprehension of the tasks assigned. Nunan (1991) says that learning to speak in a foreign language will be facilitated when learners are actively engaged in attempting to communicate in groups. We observed that when learners worked in group there were more opportunities for them to develop the target language skills since they took risks to participate in class by speaking English.

6.4.3 Students expressed a desire for more guidance from the teacher

The analysis here presented shows the students' desire for assistance from the English teacher. The reasons learners gave were that the teacher did not provide them with the appropriate input, explanations, and interaction to lead them towards learning and understanding of the lessons. Thus, the students' comments indicate that they felt that the lack of the teacher's support did not contribute to successful development of the activities proposed in class. When some students were asked to suggest the aspects to improve in the classes, their answers were as follows:

Sample # 1 from students' interview

IAI11-3: *"Nada, porque no entiendo no ve que ella no sabe explicar bien...porque cuando uno no entiende, uno le dice que vuelva a explicar y si explica lo hace en inglés o no lo explica"*

IAI6-2: *"pues la profesora como que no insiste en que los estudiantes aprendan, pues tampoco es que no le importe, pero... hay gente con más dificultad para aprender, y ella no está encima de ellos ayudándoles"*

In these samples, the students complained that the teacher did not make the classroom a supportive place of learning. They suggested the need for English teachers to explain some activities more than once.

Sample # 2 from students' interview

IAI6-4: *"si sabe o sabe... ella explica uno o dos veces y ya...el que entendió, entendió y sino paila"*

It was found that students were discouraged about the teacher's behavior and role during the lessons. A number of the interviewees reported that the teacher sat or stood behind a desk, and spent a large amount of time giving directions or threatening to put a bad grade to those learners who were talking in class. Also, they mentioned that some teachers, instead of monitoring students' performance, paid special attention to their electrical devices. Students' comments indicated that they expected teachers to be more interested in their learning process and to be a guide in the classroom activities.

Sample # 3 from students' interview

IBI6-1: *“pero es que el profesor es muy conchudo ja! él, ja! él tiene el vicio de que uno le pregunta algo: ay yo no sé! esto y lo otro, y él mira del celular del BlackBerry y escribe y escribe en el salón ¿sí o no?”*

IAI10-2: *“ella mantiene sentada ahí... muy pocas veces camina” “uy ella es muy estricta... ella tiene ojo biónico”*

The teachers told us that they used their blackberries to look up word meanings, not as a distraction from the class. In any case, it is clear that students perceived a lack of teacher support. Our class observations supported this perception.

In the next sample, it can be seen that when students worked on a task, they did not have enough teacher support and guidance for the appropriate accomplishment of it, they started focusing more on events other than the English class.

Sample #4 from teachers' observation

IAO11-2: *“After the teacher wrote on the board the difference between countable and uncountable nouns, she asks students to complete an exercise of a book. Some*

students say that they do not understand, and the teacher asks them to come to her desk for giving a second explanation. Meanwhile, the other learners start doing noise, stand up of their chairs, and others chat on their cellphones”

As we can see in these samples, the learners felt that the English teacher did not show interest in helping them understand the topics of the class. Moreover, our observations suggested that the teacher did not effectively support and motivate her students. According to Harmer (2007), the teacher’s role as prompter encourages students, pushes them to achieve more, and feeds in bits of information or language to help them proceed. Our data indicated that many factors such as the lack of scaffolding and the limited inclusion of communicative activities may have affected the students’ engagement in learning a foreign language. The students’ motivation might have been higher if teachers played a facilitator role and provided activities that allowed learners to use the language for practical and relevant purposes, and also if the classes became more learner-centered, taking into consideration students’ needs, abilities, and interest, and placing the teacher in the role of a facilitator of learning.

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the data collected in these three public schools in Pereira indicate that teachers made extensive use of techniques associated with the Grammar Translation Method. For example, they devoted most of their class time to activities such as having students translate from L2 to L1, completing grammar and vocabulary exercises, and discussing grammar rules using L1. Students had very few opportunities to practice the language for real communication since bilingual dictionaries were practically the only pedagogical resources used. Teachers used these methods consciously and purposefully. They complained about the lack of professional development courses and the lack of pedagogical resources. Besides this, the teachers told us that their students were not motivated for the English class since they do not consider English learning as a rewarding experience. Ochoa (2005) states that the current context demands teachers who are updated in their academic fields. *“Si miramos el perfil del maestro del presente, del que está ejerciendo su profesión y se graduó ya sea de la universidad o de la Escuela Normal hace ya más de diez años, bien podría afirmar que frente a estos grandes retos, los maestros tenemos una formación insuficiente”*

On the other hand, the students we interviewed said that they desired more opportunities to practice real communication and use of the English language. They complained that teachers did not give them enough support to do this. They also felt that their teachers should use a greater variety of pedagogical materials and to do more group work and role plays.

It is clear that the teachers who participated in this study felt that they were teaching their classes in the only way possible for them. It is also clear that most of students were discouraged with respect to the methodologies presented by the teacher. Amador (2011) claims that a reason why teachers use traditional methodologies in the classroom is because they are not trained in new methodologies *“Se atienen a la gramática y a traducir palabra por palabra. Seguimos enseñando los verbos to be y to have de forma rígida y les pedimos a los niños llenar espacios en blanco para completar oraciones, es decir, una estructura gramatical obsoleta. No hay discurso, ni pragmática, y esto lo he visto particularmente en los colegios públicos. Los docentes no encuentran capacitación y, si la hay, no la conocen”*

Our findings indicate that English lessons were not as authentic as they should be since there was little evidence of communicative activities or use of authentic resources that could help students in their understanding of the language and provide motivation to use it. That is why students lack motivation towards the English classes or do not see the importance for learning it.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

After finishing this study, researchers could reflect on the limitations encountered in its development. One of the limitations had to do with the classes observed since only three of six public schools that were asked to take part in this project gave the permission to collect data in the English classes. Our observations represent just a sampling of what is actually happening in language learning settings; nevertheless, they allowed us to gather useful information about aspects related to language learning and teaching.

Another limitation was with respect to the teachers' willingness to contribute to the second step of the data collection process: questionnaires and interviews. It is important to report that the process of data collection took a great deal of time because teachers usually stated that they had academic overload. Thus, the teachers' contributions did not provide in-depth description and reflection as it was expected since these participants did not fill the questionnaires completely, thus causing difficulties when analyzing the data.

Finally, the fact that some of the natural contexts where the phenomenon under investigation occurs were located in rural zones and relatively far away from the city represented costs for the researchers. Sometimes we could not collect data because participants were in extracurricular activities or there were no classes in the schools.

9. RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has shown that there are issues that need to be addressed in the English language classes at some public schools in Pereira. The results of this research suggest that the aim of forming citizens capable of communicating in the English language as expressed in the educational public policy called “Risaralda Bilingüe” may not be achieved in some public institutions if teachers continue using traditional teaching methods with classes merely focused on the development of the grammatical competence to the exclusion of other components of the communicative competence.

In our perception, the greatest challenge in English teaching in these institutions is to move significantly to the teaching of rules, memorization, and translation to the point of teaching our students to communicate spontaneously and meaningfully in the second language.

We believe that in order for public schools to achieve the goals with respect to the English proficiency levels that Colombian students should be able to reach, the numbers of hours per week need to be increased in the English curriculum. Also, the institutions have to consider teachers’ labor conditions in two aspects. The first one is about teachers’ academic overload, such as the number of classes taught and the number of students in each class, which can make teaching difficult because teachers do not have time to plan lessons adequately. Secondly, public schools must help English teachers to improve their skills, be updated in their field and learn about new teaching methods. Thus, we consider it important for English teachers not only to be supplied with technological resources, but also to receive training in how to use these resources appropriately.

We have not explored other factors that could affect the implementation of a communicative approach in public schools. Future research may probe deeper into how teachers' working conditions can influence both language teaching and learning, and suggests strategies and possible solutions that might facilitate the implementation of communicative practices in class.

10. CONCLUSION

In spite of the policies established by the Colombian Ministry of Education with the purpose of raising the level of quality of English teaching and learning through the development of the communicative competence, the results obtained from data collected in these three public schools in Pereira reveal that some techniques associated with GTM are still used extensively by the English teachers. We observed that classroom goals focused on grammatical and lexical skills rather than on communicative competence to be applied to real situations, and that L2 was limited to isolated English sentences and short presentations of grammatical rules. English teachers acknowledge that GTM is ineffective in developing students' communicative competence, but they use it because they consider that this method makes their work easier, makes students work quietly, and increases learners' language vocabulary store.

Through students' interview, we noted students' desire for oral activities with group work, more guidance from the teacher, and use of technological resources and authentic material. Nevertheless, this did not occur in the classes we observed because translation exercises routinely took place with the bilingual dictionary as the main element used.

In fact, some statements made by teachers and students contradicted one another since teachers said that the lack of communicative lessons was because the institutions do not supply them with the essential pedagogical resources. On the other hand, students told us that although the institution has a computer room, the teachers almost never take advantage of it. Our findings indicate that English lessons are not as authentic as they need

to be since there is little evidence of communicative activities or use of authentic resources that could help students in their understanding of the language and motivation to use it.

The outcomes of our study suggest us that the main factors affecting the implementation of a communicative approach in these three public schools could be the lack of professional development courses. The way we see it is that English teachers are not updated with strategies for teaching the language skills in the classroom. Therefore, the English lessons tend to be repetitive and traditional with the same type of exercises and the same materials.

Besides this, we found that students' lack of motivation could be associated with the educational system. The fact that the students only receive two hours of English class per week and they are not exposed to modern methodologies may affect their motivation because they consider the classes as not interesting and dynamic for them and do not see the importance of learning a foreign language.

This study indicates that there is a need for English teachers to be acquainted with techniques that allow them to go beyond the limitations they face daily at schools. We observed that a communicative approach is difficult to include in contexts in which the educational system does not support English teaching and learning with the necessary pedagogical resources and training.

REFERENCES

- Amador-Watson, C. (2011, March 31). ‘El inglés se enseña de forma muy arcaica aún’: experta en bilingüismo. Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/vida-de-hoy/educacion/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-9103576.html
- Arnold, J. (2000). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Bahous, R et al. (2011). Motivating students in the EFL classroom: A case study of perspectives. *English Language Teaching*, 4 (3),33-43.
- Berg, B.L. (2001). *Qualitative Research methods for the social sciences*. Fourth edition. USA: A Pearson Education Company
- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.).Boston: Pearson Education.
- Breen, M.P., & Candlin, C. (1980). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied linguistics* (1980) I (2): 89-112
- Brown, D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Fourth edition. Harlow: Longman, 2000.
- Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- Brumfit, C. J., & Johnson, K. (1979). *The communicative approach to language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carbonaro, W. (2005). Tracking, students’ effort, and academic achievement: a magazine of theory and practice. *Sociology of Education*, 78 (1), 27-49.

- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A.L. (2008). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and Procedures for developing grounded theory. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Council of Europe (2001). The common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching and assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- deMarrias, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarrias & S.D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research*. Mahwah,NJ:Erlbaum.
- Denzin, N. K & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. London: Sage.
- Diaz, Martinez, Roa & Sanhueza (2010). Los docentes en la sociedad actual: sus creencias y cogniciones pedagógicas de acuerdo al proceso didáctico. *Revista de la universidad Bolivariana*, 9 (25), 421-436. Retrieved october 23th, 2013 from <http://www.scielo.cl/pdf/polis/v9n25/art25.pdf>
- EF-EPI (2011). Índice de nivel de inglés. Retrieved may 20th, 2012 from http://www.ef.com.es/sitecore/_/_/~/media/efcom/epi/pdf/EF-EPI-2011-Spain.pdf
- Esposito, J. L. (2002). Interactive, multiple-method questionnaire evaluation research: A case study. Paper presented at the International Conference in Questionnaire Development, Evaluation, and Testing (QDET) Methods.
- Fishbein, M. (1967). Readings in attitude theory and measurement. America: KohnWiley&Sons, Inc.
- García Arreza, M. (1994) et al. La Lengua Inglesa en la Educación Primaria. Málaga, Aljibe.

- Gardner, R.C. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.
- Georgiana VOICU, C. (2012). Overusing mother tongue in English language teaching. Apollonia, 2 (3), 212-218.
- Giraldo & Vélez (2010). Las interacciones Comunicativas en la Educación Básica Secundaria: Un estudio de caso”. Retrieved october 15th 2013, from [http://latinoamericana.ucaldas.edu.co/downloads/Latinoamericana6\(1\)_3.pdf](http://latinoamericana.ucaldas.edu.co/downloads/Latinoamericana6(1)_3.pdf)
- EF - EPI índice de nivel de inglés. Retrieved may 20th 2012, from http://www.ef.com.es/sitecore/_/_/media/efcom/epi/pdf/EF-EPI-2011-Spain.pdf
- Harmer, J. (1991). The practice of English language teaching. London: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2007). How to teach English. UK: Pearson Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2009). How to teach English. UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Kitao, K., & Kitao, S. (1997). Selecting and developing teaching/learning materials. The internet TESL journal, 4 (4).
- Laurillard, D. (2012). Teaching as a design science: building pedagogical patterns for learning and technology. NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Lightbown, P.M., & Spada, N. (1999). How languages are learned. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). Communicative Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press.
- Lopez, M. (2011). ¿Qué hacer ante el bajo rendimiento académico de nuestros niños y adolescentes? Ministerio de Educación Nacional, en Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF)

- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional, (2006). *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: inglés*. Colombia , Imprenta Nacional.
- Moss, D., & Ross-Feldman, L. (2003). *Second language acquisition in adults: From research to practice*. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education.
- Moya, M. (2011). *¿Qué hacer ante el bajo rendimiento académico de nuestros niños y adolescentes?* Ministerio de Educación Nacional, en Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF)
- Nation, P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language teaching. *Asian EFL journal*, 1-8.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology*. Prentice Hall International.
- Ochoa, M. (2005, Junio-Julio). *Tres miradas a la formación docente*. Altablero. Retrieved from <http://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/article-89943.html>
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W. M. (Ed.). (1987). *Interactive language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Robinson, H. A. (1994). *The Ethnography of Empowerment-The Transformative Power of Classroom Interaction*. (2nd Ed.). *Sage Publications*. Newbury Park, U.S.A.
- Rojas, R. (2008). *Pedagogical content knowledge in early childhood: A study of teachers' knowledge*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Loyola University Chicago. Chicago, IL.
- Salvi, S. (2010). *What is Training and Development?* Human Resources, Amherst College.
- Scrivener, J. (2011). *Learning Teaching: The essential guide to English language teaching*. Oxford, UK: Macmillan. 3rd edition.
- Secretaría de Educación y Planeación departamental (2001). *Proyecto de Ordenanza, Política Educativa "Risaralda Bilingüe"*.
- Tamo, D. (2009). *The Use of Authentic Materials in Classrooms*. Retrieved October 15th 2013, from http://www.lcpj.pro/skedaret/1277547685-74_pdfsam_LCPJ,%20Per%20shtyp.pdf
- Tang, J. (2002) , *Using L1 in the English classroom*, *English Teaching Forum*, 40 (1), 36-43
- Tomlinson, B. (2003). *Developing materials for language teaching*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
- Ur, P. (1996) *A Course in Language Teaching. Practice and Theory* Cambridge University Press: CUP
- Walia (2012). *Traditional Teaching Methods vs. CLT: A study*. *Frontiers of language and teaching*. Volumen 3. Retrieved September 17th from https://www.academia.edu/2442163/Traditional_Teaching_Methods_vs._CLT_A_Study

- Widdowson, H. G. (1974). An approach to the teaching of scientific English discourse. *RELC Journal*, 5, 1, 27-40.
- Wright, T. (1987). *Roles of Teachers and Learners*. Oxford University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A (Consent Letter)



Universidad
Tecnológica
de Pereira

01-2144- 03

Pereira, 4 de febrero de 2013

Señor Rector

Institución Educativa

Pereira

(2144-0000-0)

Cordial saludo:

Dentro de las exigencias de la modernidad está el manejo de un idioma común que les permita a los ciudadanos acceder a la información de un mundo globalizado. En Colombia según información del ICFES en el año 2004, el 99% de los estudiantes eligieron el inglés en las pruebas Pre-SABER 11, razón por la cual las instituciones educativas han optado por la enseñanza de este idioma.

Es por ello la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira a través de la Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, han emprendido acciones para el fortalecimiento del inglés como segunda lengua.

Por tal razón se requiere su colaboración y disposición, de acuerdo al compromiso asumido en la visita a cada uno de los núcleos donde se presentó la naturaleza del proyecto, para dar inicio a las entrevistas y observaciones que se realizarán a los coordinadores académicos, profesores del área de inglés, las cuales estarán a cargo del grupo de estudiantes seleccionadas de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, de la licenciatura referida, quienes harán presencia en las Instituciones durante los primeros meses del año 2013.

Le agradezco su colaboración con la cual contribuye al logro de nuestros objetivos académicos.

Coordinador
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa

Anexo: Un folio



Acreditada Institucionalmente de Alta Calidad por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional
NIT: 891.480.035-9 - Apartado Aéreo: 097 - Tel. Conmutador: (57) (6) 313 7300 - Fax: 321 3206
www.utp.edu.co - Pereira (Risaralda) Colombia

Appendix B (Observation Format)



Universidad
Tecnológica
de Pereira



Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira
Proyecto Estado del Arte de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Pereira
Formato de Observación

Colegio: _____		Fecha: ____/____/____	
Observador: _____		Grado a observar: N° ____	Observación N° ____
Factores observados		Descripción	
Setting and classroom layout			
Lesson Plan (sequence, coherence of activities, appropriate to students' level)			
Giving clear instructions			
Teacher's roles			
Students' role			
Students' reaction and attitude			
Teacher's attitude towards the class			
Strategies to maintain discipline			
Use of L1 Teacher and Students			
Use of L2 Teacher and Students			
Patterns of interaction			

Appendix C (Questionnaires)



Universidad
Tecnológica
de Pereira



Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira- Alcaldía de Pereira
Proyecto Estado del Arte de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Pereira
Formato de Observación

1. Name the approaches that you as a teacher use in the English classes

a) When do you use them?

b) How do you implement them?

c) How do students respond to these approaches in terms of motivation, performance, etc?

2. Name the techniques that you as a teacher use in the English classes

a) When do you use them?

b) How do you implement them?

c) What do you perceive when implementing these techniques in class?



Universidad
Tecnológica
de Pereira



3. Name the methods that you as a teacher use in the English classes

a) How do you implement them?

b) What are the students' reactions when you implement these methods?

How do you evaluate/asses your students per skill?

a) Grammar _____

b) Speaking _____

c) Listening _____

d) Writing _____

What materials do you use to assess the students' performance?

**Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira- Alcaldía de Pereira
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa
Grupo de Investigación en Lingüística Aplicada**

Cuestionario Profesor de Inglés

El presente proyecto “El estado del arte de la enseñanza del Inglés en colegios Públicos de Pereira”, está conformado por 12 estudiantes de la Licenciatura de la Lengua Inglesa (LLI) de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. Este proyecto busca específicamente conocer y describir las tendencias metodológicas implementadas en las instituciones educativas en cuanto a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Además se desea conocer la percepción tanto por docentes como por estudiantes.

Su participación y colaboración en esta investigación, contribuirá significativamente a los estudiantes de LLI a desarrollar dicho proyecto con el fin de cumplir con el requisito de proyecto de grado, por consiguiente, agradecemos su colaboración durante el desarrollo de este proyecto.

OBJETIVO

Caracterizar el estado del arte de la enseñanza del inglés en la ciudad de Pereira en instituciones públicas.

INFORMACIÓN ACADÉMICA

1. Estudios realizados

NIVEL LUGAR FECHA TITULO

Bachillerato _____

Pregrado _____

Postgrado _____

EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL

2. Colegio donde Labora _____



Público _____ Dedicación: Medio Tiempo _____ Tiempo Completo _____ Por horas _____

3. Años de experiencia de trabajo:

Entre 1 y 4 años _____ Entre 5 y 10 años _____ Más de 10 años _____

4. Tiempo de experiencia enseñando inglés

Entre 1 y 4 años _____ Entre 5 y 10 años _____ Más de 10 años _____

CAPACITACIÓN Y ACTUALIZACIÓN

5. Cursos de capacitación recibida (Favor indicar los cursos tomados en los últimos cinco años)

NOMBRE CURSO	DURACIÓN	FECHA	ENTIDAD QUE LO REALIZÓ
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

6. ¿Ha mantenido usted contacto con la Universidad después de haber egresado?

SI _____ NO _____ ¿En qué forma?

7. ¿Ha adquirido usted últimamente bibliografía sobre la metodología de la enseñanza del inglés? SI _____ NO _____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

AUTOR	TITULO	AÑO
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

8. ¿Ha adquirido bibliografía en inglés?

SI _____ NO _____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

AUTOR TITULO AÑO



9. ¿En los últimos cinco (5) años ha participado en seminarios o congresos del Área? SI ___ NO ___ ¿Cuáles?

Asistente _____ Ponente _____

TITULO DEL EVENTO	ENTIDAD ORGANIZADORA	FECHA
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

10. ¿Pertenece Usted y/o es socio activo (socio actual) de alguna Asociación Académica?

SI ___ NO ___ ¿CUÁL(ES)?

11. ¿Qué tipo de capacitación considera usted que debe recibir como docente en ejercicio? Especifique

12.Cuál es su opinión sobre el nivel académico en el Área de Inglés de su colegio?

Pésimo ___ Malo ___ Regular ___ Bueno ___ Excelente ___

¿Por qué? (prueba)

13. ¿En qué nivel promedio se ubicaron los estudiantes del grado once en las pruebas de inglés del ICFES del año pasado?

14. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el examen de inglés del ICFES?

15. Mencione los problemas más frecuentes y críticos que usted actualmente enfrenta en la enseñanza y en el aprendizaje del inglés en Bachillerato. Enumérelos en orden de importancia según el grado de seriedad o gravedad.

Planeación de clase

14. ¿Los estudiantes tienen texto guía? SI ___ NO ___

Si la respuesta es SI indique el texto que usan los estudiantes.

TITULO DEL TEXTO	EDITORIAL	AÑO
------------------	-----------	-----

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

¿Si la respuesta es NO, que tipo de materiales utiliza?

15. ¿Qué tipo de libros consulta usted para la preparación de sus clases? ¿Señale en orden de importancia para usted?

AUTOR	AÑO	TITULO
-------	-----	--------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

16. Habilidades en que hace mayor énfasis en sus clases, enumere en orden de importancia.

Listening _____ Reading _____

Speaking _____ Writing _____

17. ¿Qué aspectos tiene en cuenta para diseñar sus clases?

18. ¿Qué estrategias usa para preparar su clase?

19.Cuál de los siguientes métodos utiliza usted en sus clases?

Método de Gramática y Traducción. ___ Suggestopedia ___

Método de Series ___ Enfoque Comunitario ___

Método Directo ___ Enfoque Natural ___

Método de Lectura ___ Método Ecléctico ___

Método Audiovisual ___ "Silent Way" ___

Método Audio lingual ___ Enfoque Cognitivo ___

Método de Aprendizaje de Lenguas en comunidad ___ Enfoque Comunicativo ___

Método de Respuesta Física Total (TPR) ___ ¿Otros? ¿Cuáles?

No sabe ___

20. Para elaborar su programa de inglés, ¿se basa usted en los Estándares de enseñanza del inglés del Ministerio de Educación Nacional? (MEN)? SI ___ NO ___

¿Cómo?

21. Si no se basa en los estándares del MEN, ¿elabora usted el programa de inglés?

Si ___ No ___ ¿cómo lo hace?

¿Con base en un texto? ___

¿Cuál? _____

¿Según sus propios criterios? ___ ¿Cuáles? _____

¿Otros? ___ Especifique _____

22. De los siguientes objetivos señale en orden de importancia (1-2-3-4-5, etc. Siendo el 1 el menor y el 5 el mayor) los planteados por usted en su programa.

_____ Comprender correctamente la lengua hablada.

- _____ Entender un texto escuchado, sobre un tema con el cual este familiarizado.
_____ Hablar el idioma con corrección y seguridad.
_____ Participar en conversaciones sencillas sobre los temas estudiados
_____ Escribir el idioma con corrección y seguridad
_____ Leer y traducir con precisión el material escrito en Inglés, de manera comprensiva analítica y crítica.
_____ Leer comprensivamente con el fin de captar el sentido general de un texto y extraer la información específica.

Otros ¿Cuáles?

MEJORAMIENTO ACADEMICO

23. ¿Practica usted la lengua extranjera? SI _____ NO _____ ¿En qué forma?

24. ¿Ha presentado usted alguna vez algún examen de inglés, para medir su nivel de competencia en lengua extranjera?

SI _____ NO _____ ¿Cuál o Cuáles?

NOMBRE _____ AÑO PUNTAJE _____

12. Cómo considera su nivel de Inglés en este momento?

Bajo _____ Bueno _____

Regular _____ Excelente _____

¿Por qué?

Agradecemos de antemano su colaboración y su autorización para ser participante en el proyecto.

Appendix D (interviews)

Interviews to students:



Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira-Alcaldía de Pereira
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa
Grupo de Investigación en Lingüística Aplicada
Entrevista para los estudiantes

1. Nos gustaría que nos contara acerca de la clase de inglés correspondiente a su grado.

- ¿Describa una clase de inglés de su grado?
- ¿Cuál sería el orden?
- ¿Cuáles son los recursos usados en clase?

2. Recordando el trabajo realizado por los docentes en las clases de inglés, describamos algunos aspectos de las prácticas (no es evaluarlos, es que me describa sus cualidades y aspectos por mejorar).

- ¿Cuáles crees que son las mayores cualidades de la clase?
- ¿Qué aspectos mejoraría de la clase?
- ¿Qué sugerencias le haría a la clase?

3. Hablemos de su aprendizaje del inglés.

- ¿Cuál es la lengua usada en clase?
- ¿Cómo piensa que es su conocimiento del inglés?
- ¿Cómo referencia su conocimiento, dónde la usa?
- ¿Cómo practica el inglés? ¿usa lo visto en clase?

Interviews to English teachers



1. ¿Profesor, cuál es el método más en sus clases de inglés y por qué?
2. ¿Qué aspectos positivos y negativos le ve usted al uso de ese método usado en una clase?
3. ¿Cómo controla usted la disciplina en clase?
4. ¿Hacen los estudiantes caso al usted tratar de controlar la disciplina?
5. ¿Qué tipo de indisciplina ve usted en clase?
6. ¿Qué puede percibir usted como docente ante la actitud de los estudiantes en clase?
7. ¿Porque cree usted que los estudiantes no ponen atención a las clases de inglés?
8. ¿Qué tipo de actividad usa usted para llamar la atención de los estudiantes?
9. ¿Cuál cree usted que es el motivo del bajo nivel académico de los estudiantes en inglés?
10. ¿Qué tiene usted en cuenta para planear sus clases?
11. ¿Cuándo es el momento de empezar a explicar la clase, cómo hace usted como docente para mantener atraída la atención de los estudiantes?

Appendix E (English proficiency levels that Colombian students should be able to reach at the end of each grade or program)

Tabla No. 1

NIVELES SEGÚN EL MARCO COMÚN EUROPEO	NOMBRE COMÚN DEL NIVEL EN COLOMBIA	NIVEL EDUCATIVO EN EL QUE SE ESPERA DESARROLLAR CADA NIVEL DE LENGUA	METAS PARA EL SECTOR EDUCATIVO A 2019
A1	Principiante	Grados 1 a 3	
A2	Básico	Grados 4 a 7	
B1	Pre intermedio	Grados 8 a 11	• Nivel mínimo para el 100% de los egresados de Educación Media.
B2	Intermedio	Educación Superior	• Nivel mínimo para docentes de inglés. • Nivel mínimo para profesionales de otras carreras.
C1	Pre avanzado		• Nivel mínimo para los nuevos egresados de licenciaturas en idiomas.
C2	Avanzado		

6
|

Tabla No. 2

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

10
|

<p>GRADOS</p> <p>1 a 3</p> <p>Básica Primaria</p> <p>Principiante (A1)</p>	PRIMERO A TERCERO	Principiante	A 1
	CUARTO A QUINTO	Básico 1	A 2.1
	SEXTO A SÉPTIMO	Básico 2	A 2.2
	OCTAVO A NOVENO	Pre intermedio 1	B 1.1
	DÉCIMO A UNDÉCIMO	Pre intermedio 2	B 1.2

Appendix F (CEFR)

Table 1. *Common Reference Levels: global scale*

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.