

**FIRST STEPS TOWARDS CHANGE: AN APPROACH TO ENGLISH ASSESSMENT
PURPOSES, TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND WASHBACK IN THE BACHELOR OF
ARTS IN MODERN LANGUAGES AT PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA**

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Bogotá, 2014

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Research Study to obtain a Bachelor degree on Modern Languages

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ABSTRACT

This research study aims at inquiring what are the assessment purposes language teachers have and the possible washback these purposes imply for the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. This study is intended to identify and describe when assessment is carried out; how language teachers assess and what they assess according to their purposes. Finally, it intends to contrast these purposes with the students' responses. The researchers draw on relevant literature to develop a theoretical framework which includes Assessment, Assessment purposes (assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning), and washback (impact, feedback and responses). It also draws on data collected through semi-structured interviews addressed to English teachers and students from the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages; non-participant classroom observations and elicitation techniques based on metaphors and images related to assessment. Findings indicate that formal assessment and informal assessment are the most common techniques used by teachers at the Bachelor. Likewise, the aforementioned techniques are related to the assessment purposes *of* learning and assessment purposes *for* learning. In addition to this, the assessment moments and the topics assessed are related to established practice. As a final point, washback in learning and washback in teaching are associated with students' responses, students' results and the negative or positive impact that are reflected during the assessment process.

KEYWORDS: Assessment, types of assessment, assessment purposes, washback.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research study presents an identification and description of assessment purposes language teachers have and the possible kind of Washback these might have on the students' responses in the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

The idea to carry out this study came up from our personal experience related to assessment because we consider that there is a problem in terms of how students and language teachers perceive the assessing practices, this problematic was reflected on three interviews addressed to language teachers, L2 students and students from the seminar 'Pedagogía y Didáctica 3' and it is presented on the 'Statement of the problem'. In addition, some of the aspects related to assessment also called our attention since this topic as a whole is regarded as a relevant, but also controversial component that makes part of the second language acquisition process. For that reason, the purpose of this study is to identify and describe the assessment purposes language teachers have and the way washback affects teaching and learning practices in the English Department at the major.

The data collection was done through three different instruments that allowed us to have a closer perspective about the way assessment is carried out at different English levels; also we could see how language teachers and L2 students perceive assessment. Through the use of semi-structured interviews addressed to nine language teachers and ten students; as well as non-participant classroom observations were undertaken at different moments in which formal and informal assessment were seen. Furthermore, elicitation techniques (images & metaphors) were addressed to nine teachers and thirty three students from different English levels. Postliminary, the data gathered was codified through the use of the software Atlas.ti, in order to analyze and interpret the qualitative data gathered. This software is a helpful tool that segments data into meaning units (concepts, categories and themes) labeled according to the researchers and their study. With the aim of presenting the whole process done in this research study, we now introduce the five chapters that compose this study.

In the first chapter, the problematic situation is stated from two perspectives, the specialized literature and the real context. This problematic revolves around how traditional assessment does not integrate the different learning styles, how there is a 'cognitive tension'

between teachers' beliefs and their practice and finally, how the established practices also affect the way assessment is carried out. The aforementioned lead us to define our research question and our objectives where the identification and description of the assessment purposes language teachers have and the how these might have an effect on the students' responses is the main goal. The importance of this research study is presented in the rationale and connected with the background studies of Cheng, Rogers and Hu (2004); Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández & Ortiz Navarrete (2012); López Mendoza and Bernal Arandia (2009); Muñoz, Palacio and Escobar (2011); Niño Ardila and Molano Calderón (2013) and Castro Acosta (2009). These background studies present an international, national and local perspective about the problematic of assessment.

In the second chapter, the theoretical framework is presented together with the main concepts related to the language assessment aspect. The concepts of Assessment, Assessment Purposes and Washback are the axis of this research study. Related to Assessment authors that help us conceptualize this concept are Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) and Chapelle & Brindley (2002). Authors such as Earl & Katz (2006) present the basic concepts related to Assessment Purposes. Finally, Hughes (2003) and Pan (2009) clarify the concept of Washback. In the third chapter, we present the methodological framework that include the participants (nine English teachers and thirty three L2 students), the data gathering tools (semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations and elicitation techniques), the institutional framework and the ethical considerations that are taken into account in our research study.

In the fourth chapter, we present the corresponding analysis of the data gathered taken from the different instruments. The categories previously presented on the theoretical framework and two new categories (situational/effectiveness & emotional response) that emerged during this analysis process are used as a starting point for the analysis. Lastly, in the fifth chapter, we picture some conclusions taken from the results and the analysis and that answer our research questions following the objectives established. We also present the limitations of this study and some questions that might lead our readers to a reflection about assessment.

It is relevant to acknowledge that the data gathered allow us to identify and describe the different assessment purposes language teachers have and how washback affects both the

teaching and learning practices at the English Department in the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, being as we consider the first steps towards change in the assessment field.

Finally, according to the “Documento de Currículo” (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004) our research study suits the 1th modality because it includes a reflective analysis about a specific subject related to the central topics of our degree, and whose final result will be presented as a written report. Lastly, our research study follows the research line of language, learning and teaching.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to López Mendoza & Bernal Arandia (2009), classroom assessment is an integral part of the language learning process and a powerful informed decision-making tool. Classroom assessment seeks to reveal students' critical-thinking and evaluation skills by asking them to complete open-ended tasks that often take more than one class period to complete. Based on our academic training, we are aware that for a long time the way of assessing a second language has its basis on the traditional paper based tests. In that sense, these types of test do not lead to the development of a critical thinking; therefore, it does not reflect the real L2 knowledge of the students.

Language testing in Colombia is based on the educational and linguistic policies established by the CEF (Common European Framework), which aims at the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. The CEF becomes the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice. This Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis (Council of Europe, 2012).

These policies were incorporated in Colombia in 2004 by the Ministry of Education (MEN) in its "National Bilingual Program 2004-2019", which strengthens the communicative competence in English in the entire education system and incorporates the use of new technologies for learning a second language. This program now is called "Proyecto de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras" that endeavors to train citizens for communication purposes according to the international standards, so they can be part of the universal communication processes, the global economy and the cultural opening (Ministerio de Educación, 2013).

This national program stated above established the different language proficiency levels that also include how to assess each level. These policies are not only addressed to college students, but also to professionals. The Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana is one the first academic programs with more than forty two years of experience training high quality teachers in the field of language teaching. This program has been

recognized by the 'Ministerio de Educación' and the 'Consejo Nacional de Acreditación' as one of best programs in Colombia due to its high standards in language teaching education (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2009).

Furthermore, there are other educational policies stated in the curriculum of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana related to assessment. In this case, assessment in L2 will be divided into formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment requires feedback which indicates the existence of a 'gap' between the actual levels of the work being assessed and the required standard. Moreover, summative assessment is a judgment which encapsulates all the evidence up to a given point (Taras, 2005).

In formative assessment are included: portfolios, self-assessment, quizzes, group work and participation of the students. In addition, in this type of assessment, the criteria, the aspects to be evaluated, as well as the percentages assigned to each of the previous aspects will be established by mutual agreement between the participants of the learning process: the teachers and the students. In terms of summative assessment, students will receive an oral and a written feedback about their performance (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004).

In general, the pedagogical practices including assessment that are present in the L2 classroom are determined by the language teachers' beliefs and the students' perceptions. There is evidence that teachers' beliefs on teaching and learning exert an influence on the way they teach and assess learning, and on what students learn. Therefore, it is central that overt attention is devoted to the perceptions teachers have and how they influence teaching and learning (Muñoz, Palacio, & Escobar, 2011).

In terms of students' perception as stated by Cuesta (2000), the perceptions arise before the actions and allow the individual to 'gain experience', an experience that will impact on future perceptions. Also, the author states that once you have learned from the experience, thinking and reflection provide the space to identify and interpret new perceptual contents allowing the development of more complex perceptual processes. In that sense, the perceptions about assessment are different one from another since the students' experiences are different.

In order to get a closer view about the perceptions and beliefs that L2 students and language teachers have on assessment, three type of surveys were developed by the researchers in the

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, in which 14 students (from second to eighth semester), 13 students from the course of *Pedagogía y Didáctica III* and 7 language teachers were polled.

The majority of polled students (64%), who were from second to eighth semester consider that assessment is an essential element of language learning because in the first place, it allows measuring the knowledge acquired by the students throughout the course. Secondly, this helps L2 students to develop the ability of self-assessment and in that sense the students improve their academic performance based on the identification of their own weaknesses. Nevertheless, some students (36%) agreed that assessment does not enhance their learning process because it does not show completely the students' knowledge about the L2 leading to produce a negative impact on the students' self-esteem. Based on this, there is some tension between the expected role of assessment in the L2 learning process and its perception given by the L2 students.

This supports the idea of Pan (2009) who has found as a problematic fact that language assessment tests have an impact on the students, this impact could be either positive or negative due to the important role these tests play in the language learning process. This impact is called 'Washback' defined by Alderson & Wall (in López Mendoza & Bernal Arandia, 2009) as the effects that tests have on teaching and learning.

Moreover, the issue about the impact of assessment practices on the students could be connected to the language assessment in Colombia. In the research study conducted by López, Pacheco and Peralta, it is stated that based on *Saber 11 English exam* the language assessment in the schools of our country is centered on skills such as grammar, reading and vocabulary while the other skills speaking, listening and writing are not being assessed (López, Pacheco, & Peralta, 2011). The previous issue is reflected on the English courses at Javeriana University. The survey results revealed that 37% of the polled students pointed out that language courses emphasize on the grammatical and lexical aspects rather than on other skills and for that reason, vocabulary and grammar are their strong points at the time to be assessed.

Related to the way assessment is carried out as a division of skills, this leads some students (42%) to state that sometimes the questions about reading comprehension are easier and they have more time to reflect upon the questions, different from the ones of other skills, such as writing and listening. Taking into account this assessment process in some English levels, it

could be stated that there is a problematic perception since assessment of the language learning process involve a deeper and a more committed process instead of focusing the attention on specific elements or skills of the second language (Ahumada, 2001).

In relation with the types of test, there is also a conflict between the students' perceptions about the traditional paper-pencil test and the alternative ways of assessing such as videos, essays, and presentations, among others. Some of the polled students (64%) took a different test from the traditional paper-pencil tests and agreed on the fact that it was a positive, productive and less stressful experience because they did not feel in any moment the pressure that they usually feel when they take a test. The students claimed that this experience also allowed them to easily demonstrate a better performance in the language skills in which they were being assessed. The previous results show that the L2 students' feelings, the teachers' beliefs and the conditions of test taking affect the results students might obtain on their tests (Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete, 2012). These students also stated that they feel more comfortable, relaxed and free of tensions because they have more time to take the exam and also have a great variety of tools that allow them to achieve better results.

Another issue concerns the relation between the students' needs and the assessment process. All of the polled students (13) who took the course of 'Pedagogía y Didáctica III'¹ considered that the traditional paper based test focuses more on attaining the class objectives and the curriculum goals rather than considering the different learning styles of the students, which implies the use of diverse strategies to assess. This supports the idea of Rodríguez Ochoa (2007) and Melgarejo (2010) who considered as a problematic issue the fact that traditional assessment practices do not lead to the development of a student-centered process.

However, 8 out of 13 polled students (62%) indicated that not only the students' needs are relevant in the assessment process, but also the objectives, contents of the course, and teachers' needs. The previous statement could be explained by the fact that some teachers might have to fulfill the linguistic and educational policies established in the curriculum of the institution they

¹ This seminar aims to provide theoretical and practical tools to participants for L2 evaluation and tests design. It also aims to build knowledge about the evaluation, the design and implementation of tests to measure the competency in a L2. Finally, the seminar pursues that the participants design items for particular contexts of L2 learning and analyzing their pedagogical implications as part of the evaluation processes in the L2. (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2009)

work for. Nevertheless, the authors mentioned above argue that tests decisions are based on a holistic process that involves the analysis and recollection of students' interest and needs in order to achieve the assessment goals.

All the polled teachers considered that assessment practices have an impact on their students. On one hand, it could be seen as a positive impact when feedback of the test allows the students to have more autonomy and be more aware of their learning process. On the other hand, it could be negative when tests are seen as an imposition. In that sense, students reflect a lack of commitment, since they do not find test meaningful for their future. In the same line of thought Pan (2009) and Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete (2012) agree on the problematic fact that assessment practices such as language assessment tests have an impact on students' tests results; therefore, that will be reflected on the students' language learning process.

In addition, for most of the polled teachers (71%) assessment is a helpful tool that could improve their students' learning process and could help them to make an evaluation about the methodology they use in their L2 classes. Nonetheless, it is possible that students' needs are underestimated in the assessment process due to the fact that language teachers may have to follow a program established by the institution. In addition, teachers might take test decisions based on his/her beliefs about assessment and sometimes it means that students are not necessarily included in these decisions; hence, students do not feel as part of this process.

Based on the previous information, we argue that there is somehow an unbalanced relation among the teachers' beliefs and the students' perceptions about assessment. These perceptions and beliefs are influenced by the conditions of test-taking, the type of test, and the results students get. Furthermore, factors such as students' learning styles and alternative ways of assessing are not enough considered and sometimes overlooked by different causes such as the curriculum or teachers' beliefs. In that sense, we consider that it is important to inquire about the assessment purposes teacher have and the way washback have an impact on the L2 students' performance and the teaching practice.

a. RESEARCH QUESTION

Taking all into account; this research study aims to inquire what assessment purposes language teachers have and what is the possible Washback these purposes imply for the Bachelor of Modern Languages in the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana?

b. OBJECTIVES

i. General Objective

- To find out what are the purposes language teachers have towards assessment and the possible kind of washback these might have on the students' responses.

ii. Specific Objectives

- To identify and describe when assessment is carried out according to the teachers' purposes.
- To identify and describe how language teachers assess according to their purposes.
- To identify and describe what language teachers assess on their classes according to their purposes.
- To contrast these previous aspects with the L2 students' responses towards them.

c. RATIONALE

This research study came up from the academic assessment experience that we have had as L2 students in the BA of Modern Languages. Issues such as assessment practices, test taking conditions, type of tests and test impact were very appealing for us throughout our training process as future language teachers. Likewise, our research study emerged due to the interest to contribute to the development and improvement of the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. We expect to accomplish that through the identification and analysis of the assessment purposes language teachers have and of the washback these imply in the teaching and learning practices of the English Department.

Assessment as part of the teaching and learning process involves not only language teachers, but also L2 students. Therefore, this study will benefit positively these two agents since the findings of our analysis will allow them to understand based on the assessment purposes how assessment is designed, when it is carried out and what is actually assessed in the English department of the major. Equally, our research study presents a reliable background together with relevant theoretical concepts that help them to be aware of the existence of gaps between what is established in the English Department and what happens in the regular English classrooms.

The analysis and results of this research study may influence future decisions concerning the selection criteria for implementing strategies and assessment practices in the English classroom. Hence, this research study could be taken into consideration in the curriculum of the major, which is evaluated and updated periodically in accordance with the trends and needs of today's world, so that it reflects criteria of flexibility, students' autonomy and interdisciplinary approach in the field of language learning (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014).

Beyond the contributions that this research study may offer to the educational community of the English language program, we aim to be faithful to what is expected from us as future language teachers: "lead and promote changes in the field of language teaching and Modern Language learning" (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014). This includes the development of critical thinking that allows us to participate in the process of continuous improvement that characterizes the quality of our university.

Our research study becomes a significant contribution to the Bachelor of Arts of Modern Languages since the findings through the analysis will help the community to identify and understand the kind of purposes that languages teachers take into consideration when it comes to assess their L2 students' performance. Lastly, our research study follows the research line of language, learning and teaching.

d. BACKGROUND

In order to accomplish this research study, it is important to have a closer view about the way in which assessment, beliefs, purposes and responses have been regarded by several research studies. Next are referenced some of these studies from a global to a local perspective taking into consideration the way the researchers carry out their own studies (methodology, objectives, instruments, results, population, and possible unsolved questions).

From an international perspective, the research study we found is related to the purposes, methods, and procedures of assessment. The research study was conducted by Liying Cheng (Queen's University) & Todd Rogers and Huiqin Hu (University of Alberta). It is entitled <<ESL=EFL instructors' classroom assessment practices: purposes, methods, and procedures>> (2004). This study reports a comparative survey conducted in English Second Language =English Foreign Language contexts represented by Canadian ESL, Hong Kong ESL=EFL, and Chinese EFL. The population used was 267 ESL or EFL instructors. Related to the methodological framework, the researchers used three different instruments as follows: a survey questionnaire, three samples that represented, respectively, three ESL=EFL instructional settings: an English-dominant setting, a bilingual (English and Cantonese) setting, and a Mandarin-dominant settings. In each of these locations, ESL=EFL instructors were sent a questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope. Finally, descriptive analyses were used to summarize the bio-demographic information provided by the instructors.

The authors' findings were divided into purposes, methods and procedures; each one of these is divided into other aspects. Related to the purposes of assessment and evaluation, these were organized by three underlying constructs: student-centered where the purposes were to obtain information on the students' progress; to provide feedback to their students as they progress through the course; to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in the students; to determine final grades for the students; and to motivate their students to learn. Related to instructional purposes the authors found that instructors used the results of their student assessments and evaluations to plan and improve their own instruction; to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching and instruction or even to group their students for instructional purposes. Finally, related to administrative purposes, findings show that some instructors provided assessment and

evaluation information to their central administration and others provided assessment and evaluation information to an outside funding agency.

In terms of methods, findings show that the assessment methods for reading, writing, and speaking-listening could be categorized into: instructor-made assessment methods; student-conducted assessment methods and standardized testing in reading, writing, and speaking-listening. It is important to clarify that the instructor-made assessment methods in the research study are those assessment methods designed and administered by instructors, whereas student-conducted assessment methods are those that directly involve students' participation in the assessment process (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu, 2004). Finally, the procedures instructors used to assess and evaluate the students were divided on the source of assessment items and tasks, the time students spent on assessment and evaluation and the methods for providing feedback and reporting (that according to the findings could be given either during the course or as a final report). This study presents the assessment purposes that tend to be overlooked. Furthermore, this study presents one of the main concepts of our research study, which are assessment purposes. Likewise, these assessment purposes are divided in three categories (student centered-instructional-administrative). This division enlightens us to have a relevant organization for the assessment purposes we identify and describe along our research study.

In the same line of thought, we would like to argue that teachers' beliefs have an important role related to assessment and assessment decisions. For that reason, a research study from an international perspective is <<The English Teacher: His Beliefs about English Language Assessment at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Levels>>. This research study was conducted by Claudio Díaz Larenas, Paola Alarcón Hernández & Mabel Ortiz Navarrete (2012). This study aims at identifying beliefs about English language assessment stating that the learning and teaching evaluation at primary, secondary and tertiary levels is based on the traditional process of assessing students by final tests and written tests. The population used was a group of thirty Chilean teachers from primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In methodological terms, this research is a multiple case study that uses as instruments a semi-structured interview, autobiographical diaries and a Likert questionnaire², whose data were interpreted through a

²Likert questionnaire is a questionnaire where the scales use fixed choice response formats and are designed to measure attitudes or opinions.

software called 'Atlas.ti' that analyzed the semantic content of the informants' beliefs about assessment.

According to the authors' findings, there is a speech characterized by the 'teaching ideals', this means the teacher reflects on their speech the 'must be' of the assessment process. According to Brown (2004) (in Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete, 2012) these are called 'cognitive tensions'. In addition, the researchers found that the teachers' statements reflect an absence of an authentic assessment, which main goal is to measure the performance of the students on communicative tasks. According to Scrivener (2005) (in Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete, 2012) some examples of authentic assessment are portfolios, essays, autobiographic diaries, among others.

Finally, according to the authors the data provided by the teachers of the three educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) reflected a rather interesting fact about how English learning assessment was carried out. Both primary and secondary teachers display linguistic and pedagogical beliefs that pointed mainly to a fragmented language evaluation system, teachers assess vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation through the use of written tests. Nevertheless, Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete (2012) stated that when querying teachers about their beliefs, it is possible to find that they tend to move away from their performance in the classroom. In many cases there are tensions between their discourse and their classroom performance.

This research study is valuable because it presents an approximation to the L2 assessment phenomena from a qualitative perspective. This study allows other studies to be carried out where a comparison between the teachers' discourse and their pedagogical action can be done. It will contribute to determine the level of consistency and inconsistency between what teachers claim to do when they evaluate and what they actually do when they designed and implemented an evaluation tool.

These research studies allow us to get a general perspective about how researchers analyze and carry out studies related to assessment. Now we would like to present some local research studies related to assessment. Regarding a local panorama, there is a remarkable research study about language testing in Colombia. This study called <<Language Testing in Colombia: A Call for

More Teacher Education and Teacher Training in Language Assessment>> was conducted in 2009 by two Colombian language professors: Alexis A. López Mendoza and Ricardo Bernal Arandia. They inquired about the Colombian English language teachers' perceptions about classroom assessment and also about the way Colombian English teachers use language assessment in the classroom. Methodologically speaking, the researchers used an online qualitative survey addressed to eighty-two English teachers in order to get the participants' perspectives, experiences and concerns about language assessment. The curricula from 27 undergraduate programs and seven graduate programs aimed at training English language teachers in Colombia was also used in order to obtain information about the number of language assessment courses offered in Colombian institutions.

As a result, the researchers found that the perspective of teachers who have had formal training in language assessment differ from the ones who have not had a formal training. While teachers with training tend to view assessment as a powerful tool to guide the students' learning process, teachers with no training in language assessment tend to view it as a means to give a grade or to make judgments about the students. With regard to the university programs, the findings show that there are very few private and public universities with education programs that offer courses on language assessment or assessment in general. Finally, in terms of using language assessment in the classroom the researchers found that there is a tendency to use traditional assessment instead of alternative assessment.

The aforementioned leads to the following conclusions: 1) Classroom assessment in English teaching in Colombia tends to be more summative than formative. 2) There is a need to have an adequate training in language assessment, which should be offered through language assessment courses by the universities. 3) Having a proper education and training of teachers will help change teachers' perceptions about language assessment. "If teachers have a positive view of assessment, they will be able to select or design appropriate assessment procedures for their context and students that will allow the assessments to provide useful information" (López Mendoza & Bernal Arandia, 2009)

The next noteworthy local research study focuses its attention on the teachers' beliefs and their perceptions about assessment. The study called <<Teachers' Beliefs about Assessment in an EFL Context in Colombia>> was carried out by Ana Patricia Muñoz, Marcela Palacio and Liliana

Escobar in 2011. In general, the study aimed to examine not only teachers' perceptions about assessment, but also their beliefs and practices about the assessment systems used at a language center of a private university in Medellin, Colombia.

In terms of methodology, sixty two teachers (30 females and 32 males) who work in the Language Center's adult English program participated in this research study. Moreover, the researchers used surveys, interviews, and a written report of experiences in order to explore teachers' belief about oral and writing assessment practices. Both the process of data collection and data analysis were based on Brown's four major conceptions of assessment purposes (Muñoz, Palacio, & Escobar, 2011).

The findings indicated that the Language Center teachers believe that assessment improves teaching and learning, and that the LC assessment tools are trustworthy, reliable, accurate and well accepted by students. According to the researchers, there is a tendency to relate assessment to summative purposes. However, the percentages of teachers who agreed with the summative approach are lower than the percentages of teachers who viewed assessment as a tool to be used for formative purposes. Based on the previous results, it could be said that there is a discrepancy between what teachers say they do and what they believe; therefore, the researchers conclude suggesting that there is a need for reflection, self-assessment and more guidance on formative assessment practices.

Taking both the international and local perspective into account, we could see in general terms that assessment is a complex aspect for teachers since some of them have an image about assessment and its role in the L2 learning process that differs from what they do in the classroom. In order to get a closer perspective about this problematic in our context we want to introduce some research studies that had been carried out at PUJ.

In regards to a more specific context, there is a recent research study done in the BA in Modern Languages at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. The study called <<Configuración de las prácticas evaluativas en los cursos de francés de la licenciatura en lenguas modernas de la pontificia universidad javeriana>> was conducted by Shirly Lissette Niño Ardila and Paula Fernanda Molano Calderón, two students from the major, during the years 2012-2013.

This study aimed at determining how students and teachers set evaluation practices that are conducted in the French courses of the Bachelor. This qualitative research study made use of semi-structured interviews, non-participatory observations, and computer software called 'Atlas Ti' was used in order to obtain and analyze the data and the results. A total of 5 language teachers and 12 L2 students participated in this study.

The researchers found that students and teachers set evaluation practices of the French courses based on two concepts: The types of assessment and the Washback (that could be either positive or negative). Likewise, findings showed that both language teachers and L2 students mainly set the evaluation practices based on the grade. The interesting fact here is how the grade, that belongs to the summative assessment, is the most convincing form to set the evaluation practices, but at the same time it has a negative Washback on the students. So, it could be said that the way students set the summative assessment is related to a negative Washback on the students' learning process.

Once again the researchers of this study agree with the authors of the two previous research studies about the importance of having a suitable training in the assessment field since it is transcendental for a language teacher to get to know how a learning process should be assessed. This assessment training also enables teachers to become aware of the principles of validity and reliability in the designing of tests.

It is also important to have a perspective about what the previous work that had been done in the English Department was. For that reason following the same university context, there is another research study called <<Percepciones de la comunidad de la licenciatura en lenguas modernas de la pontificia universidad Javeriana respecto a los exámenes TOEFL, IELTS Y CAE durante el periodo 2005-2008>> carried out by the ex alumni Francisco Castro Acosta during the years 2008-2009. This study aimed to explore and describe the perceptions of some of the members of the educational community of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at Javeriana University about the TOEFL, IELTS and CAE exams required as a graduation condition of the major since 2005.

Methodologically speaking, this is across descriptive-exploratory research study in which the three tests (TOEFL, IELTS y CAE) were analyzed and three similar semi-structured surveys

were conducted and addressed to a specific group (five language teacher, fifteen L2 students, and thirteen ex alumni) in order to gather information about the perceptions that each group has about the three English international tests. After designing the instruments, the researcher made a pilot testing of those in order to modify and make clear some survey questions. Additionally, the surveys addressed to language teachers and ex alumni were conducted by an online platform.

As a result of the data analysis, the researcher found that although the three groups have different perceptions about the three English international tests, the entire surveyed population think that the preparation for each test have an influence on the results. Likewise, taking these tests makes the students feel anxious and under pressure due to the possible consequences that may result in failing the tests such as postponing the graduation ceremony and paying another English international test. This leads students to study the format of the test in order to potentiate their skills and recognize their deficiencies and limitations.

Furthermore, teachers believe that test results have an impact on the academic and professional performance of students since these tests determine the students' English proficiency levels. The above said demonstrates a clear existence of the washback phenomena in the English classes created by the consequences of test-taking and achieving the required result. However, it was not possible to determine the type of washback on the use of standardized tests in the English courses due to the type of research that was conducted.

Taking the previous research studies into account, we would like to clarify the main aspects these research studies left us related to the frequent methodology researchers carried out, the conclusions that the researchers obtained through their research studies, the population used. And finally, some aspects of these research studies that were not covered and the information gaps such as students' perceptions and beliefs about assessment and the small number of participants.

Based on these research studies, we could observe that there are some tendencies methodologically speaking that the researchers used to follow. Most of the instruments that the authors of the previous research studies tended to implement in order to collect and analyze the specific data were: Likert scales, structured and semi-structured interviews, online surveys and computer software (Atlas Ti). Likewise, in terms of population the research studies focus their attention on the language teachers (their beliefs and perceptions) rather than on the L2 students.

Additionally, most of the researchers found out that there is a contradiction between what the teachers' belief about assessment and what they actually do in their classroom assessment. In other words, the teachers' beliefs about assessment differ from their practices. However, some of the findings of these studies agree on the fact that the more knowledge and training teacher have in the assessment field, the better they perceive and understand the assessment process. For that reason, most of the researchers promote through their research studies a significant and appropriate training in the field of assessment for the language teachers and the L2 students.

Our research study aims at identifying what are the purposes language teachers have towards assessment and the possible kind of washback these might have on the students' responses and teaching practice. In order to do that, we identify and describe how, what and when assessment is carried out according to the teacher's purposes. We include a population group that consists of teachers and students from different English levels. At the end, this research study will get a closer approach to how assessment is reflected on the English Department at the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the English department.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section introduces the basic concepts that allow us to develop and accomplish the objectives of our research study that aims at inquiring what are the assessment purposes language teachers have and what is the possible washback these purposes imply at the English Department in the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages. There are three main categories that weave the most important concepts of this research study. The first category is assessment; the second category is assessment purposes and the third one is washback. In each one of the corresponding categories, there is an introduction supported by different authors.

Before introducing these categories, it is necessary to state that the discipline that underlines our research study is Applied Linguistic, which is a broad and exciting interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on language in use, connecting our knowledge about languages with an understanding of how they are used in the real world. The field of Applied linguistics works in diverse research areas including second-language acquisition (SLA), teaching English as a second or other language (TESOL), workplace communication, language planning and policy, and language identity and gender to name just a few. Many applied linguists also work in related fields such as education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Pennycook, 2010).

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, it is defined as “the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching and the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems, such as lexicography, translation, speech pathology, etc.”. (Pennycook, 2010, p. 2) Having this in mind, Applied Linguistics is an area of work that deals with a wide range of issues related to the language use in professional settings, that is why Applied Linguistics research studies tend to be interdisciplinary.

On the field of Applied Linguistic there are different domains, but the one that is most important for this research study is Language Testing. We acknowledge that Critical Language Testing implies the need to develop critical strategies to examine the uses and consequences of test. (Pennycook, 2010, p. 13) For that reason, the analysis of data of our research study is based on a critical perspective; this implies a continuous reflection between thought and action, establishing micro and macro connections and gaining a deeper understanding of specific phenomena. (Pennycook in Sanchez, 2007, p. 100) It is important to clarify that before considering the impact that language tests have, it is necessary to understand that tests make part of a broader category that is assessment.

After presenting a brief examination of the Applied Linguistic term, we proceed to develop the concept of assessment in order to understand what types of assessment are there, whether if it is formal or informal; formative or summative. These previous types of assessment lead us to observe how teachers link their assessment purposes with the most common assessment practices. In addition, other concepts related to assessment are taken into account such as self-assessment, peer assessment, test and portfolios. Later, we mention the most representative types of purposes that are presented in the assessment process.

Finally, we extend the concept of washback based on different authors such as Arthur Hughes, Linda Taylor and Alan Davies that present important characteristics about Washback and the impact it has on students. Lastly, this concept is connected with the students' responses based on the work of Phillip Schlechty (2002) about the 'theory of engagement'.

a. Assessment

Assessment is the first theoretical category that embraces some of the main concepts for this research study. Therefore, different authors are mentioned in order to clarify the specific concepts and consequently establish a theoretical support that is used throughout this research work.

According to Chapelle & Brindley (2002), “assessment refers to the act of collecting information and making judgments about the language learner knowledge of a language and the ability to use it”(p.267). Many people use the term in a broader sense to include both formal measurement tools, which produce quantifiable scores and other types of qualitative assessment, such as observation journals and portfolios.

Another perspective of assessment is the one stated by McNamara (in Derakhshan, Rezaei, & Alemi, 2011) who defines it as “any deliberate, sustained and explicit reflection by teachers (and by learners) on the qualities of a learner’s work can be thought of as a kind of assessment” (p.177). The author further demonstrates that whereas most performance assessment procedures require such reflection as a key component, it should not be confined to those contexts in which formal reports or whole-class comparisons (class tests) are involved. Instead, teachers and learners can engage in systematic reflection on the characteristics of an individual performance as an aid to the formulation of learning goals in a variety of contexts.

Furthermore, Brown & Hudson (in Derakhshan, Rezaei, & Alemi, 2011) claim that “credibility, auditability, multiple tasks, rater training, clear criteria, and triangulation of any decision-making procedures along with varied sources of data are important ways to improve the reliability and validity of any assessment procedures used in any educational institution” (p.175). Thus,

assessment should be considered as the gathering and use of information from a systematic collection process that is undertaken for the purpose of improving learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

Additionally, Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) claim that “assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning cycle; this means in an interactive, communicative curriculum, assessment is almost constant” (p.16). The authors state the following principles:

Periodic assessments, both formal and informal, can increase motivation by serving as milestones of student progress. Appropriate assessments aid in the reinforcement and retention of information. Assessments can confirm areas of strength and pinpoint areas needing further work. Assessment can provide a sense of periodic closure to modules within a curriculum. Assessment can promote student autonomy by encouraging student’s self-evaluation of their progress. Assessment can spur learners to set goals for themselves and finally, assessment can aid in evaluating teaching effectiveness. (p.16)

In the same line of thought, McKay (2006) claims that assessment encourages and motivates learners. Teachers and assessors of young learners have found ways to structure assessment procedures to encourage children by showing them what they have learned and to give positive feedback, motivating them to succeed. The author also claims that assessment should both promote and monitor children’s ability to enter into the new discourses relevant to the language they are studying, whether they are predominantly the discourses of social communication for present and future encounters with native speakers, and/or the discourses of the classroom and of the content areas they are learning.

Effective assessment benefits both teachers and students. It gives educators feedback in the teaching and learning process, informing the next teaching decision and giving guidance on how

students should be optimally placed. And also, “effective assessment gives students knowledge of their own progress, giving them feedback on what they have done well or perhaps misunderstood and from time to time providing some ‘creative tension’ to motivate them to study harder”. (McKay, 2006, p. 16) Something important that the author adds is that assessment is not always effective and it can play a subversive role in the lives of children. The effect of assessment may be positive or negative, depending on a number of factors, ranging from the way the assessment procedure or test is constructed, to the way it is used.

After regarding assessment as a general process, it is appropriate to introduce the concept of Assessment in L2 due to the fact that we are students of a major that focuses on the second language acquisition, second language learning and second language teaching. Assessment in L2 could be defined as an informal way to do a continuous follow up of the students’ process, whose main purpose is to analyze and take decisions about the teachers’ practice, the assessment practices as well as reinforce the topic of the class. “Assessment is an essential element that makes part of the teaching and learning process, which should be an ongoing instrument of the L2 classroom”. (Hancock in Niño Ardila & Molano Calderón, 2013, p. 35)

Having that in mind, the types of assessment could be classified depending on the purpose or the function itself. In the case of informal assessment, “it is used unplanned comments and responses that go hand in hand with coaching and other impromptu feedback, so the students become aware of their classroom performance. Teachers tend to use phrases such as “Nice job” or “Well done” in order to reflect how informal assessment is carried out”. (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 5) On the other hand, systematic, planned, sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement are implemented in the category of formal assessmen

According to the curriculum of the major, the assessment process is based on two main axis in terms of its objectives, which are formative and summative assessment (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). Formative assessment is often done at the beginning or during a program, thus providing the opportunity for immediate evidence for student learning in a particular course or at a particular point in a program. Basically, formative assessment is the gathering of data on student learning during an instructional encounter. This helps the instructor to identify concepts or skills that students are not learning well, and to take steps to improve students' learning while the course is still in progress. According to Taras (2005), it is the addition of the judgment made of the learning process plus the feedback on the performance evidenced in summative assessment.

The purpose of formative assessment is to improve the quality of student learning and should not be evaluative or involve grading students. The use of formative assessment in the L2 classes can lead to curricular modifications when specific courses have not met the students' learning outcomes. In addition, it provides important program information when multiple sections of a course are taught because it enables programs to examine if the learning goals and objectives are met in all sections of the course. It also can improve instructional quality by engaging the faculty in the design and practice of the course goals and objectives and the course impact on the program (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

In contrast, summative assessment also called program assessment is comprehensive in nature and it provides accountability and it is used to check the level of learning at the end of the program. For example, if upon completion of a program students will have the knowledge to pass an accreditation test, taking the test would be summative in nature since it is based on the cumulative learning experience. Program goals and objectives often reflect the cumulative nature

of the learning that takes place in a program. Thus, the program would conduct summative assessment at the end to ensure students have met its goals and objectives (Bardes & Denton, 2001).

In essence, Taras (2005) complements the idea of the aforementioned authors about summative assessment by stating that it is the gathering of data on student learning at the conclusion of a course, as a basis for judging student knowledge and skills. It helps the instructor to plan for the next offering of the course. All in all, “it is a judgment which condenses all the evidence up to a given point of the learning process reflected on quantifiable scores”. (Taras, 2005, p. 468)

To sum up, formative assessment is the assessment that takes place during teaching to make adjustments to the teaching process, and summative assessment is the assessment at the end of a unit or term to convey student progress (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu, 2004). As the curriculum of the major states, the assessment process should not be focused only on giving grades but rather on a fair discussion between the quantitative assessments together with the formative feedback. This is not only for the students, but also for the teacher who might evaluate his/her own performance based on this discussion (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). However, the teacher is no longer the only agent who can contribute to this holistic assessment process, the students can also make part of the tests decisions leading them to get a deeper involvement in their learning process.

This type of participation centered on students can be reflected on some of the alternatives assessment practices such as portfolio and peer-assessment that encourage the development of autonomous’ students. As a result, the assessment might be regarded as a meaningful reflection where there is a fair discussion and relation between teachers, students, topics, etc.

According to the curriculum of the major in the established mid-terms for the summative assessment, the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) and the grammatical and vocabulary component are assessed. Besides, the corresponding oral or written feedback should be given to the students. In terms of formative assessment, “the assessment practices vary according to the purpose for which assessment information is required. One purpose is conventionally made between ‘proficiency assessment’, which is concerned with measuring a person’s general ability. And ‘achievement assessment’, which focuses on determining what the student has learned as part of a specific program of instruction, usually for assigning marks”. (Chapelle & Brindley, 2002, p. 267)

In terms of assessment practices, the curriculum of the major establishes self-assessment, portfolios and test. (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). We find some of these types of assessment practices along our data gathering process and in that sense we discover the assessment purposes teachers have.

It is important to define what self-assessment is and why it is important for the research study. “Self-assessment plays a central role in student monitoring of progress in a language program. It refers to the student’s evaluation of his or her own performance at various points in a course. An advantage of self-assessment is that student awareness of outcomes and progress is enhanced”.(Coombe & Hubley, 2009, p. 45)

In the same direction, Chapelle & Brindley (2002) point out that “self-assessment involves learners in making judgments of their language ability and/or their achievement of learning goals and objectives” (p. 282). This form of alternative assessment includes self-assessment techniques

in language programs such as: self-corrected tests and exercises, rating scales, learner progress grids, standardized questionnaires and self-assessment test batteries.

Moreover, Rodríguez Ochoa (2007) states that self-assessment practices focus more on evaluating how students develop their learning process, and how they modify the results they might obtain. In addition, Ekbatani (in Chapelle & Brindley, 2002) claims that “self-assessment is an integral part of learner-centered approaches to instruction which aim to encourage the active participation of the learner in each stage of the teaching or learning process, including assessment”(p. 282). Both Rodríguez Ochoa (2007) and Ekbatani agree on the fact that self-assessment practices lead to the development of a student-centered process.

Although Rodríguez Ochoa (2007) considers self-assessment practices is an empowering tool in the teaching and EFL learning processes. Cram (in Chapelle & Brindley, 2002) states that “the ability to carry out self-assessment cannot be taken for granted and that it is important to provide learners with adequate training in the use of self-assessment techniques” (p. 282).

Self-assessment is a relevant term for this research study since it is stated in the curriculum that teacher and student should discuss about the students’ performance after the corresponding self-assessment moment in order to come to an agreement about the students’ grade (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). For that reason, we also aim at identifying and describing the way self-assessment is carried out on the English Department at the major.

Another assessment practice that is important to clarify is the portfolio. It is understood as a “collection assembled by both teacher and student of representative samples of on-going work over a period time; the best portfolios are more than a scrapbook or ‘folder of all my papers’; they contain a variety of work in various stages and utilize multiple media”. (Coombe & Hubley,

2009, p. 45) This kind of alternative assessment helps learners to be aware of their learning goals and strategies and also to become autonomous and independent learners.

A portfolio is considered as a tool where the students' learning process is reflected along with a continuous feedback provided by the teacher. Teacher will not correct nor grade this portfolio, but it is recommended to keep a register of all the students' feedback in order to reflect upon the L2 learning process (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). This term is relevant for the research work due to the fact that as an arranged assessment practice on the curriculum, it is supposed to be reflected on the English courses.

The last assessment practice established in the curriculum of the major is test. The concept of test is not only a familiar one, but also a significant one for this research study in view of the fact that tests are one of the most frequent assessment practice implemented by language teachers. Test and alternative assessment practices have an impact on the students; their responses are the consequences of different aspects such as the L2 learning strategies, previous errors, context, and feelings among others.

“Test is the method of measuring the skill, knowledge or competence of a person in a given domain. Tests are prepared administrative procedures that occur at identifiable times in a curriculum. When learners take a test, they know that their performance is being measured and evaluated, so they integrate all their faculties to offer peak performance”.(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 3) In the same line of thought, Bachman (2000) states that “tests are measuring instruments designed for a specific sample of an individual's behavior through explicit procedures” (p. 18). Having these ideas in mind, we would like to identify the purposes that

justify the frequent use of tests on the L2 classroom and the possible Washback it might have on students.

Although the next practice is not presented in the curriculum, it is important to clarify the concept of peer assessment as stated by Liu & Careless (2006):

It is often interpreted as referring to marking, grading, measuring or ranking. As a consequence, peer assessment is regarded mainly as students giving marks or grades to each other. However, peer involvement can be more than the teacher sharing with students the responsibility of grading. A reliable assessment depends on knowing what one is trying to assess and by what means one comes to an accurate judgment. (p.280)

Finally, it is also important to define peer feedback as a communication process through which learners enter into dialogues related to performance and standards. While “‘peer assessment’ is defined as students grading the work or performance of their peers using relevant criteria (it denotes grading), peer-feedback involves rich and detailed comments”. (Falchikov in Liu & Careless, 2006, p. 280) Although peer assessment is not set up on the curriculum of the major, (See curriculum of the major specifically chapter 3 *Prácticas pedagógicas*; section k *las evaluaciones académicas*; subsection 2 *Lenguas extranjeras*), it might be used by L2 teachers in their English courses at the major.

b. Assessment Purposes

We extend the concept of assessment purposes in order to reach the objectives of our research study. This concept is one of the bases of our analysis; therefore, it is important to acknowledge the different assessment purposes that lead us to identify and describe when, what and how language teachers assess. According to Broadfoot (in Chapelle & Brindley, 2002) “there are a

number of assessment purposes in language programs as follows: “Assessment for curriculum” (providing diagnostic information and motivating learners); “Assessment for communication” (informing certification and selection) and “Assessment for accountability” (publicly demonstrating achievement of outcomes)” (p. 267).

However, the previous classification is not the only one accepted in the field of language assessment. There are also three well know assessment purposes identified in the *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind* document written and developed by Dr. Lorna Earl and Dr. Steven Katz. The assessment purposes that should be taking into consideration as an integral part of a regular assessment process are the following: 1) assessment *for* learning 2) assessment *of* learning 3) assessment *as* learning. (Earl & Katz, 2006)

In the first instance, assessment *for* learning is designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities. This information that language teachers obtain is useful to determine how, when, and whether the students apply what they learn in the different assessment tasks. Basically, teachers use assessment as a research tool to find out about what their students know, can do, and strengthens or weaknesses they might have. For that reason, “it is important that teachers collect a wide variety of information about the learning process of their students. In such manner, "that information becomes the basis not only for setting what they need to do next in order to enhance the student learning, but also for providing descriptive feedback for students and deciding on groupings, instructional strategies, and resources”. (Earl & Katz, 2006, p. 29)

In terms of assessment *of* learning, it has been the traditional focus of classroom assessment. It is designed to confirm what students know and to demonstrate whether or not they have met the

curriculum outcomes, and, occasionally, to show how they are placed in relation to others. In brief, it is summative in nature due to the fact that the purpose itself searches for measuring, certifying, and reporting the level of students' learning, so that reasonable decisions can be made about students. Furthermore, Earl & Katz (2006) states that effective assessment *of* learning requires that teachers provide:

Clear descriptions of the intended learning; processes that make it possible for students to demonstrate their competence and skill; a range of alternative mechanisms for assessing the same outcomes; public and defensible reference points for making judgments; transparent approaches to interpretation; descriptions of the assessment process and strategies for recourse in the event of disagreement about the decisions. (p.55)

Last but not least, assessment *as* learning is based on research about how learning happens, and it is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adjustments so that they achieve deeper understanding. This type of purpose emphasizes on the idea of assessment as a metacognition process for students. This process of “thinking about thinking” plays an important role in learning a language because it helps students to be aware of their own language learning behaviors and progress, as well as, self-monitoring, self-reflection, and self-adjustment (Leaver, Ehrman, & Shekman, 2005). Taking this into account, we could notice how important metacognition is in the assessment process regarding the purpose of assessment *as* learning. In that sense, we could say that assessment *as* learning and metacognition work along and that could be reflected when students monitor and analyze their own learning to make adjustments to their understanding. Having all this in mind, we might remark that one of the purposes of the assessment process is that students monitor and track what they are doing, so they can remember and apply what they are learning when it comes the time to assess.

In essence, it is said that assessment not only is an instrument to take decisions about the teaching and learning process, but also it is a tool that help to improve students' learning and language teaching. Hence, it is required that language teachers make sure to take into consideration at least one of the three predominant assessment purposes in their assessment practices in order to accomplish this type of objectives. As a general rule, "it is purpose that dictates how assessment is constructed and used". (Earl & Katz, 2006, p. 14)

Assessment *for* learning, assessment *as* learning, and assessment *of* learning are different, but interrelated purposes. Each of these purposes requires a different role for teachers, different designing and different planning. Due to the fact teachers are mainly the ones who decide how to assess, what to assess, and when to assess. Therefore, it is necessary that teachers get to know these three assessment purposes, establish a balance among them. And also recognize which of the purposes are implemented and the reason why they are selecting that purpose in their assessment classroom.

To sum up, the term of assessment purposes constitutes one of the bases of our research study. For the reason, our main objective aims at inquiring and identifying them. Likewise, this concept is a fundamental part of our analysis since we use the concepts of assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning proposed by Earl & Katz (2006) as a way to organize the data we gather from the semi-structured interviews and the observations. Additionally, these purposes might give us an idea of how teachers plan their course, how teachers design and apply the assessment practices, and last but not least, how teachers regard assessment.

c. Washback

Assessment purposes not only means the reason for which an assessment practice is done, but it also implies the planning and the design of that type of assessment. Taken this into consideration, we try to identify and describe how the assessment that may depend on the purposes previously mentioned has an impact on the learning and teaching practices. For that reason, it is important to expand on the term of ‘Washback’ before contrasting the assessment purposes with the L2 students’ responses towards them.

‘Washback’ or ‘Backwash’ as defined by Hughes (2003) is “the effect of testing on teaching and learning. This effect could be harmful or beneficial”(p.1). In addition, ‘Washback’ could be seen as part of something more general, as the impact of assessment, understanding ‘impact’ not only as an effect on the educational measurement of the language learning process, but also as an effect on the learning and teaching practices as a whole. In other to extend on this idea, Taylor (2005) states that this negative or harmful impact occurs when “a test’s content or format is based on a narrow definition of language ability, and so constrains the teaching/learning context” (p.154). While positive or beneficial impact occurs when a testing procedure encourages ‘good’ teaching practice.

The concepts of ‘positive impact’ and ‘negative impact’ could be broaden with some characteristics and consequences proposed by Pan (2009). In relation to the ‘positive impact’ there are some consequences related to the classroom setting. For example: “1) Tests induce teachers to cover their subjects more thoroughly, making them complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits. 2) Tests motivate students to work harder to have a sense of accomplishment and thus enhance learning ; 3) Good tests can be utilized and designed as

beneficial teaching learning activities so as to encourage positive teaching-learning processes. And related to the consequence in the educational and social system is stated that 4) Decision makers use the authority power of high-stakes testing to achieve the goals of teaching and learning, such as the introduction of new textbooks and new curricula” (p.261). In terms of ‘negative impact’ Pan (2009) states that:

1) Tests encourage teachers to narrow the curriculum and lose instructional time, leading to “teaching to the test”. 2) Tests bring anxiety both to teachers and students and distort their performance: 3) Students may not be able to learn real-life knowledge but instead learn discrete points of knowledge that are tested; 4) Cramming will lead students to have a negative impact toward tests and accordingly alter their learning motivation. And finally, decision makers overwhelmingly use tests to promote their political agendas and to seize influence and control of educational systems. (p.261)

Through time the perspectives about the consequences that assessment may have on the students have changed, and a growing awareness about how the assessment impact goes beyond the classroom has been stated by some authors. According to Bachman & Palmer (in Pan, 2009), “Assessment impact can have an effect on the professional, educational and the future employment opportunities of the students. Moreover, this impact affects the educational systems, the assessment practices and the teaching strategies”(p. 94). In that sense, the role that ‘Washback’ has on the L2 learning and teaching processes needs to be taken more into account since it is essential for both teachers and students.

We have quoted some research studies related to the impact of Washback; nevertheless, there is other agent that will perhaps affect this impact, this agent is the language teacher. Teachers play

an important role in fostering the different types of Washback. This fostering process will depend on their beliefs about assessment and Washback; these beliefs will determine the impact of testing in teaching and learning practices. Pan (2009) proposes on the research study that “teachers should bear in mind and try to make a match between what is assessed and what is taught by using more direct testing, making sure that the test is known by students. Tests are one factor that will lead the teacher to “teach to the test”, and what students learn might be discrete points of language, not the communicative part of language they need in real life” (p.101).

To sum up the different ideas abovementioned, this conclusion of Bailey (in Pan, 2009) laces what ‘Washback’ means to the L2 learning and teaching process

As teachers, we may have limited power to influence high stakes national and international examinations, but we do have tremendous power to lead students to learn, to teach them language and how to work with tests and test results. All in all, it is the teacher who has the most power to turn it into positive or negative Washback. (p. 101)

In the education field, there is another aspect that may be linked to the Washback phenomenon: the academic feedback, which is more strongly and consistently related to achievement than any other teaching behavior. This relationship is consistent regardless of grade, socioeconomic status, race, or school setting (Ellon, Bellon, & Blank, 1991). Likewise, “the purpose of feedback will differ in different situations, but feedback is nonetheless important”. (Shohamy in Brown & Hudson, 1998, p. 668)

Taking into account the three types of assessment purposes previously mentioned, there are three types of feedback suggested by the authors Earl and Katz as well. Firstly, feedback *for* learning is part of the teaching process. It is the vital link between the teacher’s assessment of a student’s

learning and the action following that assessment. Teacher is expected to keep detailed notes, not for making comparative judgments among the students, but to provide each student with individualized descriptive and immediate feedback that will help further that student's learning (Earl & Katz, 2006).

Secondly, feedback *as* learning encourages students to focus their attention on the task, rather than on getting the answer right. It provides them with ideas for adjusting, rethinking, and articulating their understanding, which will lead to another round of feedback and another extension of learning. Although assessment *as* learning “is designed to develop independent learning, students cannot accomplish it without the guidance and direction that comes from detailed and relevant feedback. Students need feedback to help them develop autonomy and competence”. (Earl & Katz, 2006, p. 47)

On the other hand, feedback *of* learning simply tell learners whether their answers are right or wrong, or simply provide evaluative feedback in the form of grades and short, non-specific comments of praise or censure. “This kind of feedback affects students' senses of themselves and tells them how they stand in relation to others. And it offers very little direction for moving forward”. Nevertheless, students do rely on their marks and on teachers' comments as indicators of their level of success, and to make decisions about their future learning endeavors. (Earl & Katz, 2006, p. 33) Nonetheless, no matter the type of feedback, this can be understood in terms more meaningful than a single score, so that feedback can become an integral part of the learning process.

As a final point, one of the objectives of this research study is to contrast the Washback effect with the students' responses; therefore, it is important to clarify and define the type of responses

proposed by Phillip Schlechty and his 'Theory of engagement'. A response is usually defined as: An answer to a question in a test, questionnaire. A reaction or reply to something. A reaction is an organism or a mechanism, to a specific stimulus. A phenomenon that follows and is caused by some previous phenomenon or a reaction that reveals a person's feelings or attitude (Longman, Oxford)

Schlechty (2002) considers that one of the keys to successful learning is engagement. This author states that teachers want their students to respond with authentic engagement. Phillip Schlechty describes five types of responses students have to the tasks teachers ask them to perform.

Schlechty defines 'Authentic engagement' as students who see meaning in what the teacher has asked them to do. They are motivated to do their best work because they care about the task. The student sees the activity as personally meaningful. The student's level of interest is sufficiently high that it persists in the face of difficulty. The student finds the task sufficiently challenging that he/she believes he/she will accomplish something of worth by doing it. The student's emphasis is on optimum performance and on "getting it right" Finally, the student learns at high levels and has a profound grasp of what he/she learns. He/she retains what he/she learns and can transfer what he/she has learned to new contexts. On the subject of assessment, the student finds this measurement process meaningful for their L2 learning progression. In addition students will be able to transfer what they have learnt not only to the test, but also beyond formal and academic context. The 'Authentic Engagement' could be related to the students' emphasis on an excellent performance and a perfect grade.

Schlechty defines 'Strategic Compliance' as students who carry out the task. However, they are not motivated by the task itself. They are engaged because they are motivated by grades and

expectations of others. The task is not something the students would choose to do on their own. The official reason for the work is not the reason the student does the work; he/she substitutes his/her own goals for the goals of the work. The substituted goals are instrumental: grades, class rank, college acceptance, parental approval. The focus is on what it takes to get the desired personal outcome rather than on the nature of the task itself; satisfactions are extrinsic. If the task does not promise to meet the extrinsic goal, the student will abandon it. The student learns at a high level, but has a superficial grasp of what he/she learns. He/she does not retain what he/she learns. He/ she usually cannot transfer what he/she learns from one context to another. On the contrary of the previous response, students' motivation is extrinsic and depends a lot on the grades (Summative Assessment) and on acceptance from others.

Schlechty defines 'Ritual compliance' as students who are the ones who do just the minimum. They have no enthusiasm for the task. The reason they are mostly on task is to avoid negative consequences. Some characteristics of the students are: The work has no meaning to the student and is not connected to what does have meaning. There are no substitute goals for the student. The student seeks to avoid either confrontation or approbation. The emphasis is on minimums and exit requirements: What do I have to do to get this over and get out? The students react in the same way as in the strategic compliance, they learn only at low levels and have a superficial grasp of what they learn. The students do not retain what they learn. Lastly, the students seldom can transfer what they learn from one context to another. In relation to assessment the students' do not take into account 'Formative Assessment' since they are not engaged with their learning process. And neither 'Summative Assessment' since the only goal is not to fail, they are not looking forward to getting neither the 'perfect grade' nor an 'excellent performance'. Finally,

what the student learn is not reflected on the test due to the lack of enthusiasm towards the assessment process.

Schlechty defines 'Retreatism' as students who are withdrawn mentally or physically from the task. They are not motivated by the task itself or by negative consequences. Some characteristics of the students are: the student is disengaged from current classroom activities and goals. The student is thinking about other things or is emotionally withdrawn from the action. The student rejects both the official goals and the official means of achieving the goals. The student feels unable to do what is being asked, or is uncertain about what is being asked. The student sees little that is relevant to life in the academic work. Finally, the student does not participate, and therefore learns little or nothing from the task or activity assigned. In regards to assessment, the students consider that this process is meaningless and for that reason, any type of assessment is irrelevant for them.

Schlechty defines 'Rebellion' as students who refuse to comply with the teacher's instructions. They might be disruptive, try to cheat, or negotiate to change the task. Some characteristics of the students are: the student is disengaged from current classroom activities and goals. The student is actively engaged in another agenda. The student creates his/her own means and his/her own goals. The student's rebellion is usually seen in acting out and often in encouraging others to rebel. The student learns little or nothing from the task or activity assigned. The student may learn a great deal from what he/she elects to do, though rarely that which was expected. Finally, the student develops poor work habits and sometimes a negative attitude toward intellectual tasks and formal education. With respect to assessment, students reflect a negative attitude and performance towards this measurement process since their goals are completely different from the classroom goals, and they are not willing to complete the tasks.

The aforementioned concepts related to responses serve as the basis for organizing the students' responses towards the assessment purposes teachers have. These responses are identified and described based on the data we obtain from the observations of the English classes and the semi structured interview addressed to the participants of this research study.

To conclude, the aforementioned concepts of Assessment, Assessment purposes, Washback and Students responses become an essential tool for this research study. These relevant categories supported by specialized authors help us to get an approach and understand English assessment purposes, types of assessment and the washback phenomena that take place in the English component of the major.

4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This research project is framed within a qualitative approach that aims at gaining an insider's view about the purposes language teachers have towards assessment and the possible kind of Washback these might have on the students' responses. It is believed that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) by the scientific, more positivistic enquiries (Neuman, 1994). Qualitative descriptions can play the important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and dynamic processes as the ones we want to establish. Besides, since a qualitative research uses a more descriptive style this research is a particular benefit to us in order to understand in depth what the language teachers' purposes towards assessment are. In fact, a qualitative research, then, has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it (Sherman and Webb in Hughes C. , 2006).

This research study follows a descriptive method, specifically a qualitative methodology due to the fact that qualitative research focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings, and the data are typically analyzed without the use of statistics. Since this type of research always takes place in the field or wherever the participants normally conduct their activities; hence, the field of this research study is referred to the classrooms of specific English levels of the major. It is also important to mention that qualitative researchers are typically not interested in simplifying, objectifying, or quantifying what they observe. Instead, when conducting qualitative studies, researchers are more interested in interpreting and making sense of what they have observed (Jackson, 2011). Due to the fact that our research is a case study, the data gathered throughout this research is interpreted and analyzed in detail without the aim of making generalizations about the assessment purposes language teachers have.

According to Croker (2009), the term 'qualitative research' is an umbrella term used to refer to a complex and evolving research methodology. It has roots in a number of different disciplines, principally anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, and is now used in almost all fields of social science inquiry, including applied linguistics. When we are not aware or little do we know about a phenomenon, this type of research is a very useful research methodology due to its explanatory nature. Its purposes are finding insights, new ideas or even new theories.

As stated by Hancock (1998), "qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. In other words, it aims at understanding the world in which we live and why things are the way they are" (p. 2). Qualitative research is concerned with finding the answers to questions which begin with why, how, in what way. Some main aspects of the qualitative research are:

It is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data. It describes social phenomena as they occur naturally. It tries to understand a situation from a holistic perspective. Qualitative data are collected through direct encounters with individuals, through one to one interviews or group interviews or by observation. Different sampling techniques are used. Sampling seeks to demonstrate representativeness of findings through random selection of subjects. Qualitative sampling techniques are concerned with seeking information from specific groups and subgroups in the population. (p. 2)

a. Participants

In qualitative research, sampling seeks to demonstrate representativeness of findings through a precise and special selection of subjects. Due to the "intensive and time consuming nature of data collection the use of small samples is necessary". (Hancock, 1998, p. 2) For that reason, the participants selected for this research study represent a stratified sample.

According to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007), there are several types of samples. The type of sampling that is chosen by us is stratified sampling. This method involves dividing the wider population into homogenous groups. Each group contains subjects with similar characteristics. And from each group the researchers select a sample that seeks only to represent itself or instances of itself in a similar population, rather than attempting to represent the whole population.

Since this is a case study, we are not looking forward to making generalizations of the wider population. In this case the language teachers and the L2 students that belong to the seven levels of English seek to “represent a particular group, a particular named section of the wider population” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 110)

For this research study the participants are divided into two groups. For the first group, nine language teachers that work in the Department of Communication and Language at Javeriana University are selected. The second group is integrated by thirty-three L2 students that study Modern Languages at Javeriana University. Some students have been receiving lessons from the language teachers that belong to participants of group number one.

ENGLISH LEVEL	DESCRIPTION OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHER IN TERMS OF WORKING EXPERIENCE
Elementary	ET1 has been teaching for almost fifteen years so far. ET1 has taught at different universities, schools and language institutes.
Basic	ET2 has been teaching for about thirteen years now and two years at Javeriana university.
Pre-Intermediate	ET3 has been teaching for more than ten years at the university.
Low-intermediate	ET4 has been teaching for more than twenty years and almost fourteen years working at Javeriana university. ET4 has some experience on the designing of English material for specific purposes, for virtual work in general English and

	a little research experience.
Intermediate	ET5 has been a teacher for twenty-four years and a Spanish language teacher for ten years. ET5 has been a primary school teacher training, and a university instructor in three nations.
High-Intermediate	ET6 has had experience in a primary school, but not as a language teacher but as a content subject in English. ET6 has worked with adults for four-five years and last four years has been working at Javeriana university.
Low-Advanced	ET7 has been teaching for about thirteen years now in universities and schools. At Javeriana university, ET7 has been teaching at low and high levels.

Table 1. Description of the participants from the first group.

Apart from those language teachers, the researchers carried out a Pilot of the semi-structured interview with two language teachers from the *service courses of English* of the university. Due to the fact that the information gathered from this Pilot was valuable and meaningful, these two language teachers are also taken into account throughout this research study.

Service courses (Third level of English)	ET8 is an English teacher from the service courses, but also a Spanish teacher for foreigners. ET8 has been teaching English for twenty years and Spanish for fourteen years.
Service courses (Fourth level of English)	ET9 has been teaching for almost twenty years part time teacher at Javeriana university. English service courses specifically levels three & four.

Table 2. Description of the participants from the first group.

Now we introduce the participants from the second group that corresponds to the English students from the major.

ENGLISH LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Elementary	Four students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument.
Basic	* Due to a communication restriction with the English teacher from Basic level, it was not possible to do the semi-structured interviews to the students and the observations of some classes of that level.

Pre-intermediate	Five students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument.
Low intermediate	Five students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument. Two of them were asked voluntarily to answer the questions of the semi-structured interview.
Intermediate	Five students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument.
High intermediate	Five students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument. Two of them were asked voluntarily to answer the questions of the semi-structured interview.
Low- advanced	Four students were asked voluntarily to help the researchers with the images and metaphor instrument. Two of them were asked voluntarily to answer the questions of the semi-structured interview.

Table 3. Description of the participants from the second group.

In addition, four students who took at least three levels of English were asked voluntarily to answer the questions of the semi-structured interview and to make a reflection with the images and metaphor instrument. This in order to get other insights related to assessment from the perspective of the students who have already finished the English levels.

ENGLISH LEVELS TAKEN BY THE STUDENTS	IDENTITY CODE
Pre-intermediate; Low-intermediate; Intermediate; High intermediate; Low-advanced	EXST1
Pre-intermediate; Low-intermediate; Intermediate; High intermediate; Low-advanced	EXST2
Low-intermediate; Intermediate; High intermediate; Low- advanced	EXST3
Low-intermediate; Intermediate; High intermediate; Low- advanced	EXST4

Table 4. Description of the participants from the second group.

Next, it is important to present how English levels are established according to the syllabus making emphasis on the objectives and the assessment component of each one of them. According to the syllabus of the English courses, each English level has different established

objectives that aim at developing the different language skills (writing, reading, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary). Although each level has its own objectives, the assessment component is similar in most of the levels. The types and assessment tools of the English levels are consistent with the curricular axes: communicative competence, intercultural competence and autonomy in learning. The procedures used are written tests (compositions, progress tests and quizzes), oral tests (short presentations and quizzes) and small projects developed by students. Then, the final grade is obtained after assessing language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), the component of language (use of language and vocabulary), and classwork. In addition, some of the levels include test-preparation towards international exams such as: IELTS and TOEFL (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014).

The reason we select these samples is because according to the curriculum that is aligned to the Common European Framework, it represents different English levels. These levels pursue different objectives that might be reflected on the different assessment purposes that will be identified and described during the data analysis.

b. Data collection and gathering tools

For this research study, we rely on multiple data collection techniques in order to check the authenticity of their results. The following techniques are used throughout this research study: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, field notes, and audio recordings (the last one is included in the semi-structured instrument).

These techniques permit the researchers to paint a richly descriptive picture of their participants' worlds, the participants themselves, the setting, and the major and minor events that happen there. The main goal is to have a convincing creation using blending images, sounds and understandings (Croker, 2009).

Gathering tools

i. Semi-Structured Interviews

As a first device of data collection two semi-structured interviews are used. Each interview is addressed to a specific participant (language teachers and L2 students). "Semi-structured interviews consisted of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also

allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail". (Britten in Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick., 2008, p. 291)

This type of interview is conducted by us in order to obtain detailed information about both the language teachers' purposes towards assessment and the L2 students' responses towards those purposes. Some of the questions that are asked to the teachers are based on the objectives established by us. The purpose of the questions was to inquire about the way language teachers integrate the assessment component in their English classes, which can lead us to identify and then describe what, how and when language teachers assess the performance of their students (see appendix section a). And the purpose of the questions addressed to L2 was to inquire about their reactions towards assessment and their perceptions about how the assessment component is included in the English classes (see appendix section c).

ii. Non-participant observations

For the second instrument, we make use of non-participant observations; a common technique used in qualitative research studies. An 'observation' is a data collection method in which the researcher watches and makes detailed notes of the research setting. In addition, we obtain data empirically by observing the research setting without taking an active role in it. This is what is called non-participative observation (Croker, 2009). Although this research proposal is not entirely an ethnographic study, some elements from ethnography are used due to the fact we have to observe some English classes in order to identify, understand and describe the in-service language teachers' assessment purposes and the possible Washback that this phenomena might have on the L2 students. It is also relevant to mention that the focuses of the observations of the English classes are divided in three different moments that are before, during and after assessment. In each moment, it is possible to identify the different types of assessment and the way language teachers implement them with their students.

Since ethnography as a qualitative and naturalistic research carries out systematic, intensive and detailed observation of people's behavior in a given setting (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 576), a passive observation is chosen for this research project. We take the role of passive observers that simply observe and describe how the teachers' assessment purposes are reflected on their

assessment practices as well as the students' behavior during the semester and also to see how students respond towards some assessed activities.

Field notes are important tools included in this instrument. The use of field notes is very helpful given that these are registers easy to take and to follow; and they are the consequence of direct observation. As stated by McKerman (in Vásquez Rodríguez, 2002 p. 123), there are three types of field notes: the conventional-descriptive, conceptual and of procedure. The first ones are specific and immediate descriptions about an observed event. These notes do not present inferences or interpretations. The conceptual notes provide inferences, interpretations and show hypothesis from the observer. And finally, the procedural notes are more focused on the methodological aspects of the research study by using checklist or instructions. The field notes provide and support the observations done in the English classes, they show a real involvement from the researchers in the natural context where the phenomena takes place. It is important to take into considerations that during the observations aspects such as emotional involvement or personal perceptions should be avoided.

Another gathering tool of data used is the audio recordings. As stated by Velasco & Díaz de Rada (in Vásquez Rodríguez, 2002 p. 119), audio recordings allow researchers to pay attention to those context relations in a more accurate and punctual, due to the fact that sometimes these aspects appear irregular and not too explicit. These types of recordings obtained from the semi structured interviews agree to transmit the participants' voices by using textual quotations or paraphrasing. It is important to clarify that some instruments are used simultaneously in order to get a deeper analysis.

iii. Elicitation techniques

We use another instrument to gain insights into teachers' and students' way of thinking. This gathering tool is a sort of elicitation technique through the use of metaphors, quotes and images. First of all, the aim of elicitation techniques is in general "to uncover unarticulated informant knowledge . . . [and includes] asking questions in a standard way . . . [that have] an exploratory or emergent character in their attempts to reveal tacit subjective understandings in some cultural domain". (Thygesen, Pedersen, Kragstrup, Wagner, & Mogensen, 2011, p. 596) Secondly, according to Lakoff and Johnson (in Seferoğlu, Korkmazgil, & Ölçü, 2009), "metaphors express

one entity in terms of another entity. They are windows into how human beings conceptualize the world and the reality. Metaphors are a cognitive device that enhances reflection”(p.324). In addition, metaphor elicitation as a methodology considers the value of metaphoric language in revealing the subconscious beliefs and attitudes underlying consciously held opinions. According to Marshall, Thornburry and McGrath (in Seferoğlu, Korkmazgil, & Ölçü, 2009), “the use of metaphoric expressions, similes or images are not only the reflectors of subliminal personal values, but also directly or indirectly influence the classroom performance of teachers” (p.324).

Taking that into account, we made use of this type of elicitation technique based on two assessment quotes and three images that represent some ideas related to assessment such as the feeling of pressure during the assessment moment or the importance of getting a good grade (see appendix section f). These quotes and images are used in order to identify tacit knowledge such as beliefs, emotions or unframed and subconscious attitudes towards assessment of the language teachers and L2 students. And thereby, generate and provide relevant information to this research study. Now we present a table that summarizes the instruments previously mentioned, the reason they are used and the data that we might obtain through the use of these instruments at the end of this research study.

INSTRUMENT	WHAT IS IT FOR?	POSSIBLE DATA TO BE OBTAINED
NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS	<p>Since observation is a technique used to observe and describe the behavior of participants from an open, inductive, and holistic perspective (Croker, 2009), we use this instrument to describe, interpret and understand what are the purposes language teachers have towards assessment and the possible kind of Washback these might have on the students' responses.</p> <p>Moreover, some tools such as audio recordings and field notes are used to complement the observations, to gain a general perspective about the</p>	<p>The existence of assessment purposes during the assessment practices previously stated by the language teachers.</p> <p>Students' behavior in relation to the assessment practices.</p> <p>Interaction of teacher-student, and student-student during a general assessment situation.</p> <p>Possible hypothesis from us related to our research question.</p>

	classroom, and to gather specific information about the students, teacher, and assessed activities.	
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	<p>To clarify the interpretations made from the previous observations about the specific students' responses and to identify the most common assessment purposes that are established in the assessment practices by the language teachers.</p> <p>In words of Britten in Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick (2008), it allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail.</p> <p>Furthermore, oral interviews (audio recording) are used respectively to obtain precise and detailed verbal information about how teachers implement assessment to their classes, the purposes they established. All this information is inferred from the teachers' answers.</p>	<p>The language teachers' assessment purposes.</p> <p>The possible relation between the assessment practices and the students' responses towards those practices.</p> <p>The types of students' responses towards the assessment practices.</p> <p>The meaningful experiences language teachers have when they applied their assessment practices.</p>
ELICITATION TECHNIQUE THROUGH METAPHORS & IMAGES	<p>To gain insights into teachers' and students ways of thinking about assessment (Seferoğlu, Korkmazgil, & Ölçü, 2009).</p> <p>The use of metaphors and images allow us to have a wider perspective about the beliefs and attitudes language teachers and L2 students have towards assessment.</p>	<p>The language that reveals the subconscious beliefs and attitudes underlying consciously held opinions.</p> <p>The use of metaphoric expressions, similes or images that reflect personal values and ideas about assessment.</p> <p>To infer information about the direct or indirect influence of these beliefs in the classroom performance of teachers.</p>

Table 5. Data gathering tools

Furthermore, it is relevant to say that the qualitative data analysis of this research study was done through the computer software called the Atlas. ti®. This powerful analytical tool was developed

at the Technical University of Berlin by Thomas Muhr to segment data into meaning units; encode data and create theory (relate concepts and categories and themes). The use of this software allowed the researchers to achieve an efficient and accurate data analysis (Muñoz in Sampieri, Fernandez Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2006, p. 669)

c. Institutional framework

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana is a private higher education institution founded in 1623. It is one of the oldest and most traditional Colombian universities directed by the Society of Jesus, with its headquarters in Bogotá and a sectional division in Cali. It is one of the 31 universities entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America, and one of the 114 worldwide.

The mission of Javeriana University consists in promoting research and curricula-centered integral education. It will strengthen its interdisciplinary university nature, and it will reinforce its presence in the country contributing to the solution of its major problems.

In terms of research, the Javeriana University conducts research projects in the natural sciences and mathematic areas, in social and human sciences, theology, health, education, economics, management, engineering, architecture, design, urban development, and arts. It runs an average of 120 research projects per year, 30% of which have external funding, and is part of 3 National Excellence Research Centers: CIEBREG (Biodiversity and Genetic Resources); CEIBA (Interdisciplinary Research on Complex Systems) and GEBIX (Genomics and Bioinformatics) (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2009).

d. Ethical considerations

For the carrying out of this research study, we take into consideration the main codes of ethics of the qualitative research. First of all, this research study follows the *Informed consent* ethic code, which states that subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved (Denzy & Lincoln, 2011). For that reason, we made sure that the subjects agreed voluntarily to participate in the different instruments of this research study.

Secondly, social science codes of ethics uniformly oppose *Deception*. Likewise, the articles of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Declaration of Helsinki both state that subjects must be told the

duration, methods, possible risks, and the purpose or aim of the experiment (Soble in Denzy & Lincoln, 2011) Consequently, we provided full and open information about the entirely research study to the participants, which was free of active deception.

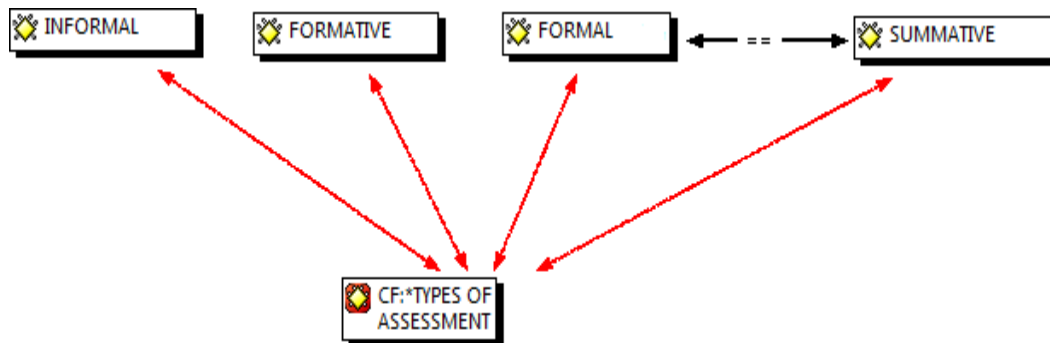
Thirdly, *Privacy and Confidentiality* codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect peoples' identity and those of the research locations. Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. We are always preserving the participants' identity for the development of this research study behind a shield of anonymity.

Last but not least, ensuring that data are accurate is a cardinal principle in social science codes as well. Fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions, and contrivances are both nonscientific and unethical (Cannella & Lincoln, 2011). Ergo, this research study obeys this code by keeping the gathering, analysis and results of data clear and precise with the aim of avoiding any kind of falsified evidence or misunderstanding.

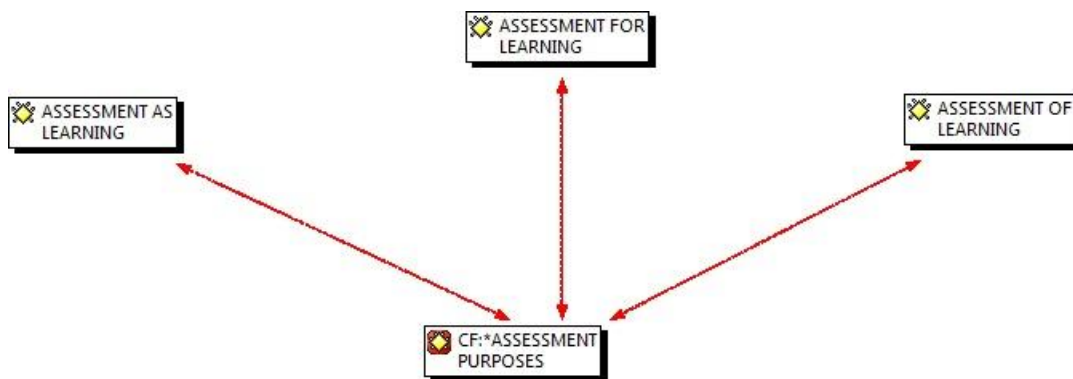
5. RESULTS

Taking into consideration the aim of inquiring what assessment purposes language teachers have and what is the possible Washback these purposes imply for the Bachelor of Modern Languages in the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews addressed to nine English teachers and ten L2 students, plus a total of thirteen field notes were analyzed through the computer software Atlas. ti®. It is important to clarify that the labeling of categories, designing of graphics and tables were made by the researchers of this study. Likewise, the metaphors, quotes and images that make part of the elicitation technique were classified in order to know the frequency of aspects such as: what to asses, how to asses, assessment moment and assessment purposes.

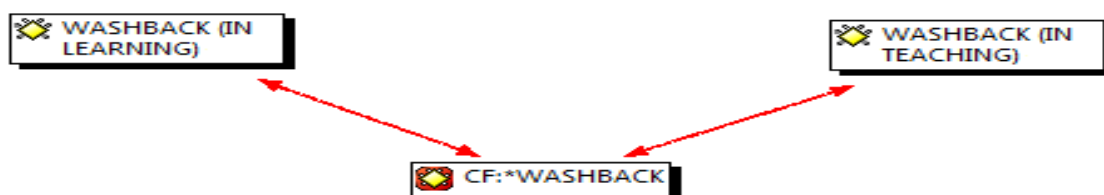
First of all, the data was segmented into three main families that are: Types of assessment, Purposes and Washback. Each family has a number of sub-families that were associated among the previous major families. The resulting families can be seen below:



Graph 1. Types of Assessment Resulting Sub-Families



Graph 2. Assessment Purposes Resulting Sub-Families



Graph 3. Washback Resulting Sub-Families

Secondly, it was possible to identify and organize a total of forty-seven codes from the theoretical categories previously established in the theoretical framework and emergent categories that came up along the data analysis. The following codes were selected based on the frequency of appearance on the software previously mentioned. And also they were the most suitable to guide the analysis that solved or gave hints towards the objectives and the research question of this study. The main categories of this research study are identified and defined as follows:

CODES	GROUNDED ³	DEFINITION
TYPES OF ASSESSMENT		
INFORMAL	51	An unplanned type of assessment carried out along the English classes together with different non-graded activities in order to inform students about their academic performance. For instance, phrases such as “Nice job”, “Well done”, “I think you mean to say you broke the glass, not you break the glass”, or putting ‘happy faces’ on some homework (Brown & Abeywickrama, Language Assessment: principles and classroom practice, 2010).
FORMAL	48	A systematic type of assessment previously planned with clear and precise objectives that belong to an established program with the aim of providing an appraisal of students’ achievement.
SUMMATIVE	13	An assessment type used to check the level of learning at the end of the program, which is reflected on quantifiable scores. It also tends to be associated with the type of formal assessment in assessment practices such as midterms and

³ Number of times it is mentioned

		quizzes.
PURPOSES		
ASSESSMENT <i>OF</i> LEARNING	31	It is designed to confirm what students know and to demonstrate whether or not they have met the curriculum outcomes. It has a summative approach due to the fact that the purpose itself searches for measuring, certifying, and reporting the level of students' learning. This type of purpose assesses if the students can use key concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the curricular outcomes in a specific given time.
ASSESSMENT <i>FOR</i> LEARNING	12	It is designed for teachers in order to use assessment as a research tool to find out about what their students know, can do, and strengthens or weaknesses they might have. This purpose regards assessment as a process, which assesses the progress of each student and the learning needs in relation to the curricular outcomes.
ASSESSMENT <i>AS</i> LEARNING	8	It is designed to guide and provide opportunities for each student to monitor and critically reflect on his/her own learning, and identify next steps in order to make adjustment so they achieve a deeper understanding. This type of purpose emphasizes on the idea of assessment as a metacognition process for students.
BLURRED ASSESSMENT	5	This emergent category identified by the researchers, implies that the different concepts and phrases from teachers and students show an approach to assessment, but not as clearly to be classified on one of the aforementioned categories.
OMITTED ASSESSMENT	12	This category emerges from the results obtained from the semi-structured interviews in which assessment was not taken into account explicitly in the teachers' planning or was not noticed by students during the development of the course.
WASHBACK		
WASHBACK IN LEARNING	13	It is the effect that assessment has

		on learning; this effect could be harmful or beneficial. In most of the cases it was beneficial, since students decided to make a change on their learning strategies in order to improve on future assessment moments.
WASHBACK IN TEACHING	12	It is considered as a straightforward phenomenon that expects a change from the teacher in his/her assessment practices due to the effect (positive or negative) of testing and assessment on the language teaching curriculum that is related to it.
EMERGENT CATEGORIES		
SITUATIONAL / EFFECTIVENESS	21	This category comes forward from a constant presence on the students' answer about the best assessment experience they had had on their English class. In addition, this category has a tendency to be related to good grades, interesting topics for the students and a suitable assessment environment.
EMOTIONAL RESPONSE	31	This category comes up from a continuous occurrence on the students' answer about their worst assessment experience on their English levels. This category was related to the assessment moment, especially with the productive skill (oral practice) in which they had had bad results and negative emotional responses as well.

Table 5. Frequency of Appearance of Codes in the Non-Participant Observations and the Semi-Structured Interviews Addressed to English Teachers and L2 Students. Source: Authors

The results obtained from the elicitation techniques were a helpful tool that permitted to have another perspective about the assessment purposes, the assessment moment and the types of assessment apart from the results gained from the complementing data gathering tools (semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations). It is important to clarify that the information obtained was organized through tables based on the main concepts from the theoretical framework. The findings obtained from the elicitation techniques (metaphors and images) are presented in order to know the frequency of some aspects, words and ideas related to assessment as follows.

Firstly, metaphors and drawings related to the way in which both teachers and students defined assessment were divided into four big groups which are: Assessment of Learning, Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning and Blurred Assessment (See Appendix section g and h- first table). The perception and the frequency of appearance are shown next:

ASSESSMENT PURPOSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Assessment of Learning	21	3
Assessment for Learning	4	6
Assessment as Learning	0	0
Blurred Assessment	8	0
Total	33	9

Table 6. Teachers' and Students' Assessment Perception Reflected on their Drawings and Metaphors. Source: Authors

Secondly, students' answers from the first part of the elicitation techniques were organized into categories such as: what to assess, how to assess, assessment moment and assessment purposes (See Appendix section h- second table). The codes were selected according to the number of appearances. The table presented below illustrates the words students related to assessment:

WORDS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Knowledge	3
Abilities/Skills	7
Injustice/Unfair/ Fair/ Equal	12
Exams/Test	9
Pressure	19
Stress/Fear/Anguish	12
Grade/Results/Scores	9
Reach a goal	5

Table 7. Words Related to Assessment According to the Students' Answers. Source: Authors

The data gathered from the teachers' answer were categorized into five main categories which are: what to assess, how to assess, when assessment is carried out, assessment moment and assessment purposes (See Appendix section g- second table). The answers were selected and organized according to the number of appearances. The table presented below illustrates the aforesaid aspects teachers related to assessment:

ASPECTS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
What to assess	1
How to assess	4
When assessment is carried out	0
Assessment Moment	3
Others	4
Assessment Purposes	6

Table 8. Aspects Related to Assessment According to the Teachers' Answers. Source: Authors

6. ANALYSIS

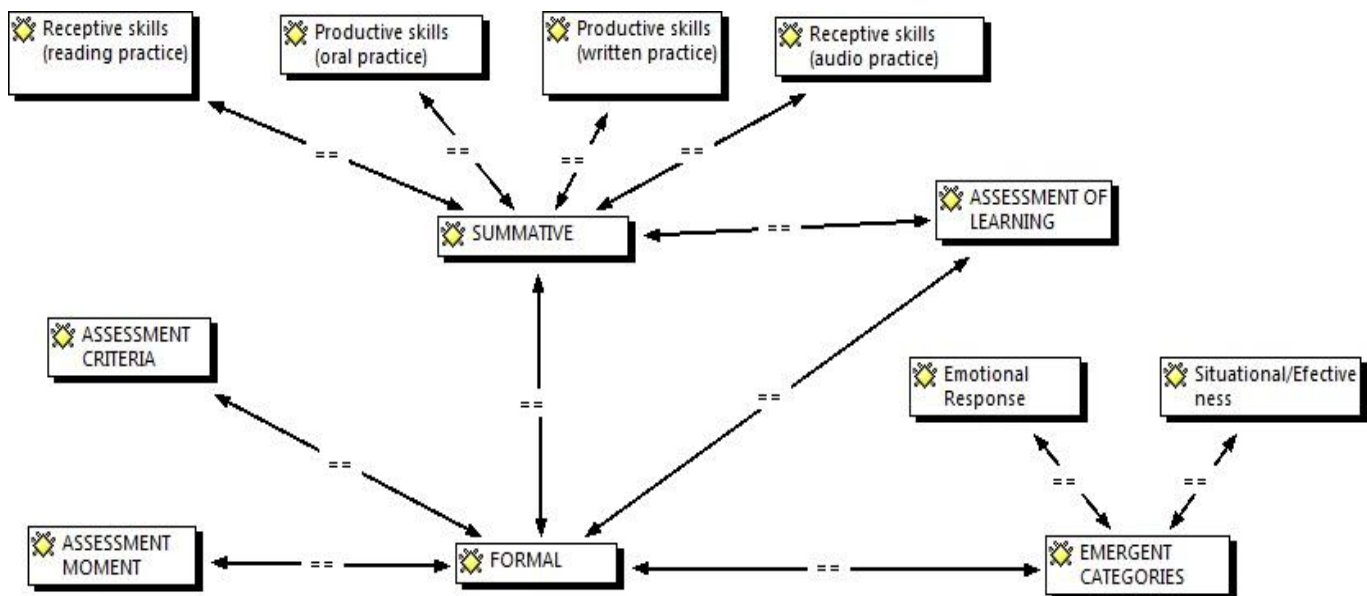
After having presented the corresponding results taken from the semi-structured interviews, the non-participant observations and the elicitation techniques that were designed to first identify and then describe the different assessment purposes language teachers' have and the way washback affects both the teaching and learning practice, we proceed to analyze the findings according to our objectives and concepts from the theoretical framework. The following discussion is divided into three big families: Types of assessment, Assessment purposes and Washback.

a. Types of assessment

Initially, in this section we aim at presenting the most frequent types of assessment collected from the different instruments, the links established between these types of assessment and the different categories are presented as follows. The category of 'Types of assessment' was grounded a total of 108 times in which formal assessment and informal assessment were the most representative sub-categories with a total of 99 quotations from the participants of this research study (see graph 1).

i. Formal Assessment

According to the findings, the sub-category of 'Formal Assessment' was quoted in a total of 48 times in which most of those quotations presented it as one of the most used type of assessment by the language teachers at the English Department. Formal Assessment was linked to other sub-families such as: assessment of learning, summative, receptive skills, productive skills, assessment moment, assessment criteria, emotional response and finally, situational/effectiveness as it is presented on the graphic below:



Graph 4. Formal Category and Its Corresponding Links and Sub-Families

According to the results obtained, Formal assessment is the process in which different information is gathered through the use of standardized instruments or tests, followed by diverse interpretation procedures. This type of assessment is one of the most used by language teachers in the different English levels at Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Formal assessment tends to go hand in hand with Summative assessment as it is stated by one of the interviewed teachers:

“...we all should have twelve grades that count 30% of the total grade. The first partial exam counts 30% and the final 40% that makes 100%. So, for the first 30% are for quizzes, expositions, classwork. And that is what we do pretty often it could be once a week and we evaluate different because there are short evaluations or short assessments in different areas/abilities we have the opportunity to evaluate just weekly in any ability...or a listening exercise or a grammar exercise or a reading one or writing a short paragraph so we have 12 opportunities to assess in a different way...” (ET8, Semi-structured interviews, 2013)

According to this teacher, language assessment has a tendency to be divided into the four language skills that are assessed at a specific moment during the semester. The fact of giving a final grade based on percentages show the close relation between the Formal Assessment and

Summative Assessment. What is expressed by the interviewed teacher let us identify the different techniques used by some of the English teachers of the major to assess their students (quizzes, expositions and class-work) which are considered by Chapelle & Brindley (2002) as formal measurement tools which produce quantifiable scores. What the teacher says let us identify also the time in which these assessment practices are carried out. All of these factors allow the teachers to get an insight of the students' knowledge at specific moments.

Likewise, the answers of the students from the semi structured interviews counterpart the aforementioned idea of formal assessment that implies the division of the skills in order to provide information to the students about their performances. The following excerpt presents student's perception about the way language assessment is developed at the English department at the bachelor:

“...Well, at Javeriana usually they make a huge division between abilities, speaking, writing and all that. For example in the fifth level, I had to do the mock exam, so it was like all the huge components of the teaching and learning process in that part. And I remember that it was just listening and speaking because they didn't do the writing...” (EXST1, 2014)

Once again, language assessment is presented as a clear division of skills and where test preparation was seen as a component of the class. From this point of view, we could see how teachers start treating skills separately from their planning, which was also reflected on what students said about this issue. They were also aware of this division.

Another teacher states that sometimes the planning of the lesson depends on the way different activities are carried out to measure the students' performance in each skill, which is assessed after having taught a lesson. This in order to know whether the students learnt what was taught by the teacher or not.

“When I'm planning the goals of that lesson, I start looking at what is it that I want students to learn throughout the lesson, so after teaching the lesson or through the process depending on what the task is, I start assessing the students...If it is a writing test then I asked them to write down about the things we are doing and I collect them and take a look at it closely. If there is something in terms of grammar for example I let's say start assessing students in terms of taking a look at the way they're using the language and then we do a short quiz or an activity to recall that information” (ET3, 2014).

The previous statement let us identify how the interviewed teacher plans the lesson which is connected with the idea of assessment as a systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purposes of improving learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

What is more, we could appreciate while observing classes how formal assessment is developed. There are moments in which the relationship between formal and summative assessment and the corresponding assessment criteria is visible. What we observed during a formal assessment moment of the mid-term called 'language use & vocabulary' showed the way teacher presented the assessment criteria. Teacher set the limit time which was of one hour and thirty minutes and explained students that the test had two sections, the first section was for grammar and the second section was for vocabulary. Each section of the exam specified the score student may receive for each good point they get (Barragán & Conde, Entry # 2 (Low-Intermediate), 2014).

As it was observed during this class, Formal Assessment is associated with Summative Assessment because since the beginning of the exam it is specified the score that is assigned to each part of the exam, the final score will result in the students' performance at the end. All in all, Summative assessment is a judgment that encapsulates all the evidence up to a given point of the learning process reflected on quantifiable scores (Taras, 2005). Based on the students' and teachers' answers (see chapter 4) this final grade represent if they succeed or fail, or whether they learn or not.

Now, it is relevant to mention that the findings taken from the elicitation techniques illustrated the students' perception about assessment with words such as: Knowledge (3); Abilities/Skills (7); Exams/Test (9); and Grade/Results/Scores (9). This in other words represents the main purpose of Formal and Summative Assessment at the major where according to the students answers on the elicitation techniques the skills are what language teachers tend to assess more instead of knowledge. Furthermore, these skills are assessed through regular tests in which what is more important to the students is the grade.

Taking the aforesaid ideas it could be seen how the results reflect the way in which Formal Assessment is carried out. Firstly, it is noticed a clear division of language skills in order to assess the students' performance. As a consequence, language assessment is regarded from

specific moments through the whole semester which lessen the opportunities to consider language assessment as a learning process because the students' performance will depend on results on precise moments rather than a monitoring process through the semester. Secondly, this perception about assessment might be a result of previously established practices that are subsequent to the curriculum of the major.

These established assessment practices belong to an insight of assessment purposes *of learning* where the tests are given at the end of a course or course segment (Earl & Katz, 2006) these purposes *of learning* set up tests at the end of a unit or semester with the aim of identifying if the students reach the classroom objective or the curriculum goals. These purposes will be deeply presented on the next section. For instance, what the next students state also support the previous thought:

“Well, usually at la licenciatura they use papers all the time, except speaking, but that's all. For example, my teacher in sixth level he really used to make lot of exams, but with activities that then they were assessed...But at the end, he had to do the same as all the teachers here at la licenciatura” (EXST1, 2014).

And “(...) In other cases they just do activities to find whether if you understood the topic or not, it depends” (EXST3, Semi-structured interview, 2014). The use of formal assessment at the end of each English level may be due to the fact that programs goals and objectives often reflect the cumulative nature of the learning that takes place in a program. Thus, the program would conduct summative assessment at the end to ensure students have met its goals and objectives (Bardes & Denton, 2001).

Formal Assessment was linked to an emergent category that we decide to call ‘emotional response’, which are the different negative reactions students usually have during a specific assessment moment, as it is stated by one interviewed student:

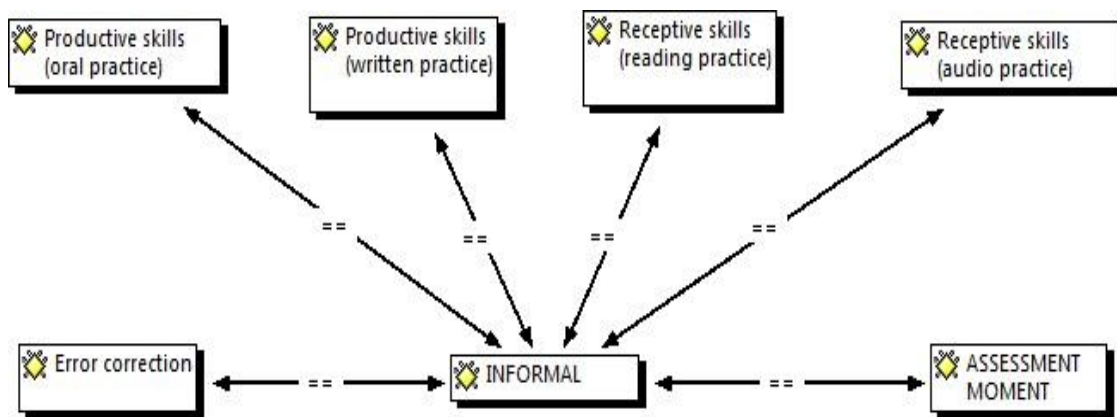
“Usually when I present my speaking I feel so nervous because you don't know what the teacher is going to ask you about, so you are not sure what is the teacher going to talk to you about, so you feel nervous. It's very confusing and stressful (...)” (LIST1, 2014).

This student's statement introduces an important aspect related to assessment, which is the role that emotions have on the assessment moment. The effect of assessment may be positive or

negative, depending on a number of factors, ranging from the way the assessment procedure or test is constructed, to the way it is used (McKay, 2006). Here we could see how aspects such as teacher’s assessment methodology could raise the level of stress and pressure on the student. These negative reactions may affect students’ results or performance during a formal assessment.

ii. Informal Assessment

During this section we present the results and analysis related to Informal Assessment. The data gathered showed that informal assessment (51 quotes) is also a prevailing type of assessment used by the English teachers at the major. These results were reflected on the teachers’ interviews and during non-participant observations in the classroom. In addition, informal assessment is also connected with different sub-families such as: assessment moment, receptive skills and productive skills, students’ roles (peer-correction & self-correction) and last but not least, error correction.



Graph 5. Informal Category and Its Corresponding Links and Sub-Families

According to the different findings obtained, Informal assessment is also one of the most common types of assessment. In terms of Brown & Abeywickrama (2010), this type of assessment refers to all unplanned comments and responses, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to inform the students about their academic performance. Informal Assessment tends to be used before and after Formal Assessment moments based on the observations and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the next teacher’s point of view towards Informal assessment reflects it as a constant component of an ordinary class:

“Well, obviously we have formal testing, that is exams, quizzes, stuff like that...paper based test. We also have informal assessment like the whole time, every time they participated, every time they use the language, there’s feedback, there’s informal assessment” (ET2, 2014)

Even though this teacher stated the use of Informal Assessment as a part of their regular classes, we could notice throughout the observations that this type of assessment at times is seen as an error correction, a peer-correction or in some cases as a self-correction process. In one of the classes one student said “All of them shows” and the teacher corrected “all of them show” and wrote on the board the correct way. Then, the student explained that what he wanted to say “all of them choose”, the teacher explained the pronunciation and later the student repeated the sentence in the correct way, making emphasis on the word [choose] (Barragán & Conde, Entry #1 (High Intermediate), 2014). As it is observed in that moment of the class, the role of the teacher during this informal assessment moment is to correct student’s pronunciation. It is also interesting how as a matter of fact this error correction has an impact on the student because he had to repeat the sentence correctly searching for the teacher’s approval.

In regards to error correction, one of the interviewed teachers claimed that sometimes students are not fully aware of mistakes and for that reason; co-evaluation is not always well handled, as it is stated below.

“...But in the classwork I try to work with them by pairs or by groups so we take less time marking. Well sometimes self- evaluation or co-evaluation. But the other 2 skills I cannot be irresponsible (from my part) to give the students a paper, so we have an exercise to try to identify his/her mistakes. But they mark other things that are not mistakes and for the speaking we do with the chart and try to be objective” (ET8, Semi-structured interviews, 2013).

Firstly, the interviewed teacher claimed that self-evaluation is part of the classwork. Nonetheless, what teacher really uses are self-corrected exercises as a self-assessment technique in the classes. As a consequence, teacher regards self-assessment only as a self-corrected task instead of considering self-assessment practices as an empowering tool in the teaching and EFL learning process as it is stated by Rodriguez Ochoa (2007). Secondly, it is evident a problem with some students at the moment of carrying out the process of self- assessment, since they sometimes get confused and mark other things that are not mistakes. This issue could affect the students’ own monitoring process. For that reason, it is important to

provide learners with adequate training in the use of self-assessment techniques as it is suggested by Chapelle & Brindley (2002).

Altogether, the previous findings based on the semi-structured interviews and on non-participant observations showed that teachers not only use informal assessment as a tool to correct students' mistakes, but also to include self and peer- correction among the students, which is also regarded as self and peer-assessment. However, we observed that in most of the cases when peer-correction is implemented, it is the teacher's last word what counts, so students occasionally are looking for the teachers' approval, which decreases the opportunities to develop their independence to acknowledge their own achievements and shortcomings. This observed issue is opposed to Ekbatani's idea of self-assessment in which it is considered as an integral part of learner-centered approaches to instruction which aim to encourage the active participation of the learner in each stage of teaching or learning process, including assessment (Chapelle & Brindley, 2002).

Furthermore, we agree on the notion that the interviewed teachers may use self and peer-correction during the informal assessment moment with the purpose of making the students feel part of the assessment as a holistic process where not only teachers have the right to participate in. The prior idea is stated by one of the teachers that participated on this study:

“Because is important, the students also know things that probably I don't know or they can realize things that I haven't realized. So it's very very important apart from that you know that students are not like empty things but they have a lot of knowledge and they can help a lot. Not all of them help of course, but the ones that help really really provide good things for the others. So, in that case the evaluation is not only the part of the teacher, but also the part of the students. And that's something that I also use, for example I ask them to write something or to answer a question and I ask them to share their answers, so that the other person gives feedback too” (ET7, 2014).

The aforesaid statement reinforced what is stated on the curriculum of the major. The assessment process should be focused on a fair discussion about the quantitative assessment together with the formative feedback. This is not only for the students but also for the teacher who might evaluate his/her performance based on this discussion (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004).

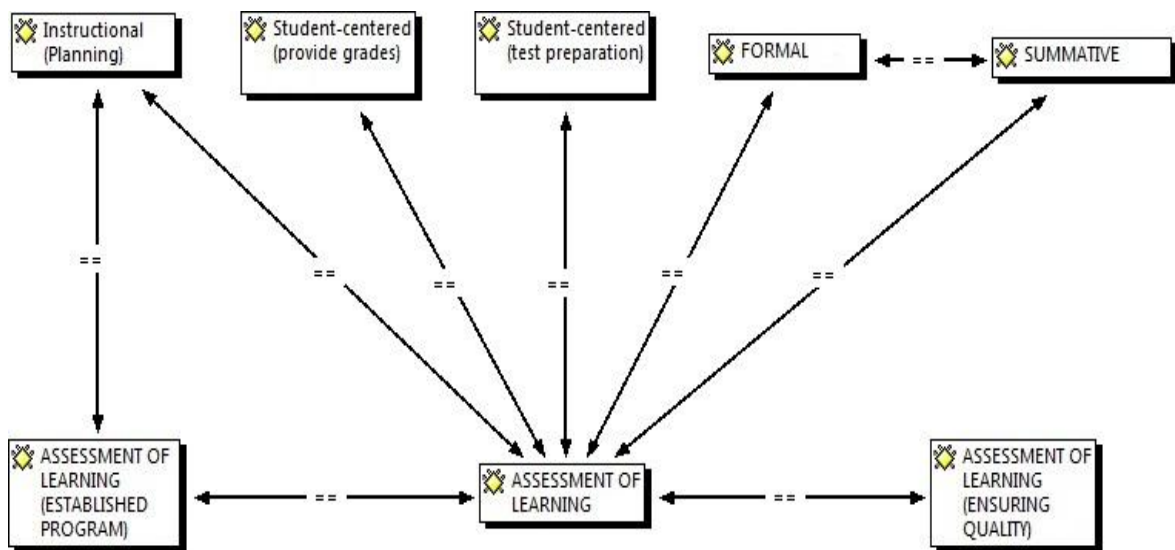
The previous findings and statements enlighten us to have an insight about the way the participant teachers assess the students' performance, which is measured from a divided perspective of the language (productive skills and receptive skills). Productive and Receptive skills have a tendency to be assessed by means of Informal Assessment and Formal Assessment, the last one strongly linked to a Summative Assessment. Finally, another interesting result from the gathered data was that the Productive Skill (Oral Practice) is one of the skills most associated with the Assessment Moment according to the participants of this research study when referring to the best and worst assessment experiences (see appendix d).

b. Assessment Purposes

Due to the fact that this research study focuses part of its attention on assessment purposes language teachers have, equally important is the assessment purposes as the second big section that was reflected on the findings from the different instruments. This category of assessment purposes gathered a total of 51 quotations on the semi-structured interviews, the non-participant observations and the elicitation techniques addressed to language teachers and 12 students. The findings were related to the three assessment purposes that are: assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning.

i. Assessment of learning

Research results showed that the purposes of 'assessment of learning' (31 quotes) are the most frequent ones according to the teacher and students' interviews. Furthermore, assessment of learning tends to be associated with sub-categories such as: formal, summative, student-centered, instructional and administrative. These relations are presented on the graphic below:



Graph 6. Assessment of Learning and Its Corresponding Links and Subfamilies

To start with, based on the findings we could identify the assessment purposes *of learning* in the teaching practice (non-participant observations), as well as in the other instruments. These purposes refer to strategies designed to confirm what students know, demonstrate whether or not they have met curriculum outcomes or the goals of their individualized programs, or to certify proficiency and make decisions about students’ future programs or placements (Earl & Katz, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, 2006).

Since the purposes of assessment *of learning* are designed to measure, certify, and report the level of students’ learning, it was found that most of the assessment practices used by the interviewed teachers follow an established practice arranged by the curriculum of the major. The following teacher’s statement reflects these types of purposes:

“We usually have to include an assessment, evaluation part in the syllabus and according to the regulations of the university we have to follow certain criteria and they are always in the program. The divisions of terms, how many exams we have to apply in the terms, the presentation of the exams and so on.” (ET7, 2014)

The previous statement let us identify the way in which the curriculum affects the teachers’ planning. According to the curriculum of the major in the established mid-terms for the summative assessment, the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) and the grammatical and vocabulary component are assessed. (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004).

This statement also allows us to corroborate how the interviewed teachers apply the assessment organization proposed by the curriculum of the major into their planning.

In addition, it is important to clarify that the assessment purposes *of learning* are designed to be summative, and aim at producing defensible and accurate descriptions of student competence, the assessment practices seek the certification of students' proficiency based on a rigorous, reliable, valid, and equitable process of assessment and evaluation (Earl & Katz, 2006). This makes clear the relation between the Summative Assessment, Formal Assessment and these assessment purposes, also reflected on the results from the data gathering tools. Classroom observations reflect the relation between the assessment of skills and the percentage they are given. In one of the classes, one student asked the teacher about the percentages of the final grade based on the different skills, the teacher displayed the program on the board and showed the percentages (Speaking 25%, language use and reading 25%, classwork 30%). Both teacher and student did not agree with the high percentage assign to classwork, so teacher said that he would ask the department about it. (Barragán & Conde, Entry #1 (Elementary), 2014)

The previous situation could be associated with Chapelle & Brindley's (2002) idea about assessment purposes. Since one of these purposes is conventionally "made between 'proficiency assessment', which is concerned with measuring a person's general ability; and 'achievement assessment' which focuses on determining what has been learnt as part of a specific program usually for assigning marks" (p. 267) or in this case percentages. Once again the discussion between teacher and student about the quantitative assessment aims at having clear assessment criteria for the development of the course. This issue of quantitative scores will have an influence on the interviewed students' responses towards assessment that make them be focused on obtaining a grade, in order to succeed the course. This issue will be expanded on the next section 'Emergent categories'.

Additionally, the findings show that these purposes aim at obtaining information on the students' progress, determining final grades or preparing students for tests they will need to take in certain moments of the course. Not only these purposes have a student-centered approach, but also they help teachers to plan their instruction. One of the interviewed teachers clarifies the importance

of preparing the students for future test. “The idea is that all the activities we are going to do during the evaluation, we practice them in class and in classroom activities. Sometimes I have like a mock test of the one they are going to have for me to make sure they are familiarized with the type of evaluation they are going to present.” (ET8, Semi-structured interviews, 2013)

The previous statement let us identify the role the interviewed teacher has in the classroom, which is being a ‘guide’ that prepares the students for future assessment moments. In addition, the use of these type of ‘mock test’ not only help the teacher to make sure if their students are familiarized with the type of evaluation they might present, but also it becomes a tool to report accurate and detailed information that can be used to modify or improve future tests in order to measure fairly the students’ learning.

Now, the aspect of how the topics are assessed according to the teachers’ purposes is presented by one of the interviewed teachers: “I evaluate them in a different way, so I ask them to give not only the... they have to know the meaning, a synonym, and they have to use the word in context, so I ask them to write either sentences that cover two or more words or stories because they... that’s how I think it works better.” (ET6, Semi-structured interview, 2014). In this case teacher used a written test in order to assess both product and process of students in the ‘language and vocabulary’ skill. This assessment decisions are taken depending on what works best for the teacher. These decisions might go hand in hand with the best way to identify whether students can apply the key concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the curricular outcomes (Earl & Katz, 2006). Basically, the interviewed teacher tends to assess the students’ performance based on their knowledge about vocabulary of a specific topic or context.

According to the findings taken from the elicitation techniques, the assessment purposes *of* learning were the most recurrent (21 times) on the students’ drawings and statements. Here there are some examples taken from the elicitation techniques that reveal how some students perceive these types of purposes:

-“Evaluation exists just to be classified in a group and be considered intelligent or not depending on your grades” (ITST1, 2014). -“Assessment of a second language is wrong focused; you are only seeing the top of tree but not the roots of this tree” (LAST3, 2014). -“Evaluation for most of us means grades; a grade itself is a metaphor of our knowledge, a false and wrong metaphor”

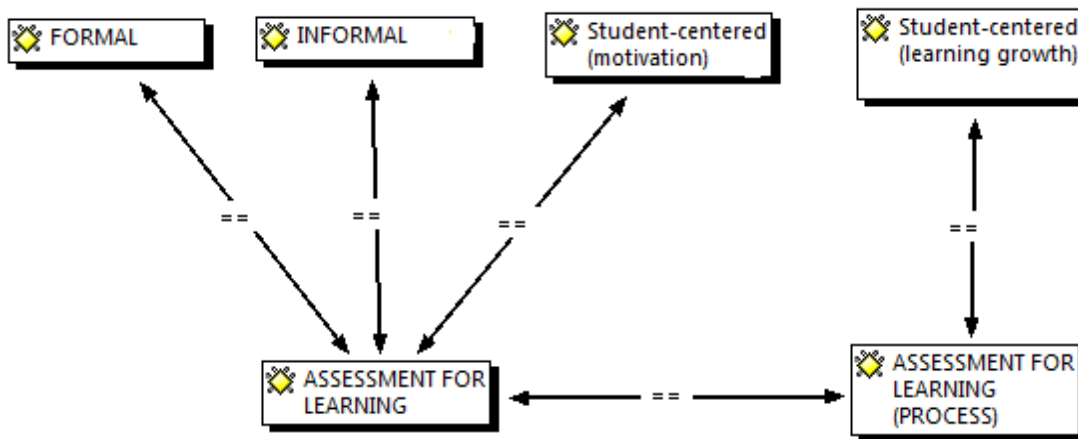
(LAST2, 2014). - “While students are overlooked, grades are overvalued” (EXST3, Elicitation Techniques, 2014)

These previous statements show the way in which 12 students associated the assessment purposes most of the times with grading. These grades indicate each student’s level of learning that they have developed and accomplished throughout the course. Some of the interviewed students consider that the score they received does not reflect completely their 12 knowledge. It is interesting how the participant students conceive assessment as a grade instead of conceiving it as “a holistic process that involves a deeper commitment from all the participant agents. Assessment is more than focusing the attention on specific elements or skills of the second language” as suggested by (Ahumada, 2001, p. 22)

Due to the fact that the purposes of assessment *of* learning were the most frequent, this leads us to contemplate the idea about the assessment moment that could be at the end of a unit or as a midterm. In brief, the purposes of ‘assessment of learning’ are summative in nature due to the fact that the purpose itself search for gathering data on students’ learning level at the end of a unit or term as a basis for judging students’ knowledge and skills (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu, 2004). As a consequence, since these purposes take place at specific moments, it could be said that there is a big possibility that teachers are teaching for testing and not necessarily for learning; hence, this issue may force students to focus their attention on studying for a test instead of regarding assessment as a learning tool. This could be done by implementing alternative assessment such as portfolio and peer-assessment, which promote the assessment *as* learning, instead of assessment *of* learning.

ii. Assessment *for* learning

Based on the research findings, the purposes linked to assessment *for* learning are also common on the English teachers’ answers (12 quotes). Assessment *for* learning is also linked to other sub-categories like: formal, informal and student-centered as it is presented on the next graphic:



Graph 7. Assessment *for* Learning and Its Corresponding Links and Subfamilies

Firstly, based on the results some assessment purposes *for* learning were also spotted in the teaching practice (non-participant observations), as well as in the other data gathering tools. These purposes are designed to make each student’s understanding visible, so that teachers can decide what they can do to help students progress. Furthermore, these purposes serve as an investigative tool that help teachers to find out about their students strengths and weaknesses, what they know and can do, and what confusions, preconceptions, or gaps they might have (Earl & Katz, 2006). Due to fact that one of the purpose of assessment *for* learning is to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in students, classroom observations allow us to identify the way in which some teachers used non-graded diagnosis test in order to have an approach about what the students know related to the topic that was going to be developed.

The following situation on one English classroom reflects the idea previously mentioned. The test was supposed to be taken at the end of the unit, but teacher decided to do it at the beginning as diagnose to see how well the student were on this topic before continuing with the unit that the book proposes. (Barragán & Conde, Entry #3 (Low-intermediate), 2014). The next day, after this Teacher asked students if it was clear the activity that they had yesterday about the diagnosis. Students said “yes” and Teacher complemented the idea by saying “It’s not that you don’t know anything. It’s that you have to learn. That’s why the importance of the diagnosis” (Barragán & Conde, Entry #4 (Low Intermediate), 2014).

The previous situation allows us to identify the teacher's purpose of having this diagnosis test as a way to make their students' skills and understanding of the new topic visible. Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that the teacher changed the assessment planning, using a different strategy in order to enhance students' motivation and commitment to move forward in their learning. For that reason, it is important that teachers collect a wide variety of information about the learning process of their students, in such manner that information becomes the basis not only for setting what they need to do next in order to enhance the student learning, but also for providing descriptive feedback for students and deciding on groupings, instructional strategies, and resources (Earl & Katz, 2006).

Secondly, these purposes reflect assessment as other way to formally document the growth in learning of the students, which in some cases is fostered by the teacher during different Informal Assessment Moments that take place throughout the class. As it is clarified by one of the interviewed students:

“She used to ask us to write a lot! And she said that it is important to see the context and for that reason everything, every grammar thing that we do, that we learn, we have to express it in a piece of writing paper. She evaluates like the progress, she asked us for the first essay or paper, and after that she asks us for a correction of that paper, so she can see how our improvement is.”
(LAST1, 2014)

The previous statement let us identify that what the participant teachers assessed was the students' progress in terms of the writing skill, not in a unique moment but as a periodic process. This assessment regarded as a continuous process leads the student to be aware of the learning enrichment achieve during the English course. According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) the periodic assessment, both formal and informal, can increase motivation by serving as milestones of students' progress. Therefore, students have the opportunity to become autonomous and transform the assessment process into a more student-centered one.

Additionally, the purposes of assessment *for* learning were barely present on the students' metaphors and images, but strongly present on the teachers ones (see Chapter 4). Next are detailed some of the teachers' metaphors that reflect the idea of assessment as a process, which in other words is one of the main characteristics of the purposes of 'assessment for learning': - Assessment is not a result, it's a process. (ET8, Elicitation Techniques, 2013) - Assessing will

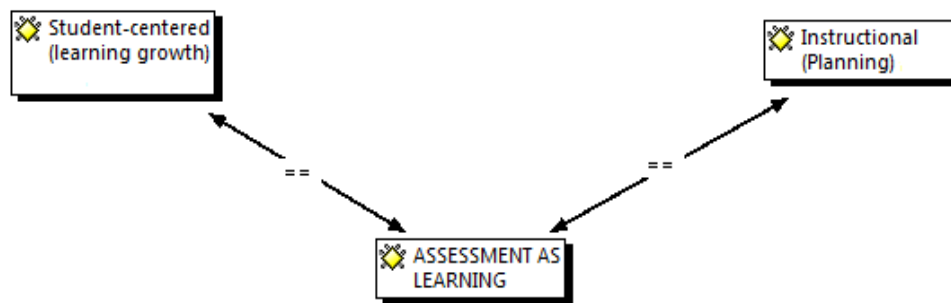
take you take to the end, the one you have planned and looked for (ET1, 2014). - Assessment is a wide road where there are obstacles that narrow this road that lead you to knowledge (ET6, Elicitation Techniques, 2014).

The interviewed teachers reflect the way they perceive assessment in these drawings and metaphors. Assessment tends to be seen as a process that could not be tied only to a result but more to the path that leads you to knowledge. This idea in some way creates a ‘cognitive tension’ defined by Brown (2004) as the conflict between the teacher’s speech about ‘teaching ideals’ and their teaching practice (Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete, 2012).

Taking the aforementioned ideas into account, it could be said that the interviewed teachers are aware and conscious about the existence of ‘Assessment *for* learning’. In fact, there is an interesting relation between these purposes and their ideals about assessment. Most of them claim on their metaphors and on the interviews that they pursue assessment as a process in which the students’ needs play an important role on the program modifications. Nevertheless, aspects such as time management, established practices and students’ level do not let them accomplish these assessment ideals.

iii. Assessment *as* learning

According to the research results taken from the teacher and students’ semi-structured interviews and classroom non-participant observations, the purposes of assessment *as* learning were the least frequent with only 8 quotations. Furthermore, these purposes were not even present on the elicitation techniques addressed to both language teachers and L2 students. The purposes of assessment *as* learning were associated with sub-categories such as: student-centered and instructional. These relations are presented on the following graphic:



Graph 8. Assessment *as* Learning and Its Corresponding Links and Subfamilies

Based on the results some assessment purposes *as* learning were less constant in the teaching practice (non-participant observations), in comparison with the other purposes (*of* learning and *for* learning). These purposes focus on students and emphasize assessment as a process of metacognition. Assessment *as* learning is based on the conviction that students are capable of becoming adaptable, flexible, and independent in their learning and decision-making besides they extend the role of teachers to include designing instruction and assessment that allows all students to think about, and monitor, their own learning (Earl & Katz, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, 2006).

Nevertheless, it was only possible to identify these kinds of purposes on the teachers' interviews, but neither on the students' interviews nor the class observations. One of the interviewed teachers stated that assessment should create a sense of awareness on the students towards their own learning process:

“I think assessment, assessment in general or any kind of evaluation process should be something that helps students to learn, it cannot be something that make students feel guilty. They should feel like “I’ve learnt”. So I think basically, if I tell them “this was your mistake” this is let’s say the result if they are able to understand why that happened and how that happened they will take it positively and they will continue learning.” (ET5, 2014)

The previous statement let us identify part of the role that assessment *as* learning plays on the l2 learning process. The assessment purposes ‘assessment *as* learning’ for the interviewed teacher provides opportunities for each student to monitor and critically reflect on his/her learning and identify next steps. However, according to the participants and the observations carried out in

some English levels. It could be seen that opportunities for ‘assessment *as* learning’ to be developed are not present enough at the English department of the major.

This low frequency leads us to claim that the assessment process is not clearly seen as learning that could have an effect on the teachers’ practice or on the students’ performance, but maybe this could be a consequence of a matter of time, commitment or effort from both students and teachers. This problematic related to the absence assessment *as* learning, was highlighted by one of the participant teachers.

“But that was formative and for many of them or for an average of them at least it was a very nice process, then thinking in groups, having the discussion of why one idea is better than the other or why even though that the idea is good, it’s not very well expressed, why don’t we say it like that, why don’t we use or put it like that. All that process done in groups is for many students what is going to teach them, how to actually learn, how to do, or how to write or how to read something because for many of them they need the discussion, they need the social interaction to really find out how it works. But it takes time, and teachers and students are not used to take time.” (ET6, Semi-structured interview, 2014)

The previous statement let us acknowledge a good experience as a consequence of implementing an assessment as learning moment. This activity where students come together to discuss by themselves the development of their task reflects a good learning opportunity to develop critical thinking for the whole group. These types of purposes emphasize on the idea of assessment as a metacognition process. This process of thinking about thinking plays an important role in learning a language because it helps students to be aware of their own language learning, behaviors and progress (Leaver, Ehrman, & Shekman, 2005). Nevertheless, different factors, in this case the lack of time, might affect the constant implementation of this type of activities that promote the assessment purposes as learning. As a result, the number of opportunities to foster the awareness of students towards their own learning does not increase, preventing students to get a deeper understanding about their learning and assessment process.

Lastly, the different perspectives that were gained from the use of different instruments let us sketch a contradiction between the assessment purposes the teachers have on their practice and

their ideal assessment, in Brown's word this represents 'cognitive tensions'. Likewise, there is a conflict between what interviewed students' think about the assessment purposes that both major and teachers apply, and what teachers think about these purposes. Therefore, from the interviewed students' perspective teachers are not teaching for learning, but teaching for testing whereas interviewed teachers argue that assessment is part of the learning process and it is a helpful tool that enhances students' learning growth. The previous statement is based on the answers gathered from the semi-structured interviews and elicitation techniques (see appendix b, see appendix d, appendix g and appendix h).

In conclusion, a balance between the three types of purposes: assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning should be established by teachers during their course planning. Based on the information recovered, these results lead us to ask ourselves to what extent students are aware of their own learning process and if they are familiarized with the different assessment purposes teacher have. Notwithstanding, it is advised not to generalize the high recurrence of the assessment purposes *of* learning on this study as the unique purposes teacher have since these statements depended on the data collected.

c. Washback

Last but not least, it is important to highlight washback as the third big section of this research study. This phenomenon was related to the Washback in learning and Washback in teaching. It was grounded in a total of 25 quotes. As defined by (Hughes A. , Testing for language teachers, 2003) 'Washback' or 'Backwash' is the effect of testing on teaching and learning, this effect could be harmful or beneficial, so for that reason it was decided to go towards washback from two perspectives that reflect the impact, effect and changes it has on the teachers' practice and the students' learning process.

i. Washback in learning

Washback in learning could be understood as the effect that the assessment practices have on the students' learning. This type of washback was reflected on some of the interviewed students', their answers went hand in hand with the feedback teachers gave them after the assessment moment. In most of the cases interviewed students considered that this effect was beneficial, and therefore they decided to make a change on their learning strategies in order to improve on future

assessment moments. One of the participant students claimed that after different assessment moments and activities in which the results were not the best, a change was needed to be made in order to accomplish the learning goals:

“And at the beginning, it was really terrible for me to speak in front of my classmates and I failed one course, so it was like worst because I felt like I was not good at this, so I was like nervous and afraid of different things in class, but then I decided to change that and I started to participate, I started to do many things in order to improve my English. So at the end it was great, it was a good experience even though I had a lot of problems” (EXST2, 2014)

The previous statement let us identify that the fact of failing the course cause a change in the student’s learning strategies since the student began to participate and practice in order to improve the English level. This experience reflects what is stated by Pan (2009) test has a positive impact by motivating students to work harder, to have a sense of accomplishment and thus, enhance learning.

According to the results, feedback was closely related with washback. This feedback plays an important role that might affect the way in which students make changes towards their learning strategies, being their results the starting point to accomplish their learning goals. One of the interviewed students claimed that in order to ameliorate his English level the student looked for exercises and extra practice: “R: What did you do after receiving that feedback? EXST2: I try to improve with extra practice or extra work even if the teacher didn’t take it into account. So I tried to look for different tools and methods to do that.” (EXST2, 2014)

The previous statement could be associated with the feedback as learning since the student searched different sources that helped to develop an independent learning. In this case, feedback helped the student to build up autonomy and competence (Earl & Katz, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, 2006).

However, the data gathered only let us state that this washback in learning produces a positive change in students’ learning; hence, it would be interesting to have an insight if students apply these changes on their learning process based on the feedback they got or if they take this feedback as an advice for future assessment moments.

ii. Washback in teaching

Washback in teaching is considered as a straightforward phenomenon that expects a change from the teachers in their assessment practices due to the effect testing and assessment have on the language teaching curriculum that is related to it. According to the findings this type of washback is built upon the students' outcomes such as: results, responses, level of English among others. One of the interviewed teachers argued that the program and curricular changes depend on how students respond to the assessment practices:

“We adjust the program, the teaching based on outcomes, if we know students and 60% of students fail on a particular item from the test, something must be going wrong with the teaching. So we readjusted for the semester and so on and so on.” (ET2, 2014)

The previous statement is opposed to what Pan (2009) stated where test encourage teachers to narrow the curriculum and lose instructional time leading to ‘teaching to the test’, since participant teachers do not narrow the curriculum, they tend to take into account the students’ results and outcomes in order to modify the curriculum if necessary. We considered that a balance between grades students obtain and other learning outcomes such as students’ responses toward test and the assessment environment should be established in order to avoid the risk of ending up ‘teaching to test’.

Even though students are not fully aware of becoming the axis of change teachers might have on their teaching practices, some of the interviewed teachers claim that students’ outcomes make them be aware of what they can do to modify and ameliorate the English learning process of their students. One of the teachers stated the following:

“What is interesting, what we are doing now after having research and having counting taking into account the results and how the students behave the reactions to assessment, which is test, etc. we decided that we have before two years ago we had three exams (two partials exam and the final one) and it seemed to us that it was too much, so we have changed the way we evaluate students and at this moment we are having just a partial exam and a final one”. (ET8, Semi-structured interviews, 2013)

The previous statement reinforces the idea of how the results and reactions from the students are taken into consideration to modify the assessment planning of the course. From this point, not

only teachers have the role to design how assessment is going to be developed but also students intervene indirectly in this assessment planning process.

Another interesting issue unraveled from the findings was the relation between the feedback teachers give to students and the washback in teaching, being feedback a pattern of change for future assessment processes, as it was argued by one of the interviewed teachers:

“Because that happened to me, after the students receive the record sheet with only the ticks, they don’t pay attention or they don’t care... So, I decided that teachers have to take their time to write something personal to each student according to their performance. Each student deserves a personal comment from the teacher, and that’s my position because if I have the same tick for you and for you what’s the point?” (ET4, 2014)

It is interesting to see on the previous statement how the interviewed teacher acknowledged the importance of giving detailed and descriptive feedback in order to improve students’ learning, instead of simply telling the students whether their answers were right or wrong. The prior idea supports what Bailey argued that teachers have a tremendous power to lead students to learn, to teach them language and how to work with test and tests results (Pan, 2009).

Taking into consideration what was mentioned above, we highlight the important role that washback plays not only in learning but also in teaching. Even though it could be helpful or adverse, in most of cases the data gathered allow us to identify how the participants improve, detect and ameliorate the possible gaps on the assessment process.

d. Situational/Effectiveness, Emotional Response & Students’ responses

It is relevant to mention that during the time in which the data was analyzed some categories emerged from the different teachers’ and students’ answers and observations. These emerging categories were given the names of ‘Situational/Effectiveness’ and ‘Emotional Response’. These categories were usually associated with the assessment moment and the type of assessment, which in consequence affected the students’ responses.

The ‘Situational/Effectiveness’ category was presented most of the times on the examples that interviewed students provided when reflecting about their best experience related to assessment. Elements such as test environment, interesting topics, non-explicitly graded test, and emotional

aspects such as: confidence, calmness and security tend to affect the interviewed students' responses.

According to some of the interviewed students answers this 'Situational/Effectiveness' were associated by us to Schlechty's responses. The first one was 'authentic engagement' understood as the full commitment from the student with assessment, which could be reflected on the following student's statement:

“And the best experience... was that he asked us to make a presentation, it was talking about a holiday and I didn't know that he was going to giving us a grade, and I was like just talking about my holiday and everything, presenting pictures and I was so excited! I had a really good grade because I really like the topic, and I didn't know that was going to be a grade”. (HIST1, 2014)

The previous statement let us perceive how the interviewed student responded well to an assessment oral practice that was not expected to be graded. And also the use of familiar and appealing topics showed to have a positive response from the interviewed student during the assessment moment. In words of Schlechty the student saw the activity as personally meaningful; therefore, the student reacted in a positive and committed way presenting an 'authentic engagement' response towards the assessment.

Based on the answer from one of the interviewed students that reflects best what was found on the students answers in the semi-structured interviews and elicitation techniques (see appendix d and appendix h); it was possible to identify also a 'strategic compliance' response. This type of response is defined as the motivation students have towards a grade not the task itself (Schlechty, 2002). The students' statement is presented below:

“After I receive the feedback I made some kind of questions, so I ask the teacher to explain me why in this skill I got this grade; I think that my grade is very low and it should be higher. But sometimes I don't get good answers. But when I get a better grade it is good and when I don't it's not so good. And also when you receive your grade you feel so anxious and expectative and this is because the grade is the most important thing in this degree.” (LIST1, 2014)

According to this statement, it is possible to identify interesting aspects about the goals of the interviewed student, the way he perceives assessment in the major and the way feedback is related with the grade not with the performance that lead to that grade. Firstly, it is clear that for

most of the participant students the goals are based on getting good grades. This perception goes hand in hand with the ‘strategic compliance’ response in which the goals are instrumental (grades, class rank and even parental approval) (Schlechty, 2002). Secondly, it could be seen that the interviewed student considered that the assessment purposes of this major are focused only on grading the students. Lastly, it is evident that after receiving the feedback the student focused the attention on the grade not on the comments that support how his performance was assessed.

The ‘Emotional Response’ category also was usually linked to the assessment moment and the types of assessment. We associate this category with the students’ answers given on the interviews and on their elicitation techniques. Most of the results obtained were stated by interviewed students when talking about the negative or worst experiences related to assessment. The ‘Emotional Response’ was constantly associated with the assessment moment, especially with the summative-formal assessment and the assessment moment. In the case of the results from the elicitation techniques words such as: pressure, stress, fear and anguish were highly associated (31) with the previous types of assessment (see Chapter 4). One of the interviewed students argued that there is a relation between the ‘Emotional responses’ and the assessment moment:

“..In my point of view, I don’t like exams...I hate those things because I think they are evaluating our memory more than the use of language, so I don’t like to be in front of a paper and I hate to fill gaps, because that’s something in the real life I won’t do. If I have to speak...I’m going to speak, I don’t ‘oh, the verb is here’ I prefer things different, but always I feel ill, fear, I don’t know, pressure, tension, I don’t like the exams.” (EXST4, 2014)

The previous statement, allows us to identify how emotional factors play a role on the assessment moment for the interviewed students. In addition, once again the student’s statement towards the assessment purposes of the major reflects a summative assessment focused on measuring the students’ memory and not the whole performance. This statement complements the idea of Díaz Larenas, Alarcón Hernández, & Ortiz Navarrete (2012) about the impact of 12 students’ feelings and the conditions of test taking on the performance and thus, students’ results on the assessment practice.

In both of the emerging categories mentioned above the productive skill (oral practice) was usually the most associated with the best and worst assessment experiences. One of the participant students ascribed the best assessment experience to an oral mid-term: “I think it was at the last levels because we usually have speaking exam, but it was more like presentation, so it was easy to be prepared and we were not being recorded because that was one of the things that got me nervous, so it was great because we were with the whole class, so it was like easy” (EXST2, 2014)

The previous statement reflect how the types of assessment affect the student’s performance, the emotions play an important role on the assessment moment since the less anxious or nervous the student felt, the more engaged and focused on the assessment she was. However, the following statement of an interviewed student let us identify how emotions, grades and the type of assessment had a negative impact on his performance:

“I think that the worst was last semester when I was presenting my speaking exam. Because I was really nervous, it was the last exam of the term and it had a big percentage of the grade. I was so nervous that when I started, my teacher asked me something that I don’t remember, and I started being confuse all the time, I confuse my ideas. I don’t think I did it really good. I finished m speaking exam and I started talking with him, and it was really nice...and I was like ‘why I couldn’t speak in this way when he was evaluating me’. (HIST1, 2014)

In this case, it is evident the negative emotional response that the interviewed student had when facing an oral mid-term. Once again, it is seen a relation between formal assessment practices and grades, which led the student to have a ‘strategic compliance’ response towards this type of assessment. Also, it is relevant to highlight that the students’ emotional response could go from a stressful state to a more relax one during an assessment moment depending on the aforementioned factors.

The researchers identified these emerging categories as counterparts, but equally important as the three main analysis categories (types of assessment, assessment purposes and washback). The emerging categories own an important role on the assessment process, the emotional and situational factors, which could affect the students’ performance and therefore, their results might differ from what they expect or what they really know.

To sum up, the previous section presents an approach to the way language assessment is perceived by some language teachers and some L2 students. This analysis allows us to identify and describe the assessment purposes teachers have and the washback that takes place in teaching and learning practices. In addition, it was possible to identify the role and influence aspects such as emotions, assessment environment, responses and feedback, have on the assessment and language learning process.

7. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND REASONS FOR CHANGE

a. Conclusions

In this section we present the corresponding conclusions of this research study. Likewise, we show the assessment purposes language teachers have and the washback on teaching and learning that these imply at the Bachelor of Arts in the Modern Languages in the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

First of all, based on the results and the analysis we conclude that the time when Formal assessment is carried out depend on established practices by the English Department, which takes place specifically on three moments or mid-terms. Nevertheless, informal assessment as such tends to be a part of the regular English classes; this type of assessment is carried out by the interviewed teachers independently from the established practice. We noticed that the interviewed teachers assess their students' performance (vocabulary and grammar) mainly through written tests. In the case of the productive skill (oral practice) the interviewed teachers and students argued that this skill was mainly assessed through oral presentations, which was also evident on the non-participant observations. In addition, according to the way teachers assess following their purposes, it was possible to identify and describe that all of these types of assessment were strongly linked to the summative assessment proposed on the established practices of the curriculum of the major.

Furthermore, in reference to what teacher assess, results showed that the topics assessed depend on the ones previously established on each level. Thus, it could be said that there is not a specific topic to be assessed since this depends on the subjects and themes developed and studied throughout the course, which demonstrate the validity aspect in terms of assessment criteria. Nevertheless, some of the interviewed teachers used familiar and appealing topics for their students or allow students to choose them freely for oral presentations, as long as they follow established parameters. Some interviewed teachers use test preparation mainly to familiarize their students with the type of tests they will face on future assessment moments.

Secondly, it is necessary to highlight that the concept of assessment on the curriculum is given as an assessment of language competence, understood as oral competence, written competence,

listening competence, reading comprehension competence and language use competence (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004). Nonetheless, for some of the interviewed teachers and students the assessment is regarded as an assessment of language skills not as a language competence assessment. Therefore, it is evident on the data gathered that students think that what is assessed is divided language skills not their language competence as a whole. So, it seems to be a gap between what is stated in the curriculum and what happens in the classroom.

Moreover, it is relevant to mention that the curriculum concerning foreign languages states alternative assessment practices related to the formative assessment that involves portfolio, self-assessment, quizzes, student's participation and group work. The findings of this study show that participants are aware of the existence of these practices; nevertheless, the portfolio, as a formative assessment practice, was not explicit neither on their discourse nor on the observations. The data gathered revealed a low presence of Formative Assessment, though it is not possible to state that formative assessment is not a part of the assessment process in the English courses at the major.

Thirdly, according to the findings the most frequent purposes that language teachers have are the purposes of 'assessment *of* learning'. This means that the interviewed teachers collect and interpret information on specific moments about student's accomplishments on using key concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes on a specific knowledge domain (Earl & Katz, 2006). In addition, these types of purposes allow the teacher to confirm whether the students achieve or not the curricular outcomes and goals on a specific moment of the semester. What is more, it was evident that the purposes of 'assessment *as* learning' was barely present on the data gathered, this means that assessment as a metacognition process is rarely regarded by the interviewed teachers at the major, and interviewed students hardly develop self-monitoring mechanisms that increase the changes to become independent on their learning process. We believe that in order to include assessment purposes of 'assessment *as* learning' in the learning process, assessment tools such as portfolios, could foster the students' participation and awareness of their learning and assessment process.

In terms of washback, the results and analysis of this research study show that beneficial washback was a tendency on the participants' answers. It was visible a relation between washback in learning and feedback, this means that some of the interviewed students change

their learning strategies after receiving a meaningful and detailed feedback. The relation between washback and the teaching practice was mediated by students' results, reactions and level of English.

This paper has argued that the type of assessment, feedback and results have an impact on the L2 students' responses. The data gathered displays how these assessment purposes together with the emotional and situational aspects affect the way students' respond on the assessment moment. For most of the students interviewed, the assessment goal is focused on achieving a good grade, which in Schlechty's (2002) words means a 'strategic compliance' response. It was also interesting and surprising to see how teachers acknowledge this goal, but because of factors such as: lack of time, lack of commitment, different learning styles of students or even established practices make complex for teachers to guide students to accomplish a learning goal instead of a grading goal.

This research study made us conscious about other interesting aspects related to the assessment process. On the one hand, there is a 'cognitive tension' for the interviewed teachers between the way in which they perceive assessment (as a learning process) and the way in which they apply assessment in their regular classes (as result on a specific moment). On the other hand, results show an unbalanced relation between what the interviewed students think of assessment as a specific and decisive event linked to grades rather than as a learning process stated by the interviewed teachers.

All in all, after analyzing the results, we consider that feedback is also an important component of the language assessment. According to the findings, this feedback could be focused on detailed and descriptive explanations, or it could be focused on presenting students mistakes. The data gathered allow us to see feedback as an error correction tool and as a profound reflection about the students' learning strengths and weaknesses; that takes valuable time from the interviewed teachers. For that reason, it would be interesting to see in future research studies the way feedback is handled by language teacher or 12 students.

To conclude with, as future language teachers, this research study enriches our experience as learners because we acknowledge that assessment is a complex field of study, but it is an essential one for the language learning process. The results and reflection lead us to see

assessment beyond the traditional paper-test. It also allows us to have a broader approach of assessment as an essential component of the language teaching and learning process. Our study lead us to a final thought about the way assessment is carried out on the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages. Since this major aims at training future language teachers, it is necessary to ask ourselves if our assessment purposes are focused on an assessment of learning that teach for testing or are focused on an assessment for learning that teach for learning.

b. Limitations

It is important to present the limitations of this research study in order to suggest possible future research proposals. Firstly, since this is a case study that does not aim at generalizing the information and corresponding results obtained, we want to clarify results are likely to change or vary in different context and with different participants. It is important to acknowledge that this research study provides detailed information that is based only on the interviewed teachers and students, and the non-participant classroom observations at the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Secondly, it is important to say that since this is a stratified sample, teachers and students voluntarily submit to answer the semi-structured interviews and permit us to observe their classes. The information gathered was rich enough to carry out this study, but future research studies could expand the sample and obtained different and also interesting results. It is recommended to use different instruments from ours to see if results differ or complement the ones presented on this research study.

c. Future steps

This research study was only a first approach to the way language assessment purposes are conceived at the Bachelor of Arts of Modern Languages in the English department. New research studies could be carried out focusing only on the teachers' perspective, or students' perspective, even at specific level or to contrast levels. According to the results, it could be seen that some assessment policies established on the curriculum of the major are not being implemented in the English classrooms (Portfolio & Self-assessment). We also believe in the importance of having assessment present at the moment of planning the development of the course. Furthermore, we suggest that L2 students should take advantage of the course of

‘Pedagogía y Didáctica 3’ in order to get familiarized with assessment and all the different factors that are involved in this process.

To conclude this research study, we agree that it is always a good moment to start analyzing the assessment purposes that we have. As future language teachers we could ask ourselves if we are looking for a grade, if we are only looking for a specific moment to assess or maybe if we are looking assessment as a process. Finally, if both language teachers and L2 students are conscious about the problematic related to assessment, why do not we start taking those firsts steps towards change?

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