

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TBL APPROACH TO FOSTER EFL 5TH GRADERS'
ORAL PRODUCTION AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN LA UNIÓN, ANTIOQUIA.

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ABSTRACT

This document discloses an action research that I carried out at a public educational institution, in La Unión, Antioquia. In this institution, specifically in 5th grade, I realized the lack of significant oral production that impedes students to generate conversations and communicate in the target language. Through this work, I intended to implement Task Based Learning (TBL) approach with the main objective of analyzing how this strategy can foster 5th – 6th graders' oral production. The data was collected through journals, audio and video recordings and surveys; thus during and at the end of the time established to execute it, results were analyzed and conclusions were generated. This study revealed how important it is to teach English using materials and authentic tasks that generate interest in students to participate in classes and the desire to learn the target language working in groups through cooperative learning.

Key words: Oral production, Task Based Learning approach, Teenager learners, English classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Willis (1996) proposed a new Task-Based Learning (TBL) framework where language learners begin their studies by joining in communicative activities using the grammatical resources they have on hand. These so-called fluency-oriented tasks or activities have as a primary focus communication and negotiation of meaning.

There are different studies carried out and published by researchers who have been interested in implementing TBL to enhance oral production. I selected four studies which are connected to my research project. The first study carried out by Castillo, Insuasty and Jaime (2016) in an A2 level English course at a school of foreign languages in a Colombian university. They intended to analyze the extent to which the implementation of authentic materials and tasks contribute to the enhancement of communicative competence. The data collection instruments were observation and tape-record of lessons, surveys, teacher's diary and interviews.

Among the results found, materials were perceived as appropriate and useful in all the classes by students and observers. They also provided students with opportunities to use their speaking skills, helped students use the target language in a communicative way, and provided the teacher with the opportunity to develop communicative activities. Another important finding regarding the students' communicative competence was that in four out of five interventions the authentic tasks and authentic materials contributed positively to the development of grammatical, textual, and illocutionary competences, evident in their written products and their oral speech.

The second project done by Córdoba (2016). A qualitative study conducted with six first semester students of English as a foreign language program at a public university in Colombia.

The author's purpose was to know to what extent TBLT promotes the integration of the four linguistic skills in students at the university level. He implemented case-study research. A series of six interviews and the same number of observations were conducted to provide validity to the research. The findings of his study suggest that TBLT is a meaningful approach to integrate language skills in an EFL program. The participants performed class assignments that helped them develop tasks which included continuing exercises in receptive and productive skills and have more time to practice doing tasks that required the integration of language skills in a lesson through the use of contextualized and meaningful activities that support natural language acquisition.

The third research related to this approach was developed by a teacher from the Universidad de Antioquia (Colombia). Buitrago (2016) published the results of an action-research focused on improving students' communicative competence in English through the TBL. This study was conducted in a co-educational public school located in the Northeast area of Medellin (Colombia) with thirty-four 10th graders. This research followed the qualitative paradigm and the author planned to implement two teaching actions through a series of steps. The actions consisted basically on (1) defining four thematic units coherent with students' interests, needs, and the syllabus; and (2) implementing the TBL approach through the development of a series of tasks. The instruments for data collection were: field notes to record the events within the classroom, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and students' artifacts in order to identify improvements in students' communicative competence.

Data revealed that students improved their communicative competence through the implementation of listing, ordering, sorting, comparing, and sharing personal experiences tasks as part of the framework for TBL. Data also suggested that the TBL approach helped students in learning vocabulary. The researcher pointed out this as a significant finding because vocabulary

acquisition is viewed as a key aspect to acquire a high level of mastery in the English language. Finally, with this research some factors that affected negatively the TBL approach implementation in her EFL classroom as well as the communicative competence development were detected. Factors by students such as few students' lack of willingness to participate in some tasks and group work. Also factors by the teacher, she recognized her lack of experience at the beginning of the implementation, the long time she devoted to the language focus stages, the development of teacher-centered tasks, her lack of enough modeling and vocabulary given to the students before developing the tasks.

The last study selected was carried out by Ramírez and Artunduaga (2017), it presents the results of a qualitative action research examining the effects of authentic tasks on oral production with a group of 10th graders at a public school in the south of Colombia. This study intended to encourage students to enhance their oral production and to make the learning process more meaningful through the use of tasks. Data were collected through video recordings, interviews, and field notes. Four different authentic tasks whose individual implementation took approximately three class sessions were designed for the pedagogical intervention.

The researchers expressed that the main motivation behind their research was to find out the effect authentic tasks have on a group of EFL learners' oral production which was examined in terms of the ability of the students to interact using the foreign language in real communicative situations. They found that the use of authentic tasks helped students to increase their confidence at the moment of speaking because they did not concentrate too much on linguistic forms but on reaching their objectives. Regarding linguistic competence there were important findings like the use of images was essential for students to make themselves understood. Regarding pragmatic competence tasks provided the opportunity for students to organize their ideas and messages in a

coherent way.

A slight comparison among the aforementioned studies can be done as it follows: all the researches were developed in public educational institutions and used almost the same data collection methods but those differ from mine in the following ways. For instance, Castillo et al. (2016) worked with two courses of few students with a broader age range and with the same English level, but their exercise was only applied in one course to compare at the end the degree of effectiveness between them. In a similar vein, in the last three studies all the participants were young learners; the age range was from 12 to 22 years old. In fact, Córdoba (2016) worked with twenty-five university students and that means they had a higher level of maturity. Additionally, they were few and that allowed the development of tasks in a simpler and faster way. Another characteristic that makes it different from my research is that the researcher sought to promote the integration of the four skills and that was not my aim, I had a precise focus on oral production.

Whereas Buitrago (2016), and Ramírez and Artunduaga (2017), implemented their research with students from 10th grade, I implemented it with students from 5th grade. Buitrago (2016) recognized that because of her inexperience she failed to allow her students to observe a model made by other people to better understand the purpose and the possible results of the task. In my case I took the precaution of presenting a model of the main task specifically for my students so they could be clearer about my purpose and were more encouraged to work to strengthen oral production.

All those studies mentioned above were developed in the same year and that creates a big difference in relation to mine since my intention was to start developing my project in the last months of their 5th year of primary school (2019) and finish it next year when they are in 6th grade of middle school (2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Félix María Restrepo Londoño is a co-ed institution located in the urban area of the municipality of La Unión, Antioquia. It offers education services from preschool to high school level. The institution's mission is to integrally and permanently train students through a curriculum inspired by humanism, the constant search for truth, the development of knowledge, research, harmonious coexistence, social projection and the reaffirmation in human values for the well-being of students, family and society. Its vision for the year 2020 was to consolidate an educational service based on curricular competencies, which allowed the comprehensive training of the children and youth of the municipality; providing an excellent quality of service, based on research, scientific, cultural, ethical and social leadership put at the service of the country.

In 5th- A group there were 40 students with an age range between 10 and 13 years who studied in the morning with an intensity of 3 hours of English weekly. Based on some observations made in their educational context, I could say that these students were dynamic and energetic who still enjoyed playing games. They were also students who relied on friends, news and social networks to obtain information and form opinions. They perceived learning English as something important that allows them to interact with foreigners, pursue higher education, travel, get better jobs in the future, and be able to help other people.

Currently, The Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006) establishes in its policy the Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo (2004-2019) which seeks that high school graduates close to completing their studies must reach B1 (Preintermediate) English level of proficiency in 2019; higher education students, level B2, which is the same level that all English teachers must have. (MEN,

2006, p. 57). Students with B1 English level could easily access employment and educational opportunities that help them improve life quality. We as teachers cannot claim to comply with the standards proposed by the national government in terms of education in English if we do not offer our students opportunities to integrate all the skills. If we do not address the four skills in a communicative manner, as specified in the national standards, and do not foster the development of oral production in English from elementary school levels, students will very likely finish high school without having reached B1 level in English. An evidence of that is the performance level in English language achieved by the Colombian students in the year 2019 through the implementation of the national test by Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior, where only 6% of students obtained B1 level and just 4% reached a higher level. The majority of applicants achieved an A- level, exactly 50% (ICFES, 2019). Students whose level of English is not enough to meet the standards of a basic user are grouped in the category A- where most of the students are.

Looking at my context, despite the fact that students had a bilingual teacher and counting with very good materials for English learning such as books, tape recorders, CDs, posters, television and also the advantage of having internet connection, students were not developing oral production significantly, just the pronunciation of vocabulary and the reading of short sentences. Students were always asked to memorize vocabulary lists and grammar explanations. Not implementing the teaching, learning and evaluation activities to enhance oral performance impedes students the opportunity to strengthen their communicative abilities in English. This was evidenced during one of my class observations (Class Observation 4, August 29, 2019); the final exam for the quarter was a 100% written one, asking for statements in present progressive tense.

In order to conduct this action research, I took into account the context above described where I was planning to implement actions that were intended to improve the situation previously described. I consider it a mistake to implement a practice that does not match the level of the students or that does not encourage the strengthening of all their skills. As I already described, teaching practices with 5th - A students focused on grammar exercises and vocabulary learning through repetition. The development of oral ability was very little or almost nil.

Scrivener (1994) claims “there is no point in knowing a lot about language if you cannot use it (which, sadly, has been the experience of many language learners in the past-able to conjugate a verb, but unable to respond to a simple question)” (p.146). In agreement with Scrivener, I consider that it does not make sense that a student knows how to write the name of all parts of the house in English but does not know how to ask if he/she can go to the restroom using the target language. There can be no learning without input and it is not only the quantity of input but also the type, quality, and level of the input that allows the output. According to Rhalmi (2019) “The input refers to the processible language the learners are exposed to while listening or reading (i.e. The receptive skills). The output, on the other hand, is the language they produce, either in speaking or writing (i.e. The productive skills)” (Par.1). When students do not have the opportunity to orally produce in English, they cannot develop their communication skills to use it effectively in real communication situations. It is important that we as teachers provide students with the necessary skills to communicate effectively in the target language so that they can share and exchange their opinions, ideas, feelings, etc.

Task-Based Learning approach can contribute to the students’ oral production because this approach is based on the implementation of learning activities in small groups of students that carry out a task related to the subject treated by the teacher and that is of interest to students. 5th

grade students in this public institution might benefit in their English language learning because they would have the opportunity to participate in different tasks and activities that I as a teacher would develop with them. These activities would offer group interaction and cooperative work. Although there was the possibility that students were reluctant to participate in oral activities for fear of being wrong, the challenge for me as their teacher was to provide teenagers with opportunities for meaningful interaction and to establish interesting and enjoyable tasks to motivate students to practice and learn the language in a comfortable environment. Thinking about this, my question arose: How can TBL approach foster 6th EFL learners' oral production at a public school in La Unión, Antioquia?

JUSTIFICATION

This research project sought to explore the benefits of teaching English language through Task-based Learning (TBL) approach. Among other objectives, I want to share with other teachers how the fact of giving students the opportunity to interact, participate and work cooperatively developing tasks favors students' language learning. My work may serve as a model for teachers to develop learning activities focused on strengthening children's oral production while developing cooperative and communicative tasks close to the students' real world.

In the Félix María Restrepo high school, I expected to, on the one hand, provide the teaching community with a pedagogical experience that could afford them an example of implementing a method of cooperative and communicative type in English teaching. English teachers or pre-service teachers might use this project as a resource to support the development of different communication skills and the planning of classes in which the needs, likes, interests and

learning styles of their students are considered. On the other hand, I expected students to significantly improve their level of English, especially their oral production. I intended students to discover the benefits of working in groups and enjoy learning by developing tasks relevant to their reality.

The development of this project allowed me as a pre-service teacher to improve my experience as English teacher in the sense that my actions were aimed at transforming my classroom practices, ensuring the appropriation of competence standards and using pedagogical material effectively. Also this project helped me gain experience as a researcher-teacher identifying the needs of a certain context, being more skilled in the activity of collecting, managing and analyzing data. I gained experience teaching, leading my group of students and implementing meaningful tasks during the development of this project. Teachers are called to continue doing research to improve their practices, and with this experience I was able to do so.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To analyze how TBL approach can foster 6th graders' oral production.

Specific Objectives

- 1) To characterize the students in their social environment.
- 2) To diagnose what the oral production of the students is at the beginning of the project.
- 3) To determine the students' reaction to a new learning method.

CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES

Taking into account the purpose of my research project, in this section I define the concepts that guided it.

Task Based Learning (TBL)

Permana (n.d.) defines Task-Based Learning (TBL):

Task-Based Learning is a different way to teach languages. It can help the student by placing them in a situation like in the real world where oral communication is essential for doing a specific task. Hence, the Task-Based approach aims at providing opportunities for learners to use the target language both spoken and written language through learning activities to engage the authentic, practical and functional use of language for particular purposes. (p. 2)

As it was said above, a very important aspect of those tasks is their authenticity. Nunan (1989) claims that “authentic refers to any material which has not been specifically for the purpose of language teaching” (p. 54). Thus, an authentic task could be considered as such, only if it has a clear and direct relationship with the things that happen in life.

Willis (1996) proposes three stages when implementing TBL:

Pre-task: The moment when the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, and presents examples to learners. Some useful procedures in this part involve using materials to lead into a topic, brainstorming for ideas, comparing and sharing ideas, providing a model, doing a similar task, and

allowing the students time to plan.

In the task cycle, students do the task in pairs or small groups and prepare the report while the teacher monitors the process. When students present the report, the teacher listens and comments. This report indicates the process learners have followed to accomplish the tasks as well as the conclusions they reached.

The final stage is language focus which provides opportunities for students to analyze and practice specific linguistic forms. (as cited in Artunduaga and Ramirez, 2017, p. 54)

According to Willis and Willis (2007) TBL promotes real language use; when doing so, they become leaders and organizers of discussion, managers of group or pair work, motivators to engage students in performing a task and language experts to provide language feedback when needed. The authors state that “a good task not only generates interest and creates an acceptable degree of challenge, but also generates opportunities for learners to experience and activate as much language as possible” (p. 70).

Oral Production

Oral production comprises several stages, one of them is the spoken interaction, which according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), it is organized by three macro-functions: ‘interpersonal’, ‘transactional’ and ‘evaluative’. (p. 83). My project focused on interpersonal function: conversation.

CEFR (2018) defines conversation:

Conversation concerns interaction with a primarily social function: the establishment and

maintenance of personal relationships. Key concepts operationalized in the scale include the following:

Setting: from short exchanges through maintaining a conversation and sustaining relationships to flexible use for social purposes;

Topics: from personal news, through familiar topics of personal interest to most general topics;

Language functions: from greetings etc. through offers, invitations and permission to degrees of emotion and allusive, joking usage. (CEFR, 2018, p 84)

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) claim that “speaking is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher to teach” (p.33). The use of English as a foreign language requires that teachers promote oral skills, being this one of the most complex tasks that English teachers must face in EFL classrooms.

In relation to oral skill, Littlewood (1981) suggests:

Learners must develop skills and strategies for using the language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. This makes it crucial to include speaking activities in the English language class since they promote meaningful activities within a cooperative learning environment, strengthening self-esteem, and improving social relationships. (As cited in Peña & Onatra, 2008, par. 9)

Teenager Learners

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence begins at age 10, and defines young people as individuals between ages 10 and 24.

Csikszentmihalyi (2020) points out teens not often have a clear function of their own in society but maintain an ambiguous lapse of time between childhood and adulthood. During adolescence, teenagers experience issues of emotional separation from their parents. This separation is important for the establishment of distinctive values, the transition to self-sufficiency forces many young people to make a sequence of adjustments. In Western cultures these issues most usually define adolescence, and the manner teenagers reply to them partially determines the nature of their adult years.

Adolescence can be seen as a period of social role learning and restructuring: not simply a period in which early learning is crystallized, but rather one in which unlearning and new learning take place. Along with training for specific roles, there is learning in the sense of cognitive and affective reorganization away from the behavioral modes of childhood and toward adult modes (Barry III and Schlegel, 1991).

The Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) establishes, through Basic Learning Rights, expectations about the level and characteristics of performance in the English language that students in each grade level must have. Within the rights for the 6th grade, it is established that students understand and use familiar words and short phrases about routines, daily activities and preferences. They can also describe basic characteristics of people, things and places that allow them to participate in short conversation.

Harmer (2001) states that when teenagers are enticed, they commit to and develop great potential for learning and creativity. They are passionate about things that interest them. The young people involved in the class make it more exciting because they pursue a learning objective with enthusiasm.

METHODOLOGY

My research project had a qualitative approach given that “qualitative approaches are generally used to explore new phenomena and capture the thoughts, feelings or interpretations of meaning and process of individuals” (Given, 2008, p. 26). This study was not based on a hypothesis where formulations are made and tests are carried out to confirm or disconfirm that assumption. On the contrary, this was based on a problem that affects in a certain way the members of a specific context, in this case the educational context where there are many students, all with different ways of thinking and acting. Burns (1999) notes that qualitative research is based on data collected by the researcher who seeks to offer descriptions, interpretations and clarifications to make sense of human behavior within a given social research context. Furthermore, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) describe that qualitative methodology allows handling research questions that need knowledge and/or clarification of social manifestations in a particular context. It is a really convenient methodology to examine problems that have certain complexity and to analyze situations and processes that take place over time.

In relation to the type of study, I implemented an action research. Burns (2010) expressed the following:

‘Action research’, a term that seems to contain a rather odd combination of two different kinds of behaviour – action and research. We saw that these behaviours come together in AR through cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection that problematise (in a positive sense) issues, dilemmas or gaps that concern us in our teaching situations. (p. 19)

Among different types of research, action research refers specifically to disciplined

research conducted by the teachers with the intention that the research will provide them information and possibly allow them to change their practices in the future. This research is carried out within the context of the teacher's environment, that means, with the students and in the school in which the teacher works, on situations that address educational issues (Ferrance, 2000).

Based on what was presented by the aforementioned authors, I could say that action research and teaching have an excellent connection that helped me carry out my project in a participatory and inclusive way since it allowed all participants to be taken into account and to recognize their value during the research development on my focus topic in my social context. It also allowed me to collect and analyze data so that afterwards possible changes in teaching are well argued.

Participants

The Félix María Restrepo Londoño co-educational school has three 5th groups, each one with forty-five students. Based on class observations into the 5th-A grade I could identify that students worked mainly in vocabulary learning and in the conjugation of common verbs in written form. They have a basic level of English language given that their language performance is reduced to listing words. Having the authorization of the head teacher I explained to all the students my desire and aim to carry out my study in their group. I notified them that all of them are participants during the process in their English classes but only eighteen from the rest of them belong to the sample, students who gave me the consent form signed by themselves and a parent or legal guardian. It is a volunteer participation expressed by the students of the sample. Besides, the research does not negatively affect any student in the group.

According to the results obtained in a survey answered by the participants at the beginning of the project, it can be said that more than half of them like the English language and that they consider it as a useful tool that opens doors, it serves to read different books and listening to other type of music, to travel abroad, interact with others, be able to study further, do better jobs in the future and be able to help others.

This project took place during their second semester of the school year in 5th grade and continued during their first semester of the school year when they were in the 6th grade of the middle school. I also participated in the project because it is an action research and that involves me all the time in two different ways: I was the teacher of the class, leading the process of developing tasks in the EFL classroom and I also collected and analyzed the data from this project. I am a teacher in training who seeks reflection on teaching to achieve continuous changes and improvements in my English teaching work.

Data Collection Methods.

The methods for data collection that I used allowed me to obtain all the information I deemed necessary to then analyze it and be able to draw conclusions.

Journals

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) claim: “A journal or diary is not only the emotional security it may afford but also for the researcher to reflect on the research, step back and look again at the scenes in order to generate new ideas and theoretical actions” (p.134). Journals are an alternative for field

notes that are made during the research. The accumulation of notes of my observations and reflections in a journal was very enlightening, since over time these notes allowed me to describe my students' performance in the classroom and the interactions of these descriptions. Also, with my journal I could provide continuous written reports of the processes and events that occurred inside and outside the classroom during the development of English learning tasks. Diaries and journals contain more subjective and personal reflections and interpretations than the relatively formalized recordings of notes, Burns (1999).

Audio and Video recording

Audio and video recording are a technique for capturing in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances. Used in the classroom, they are thus very valuable sources of accurate information on patterns of interactional behaviour which may not be obvious during the actual teaching process. (Burns, 1999, p.94)

I used video or audio recording to keep my students' responses along with the implementation of this learning approach; to record small group interactions in different types of tasks that foster oral production. The recordings gave me very valuable information for the analysis of the data since those provided me both visual and oral support.

Surveys

Surveys are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population. They are also well suited for gathering demographic data that describe the composition of the sample (McIntyre,

1999, p. 74). Surveys are inclusive in the types and number of variables that can be studied, require minimal investment to develop and administer, and are relatively easy for making generalizations (Bell, 1996, p.68). Surveys can also elicit information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques (McIntyre, 1999, p. 75).

I decided to implement surveys in my research project with the purpose to determine how my students perceive themselves in their English learning process developing different tasks, knowing that the main aim was the improvement of their oral production. Due to the students' level of English, the survey (See Appendix A) was designed in Spanish so that the language was not an impediment when reading and interpreting the questions. The initial survey has open-ended questions where they give their opinions, for example when I ask them about the pleasure and usefulness they find in the English language. It also has close-ended questions, for instance when I ask them if they like to work as a team with their classmates and if they have an internet connection at home. Glasow (2005) The multiple choice question is an example of this type where the respondent is asked to compare the possible answers and select one. The investigator must ensure that the respondent understands the answer options. When you want to rank items in order of preference, these types of questions are a very useful tool.

During the study advancement I would implement other surveys with the aim of knowing what are their strengths and/or weaknesses noticed by themselves, also their perceptions towards the English class and the methodologies implemented by me as the teacher. The use of surveys allowed me to have a better understanding of the students' thoughts, styles and rhythm for learning.

Ethical Considerations

Every research must have ethical considerations that allow researchers to carry out their work in a safe manner, being responsible and careful with all the information obtained in the development of their projects. In my particular case, the ethical considerations I considered allowed all participants to be calm because their identity and personal information was not being disclosed without their prior authorization by an informed consent.

Informed consent goes further than just letting your participants know you are doing research. It means giving them sufficient information about the research so that they can decide whether to be involved. Participants have a right to know about the purpose, the procedures, possible effects of the research on them, and how the research will be used, and should not be deceived or tricked about the aims of the research. (Burns, 2010, p.35)

In my particular case, an informed consent (See Appendix B) was signed by guardians and students to inform them about the purpose of my project. I made sure participants fully understood what I was doing and that this project did not affect them negatively. They already knew that their identity would be protected and that the results obtained would only be used for educational purposes. They also knew that they could leave the project at any time without negative consequences. Likewise, at the end of the implementation, they had the right to know about the findings obtained.

ACTION PLAN

Based on the cycle of action research, the action plan was divided in five stages at the beginning of the project which are: 1) First Observation, 2) Reflection, 3) Planning, 4) Action, and a 5) Second Observation.



Figure 1. Action research cycle. Adapted from "Interaction Design Foundation," by unknown, 2016, *Interaction Design Foundation*. Retrieved June 12, 2020, from <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/an-introduction-to-action-research> . Copyright 2020 by D.F. López.

First Observation

The first observation stage allowed a perception of the problem in that specific context. From August 13th to November 12th, which comprised 14 class sessions of 50 minutes, by using a journal as data collection instrument, important information was registered on situations that

occurred and activities carried out in the classroom during the English classes with the purpose of making a later analysis.

Reflection

The reflection stage enabled me to have a clearer idea of the context taking into account the performance of the English teacher in aspects such as the use of class time, work materials, her tone of voice, her body language, her learning assessment methods and her group management. Also taking into account the performance of students in aspects such as their behavior in class, their responsibility in the development of activities, their understanding when the teacher speaks and explains, in addition to their interest in learning English. The reflection expanded thanks to the data collected from the surveys answered by the students.

Planning

The Planning stage began with the *Pre-task* where according to the TBL approach, it is the moment when I as teacher explore the topic with my students, highlight vocabulary and I present them models. I showed them a model video created by Colombian students from another school with a higher level of English, a video created especially for my students. I made sure that all of the students understood my main aim carrying out my project during the first semester of their sixth grade, informing them that their participation would be voluntary. Also, activities and events lived in the classes were registered for further analysis.

Action

During the Action stage I continued with the *Pre-task* due to the need to perform a diagnosis task (See Appendix C). I made video recordings where it was possible to watch groups of three students and each group accomplished a conversation among them. The objective of the activity was to know their use of the target language during the recordings. Other part of the *Action* stage where *Task-cycle* should have taken place performing the final task (See Appendix D) was not possible to implement due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Second Observation

The *Second Observation* where *Language focus* should have been carried out took place when the covid-19 pandemic occurred. From March 15th to July 31st, all schools in Colombia were closed according to the 457 decree given by the current president of the republic which forced education during those three months to go virtual. Therefore, the data collection in situ was not possible.

The following chart shows specific information on the development of the action plan revealing the activities carried out in the research context with exact dates. It also shows the observations and analyzes that were possible to perform using the data collection methods during those dates.

Observation Stage			
Date	Goal/Activities	Observation/Notes	Analysis
01/08/2019	-Meet the students. -Introduce myself as a pre-service teacher.	-Co-educational school. - 5 th grade - Forty-five students. - Three hours of English per week.	-Active students. -Good communication between the English teacher and the students, but sporadically using few words in English like yes, ok, good.
15/08/2019	Know more about students' performance and the English teacher's performance.	Grammar and vocabulary development.	- The students' lack vocabulary and it impedes communication. -The teacher focuses only on written vocabulary and the repetition of this.
29/08/2019	Implementation of the term test.	Creation of short sentences using the verb to be and the progressive tense.	-The students carried out the term with the availability of using their notebooks and dictionaries for looking vocabulary. -The term did not have an oral production section.
05/09/2019	Vocabulary review	Draw and paint a house pointing out its parts in English	-The students worked cooperatively. -After several class observations I realized that the teacher does not focus on students' oral production. - I discovered the possibility of implementing a research project focused on the students' oral production.
24/09/2019	Prepositions of place. Review.	Images painting and completing sentences.	-Most of the students focused first on painting the pictures and waited for the teacher to finally complete the sentences on the board for them to complete theirs on their photocopies.
30/09/2019	Progressive tense. Review	Creation of short sentences using the parts of the house and the progressive tense.	The students developed a written activity through cooperative work.

29/10/2019	Review of topics.	Writing and reading of a dialogue.	-The teacher admitted in front of the students that throughout the year they had done very little oral production and for that reason they would work in pairs writing a short dialogue using their notebooks for looking information and topics like greetings, numbers, food and others. - I listened to some pairs and I noticed some grammatical and pronunciation mistakes in their short dialogues.
Reflection Stage			
Based on the class observations, it can be said that in each class the teacher has the active role that imparts knowledge and the students a passive role that receives the knowledge but does not produce significantly. According to the implemented survey, 73% of students like the English language, but it is clear that there must be a change to improve the learning.			
Planning Stage- <i>Pre-task cycle</i>			
12/02/2020	-Introduce myself again as a pre-service teacher who is going to be with them during the first semester of this year in their English classes. -Explain to them my intention of carry out a research with them and what is this about -Make sure myself that all of them understand what my intention is. -Deliver to the participants the informed consent.	- 6 th grade - The same group. - Forty-five students. - New English teacher. - Three hours of English per week.	-The Cooperator Teacher is interested in the implementation of the project. -The teacher sees it as an opportunity to learn more about students and English teaching. -I noticed almost all of my students have willingness to be participants in my project, so I delivered to them the informed consent which must be signed by the students and their parents or legal guardians.
19/02/2020	-Receive the signed informed consents from the students. - Give the whole	Show my students a video where there are two students from other school performing a role of	-I explained to them the aim of showing them that video and their task, the challenge of continuing the

	group an example of oral production.	foreigners. They pretend to visit Colombia and they ask us information about stay and places to visit.	study and learning some topics according to the English curriculum to answer those two students. - After watching the video some students expressed their desire to can speak English like the guys in the video, calmly and fluently. -Eighteen students gave me their informed consents.
<i>Action Stage - Pre-task cycle</i>			
04/03/2020	-Implement the diagnosis activity	-Work with the research participants. -Ask them to form groups of three students. - Call on the students of each group to talk among them about Colombia, specifically about themselves, our municipality and its places to visit. -Get video recordings of the conversations of each group.	-Some students expressed to me that they were not able to record the video because they could not speak English. They were sorry. -I explained to them again the respect for their privacy and nobody will know their identity if they don't want it. -During the recording of the videos they were calm and in the most part of their conversations they used Spanish. -They used little English vocabulary and some grammatical structures. Common vocabulary with pronunciation mistakes and short structures such as: My name is Andrea.
<i>Action Stage -Task cycle</i>			
From 17/03/2020 To 25/04/2020	-Teach students topics according to the curriculum and which are useful for the development of the main task of the TBL approach. -Implement different tasks focused on oral production in English	The implementation of these was not possible due to the aforementioned Covid-19 pandemic.	

	<p>so that students work cooperatively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the main task (videos) where the project participants give an answer to the request of the students from the other school. 	
Second Observation-<i>Language Focus</i>		
<p>From 27/04/2020 to 18/05/2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide students opportunities to practice and analyze their task. -Make a second observation. -Give feedback to students in relation to their performance relating the task 	<p>The implementation of these was not possible due to the aforementioned Covid-19 pandemic.</p>

DATA ANALYSIS

Information obtained from the survey implemented at the beginning of the project is analyzed in this section. The survey contains open-ended questions which allowed students to answer in their own words questions like *¿Te gusta el idioma Inglés? ¿Por qué?* Open-ended questions also allow the researcher to explore ideas that would not otherwise be aired and are useful where additional insights are sought (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 81). Open-ended questions were analyzed in recurrent categories emerging from their short answers, then grouped and graphed. For instance, *¿Para que nos sirve aprender Inglés?* Twenty-one (51%) from a total of forty-one students highlighted its importance for traveling to other countries, e.g. *“Para ir a otro país y saberlo utilizar en países con lenguaje inglés”*. Fifteen students (37%) expressed the usefulness of the language to work, four students (10%) see it as a mean of interaction and just one student (2%) thinks that it serves for fun. This allows us to appreciate that the majority of students know the importance of knowing English to travel abroad.

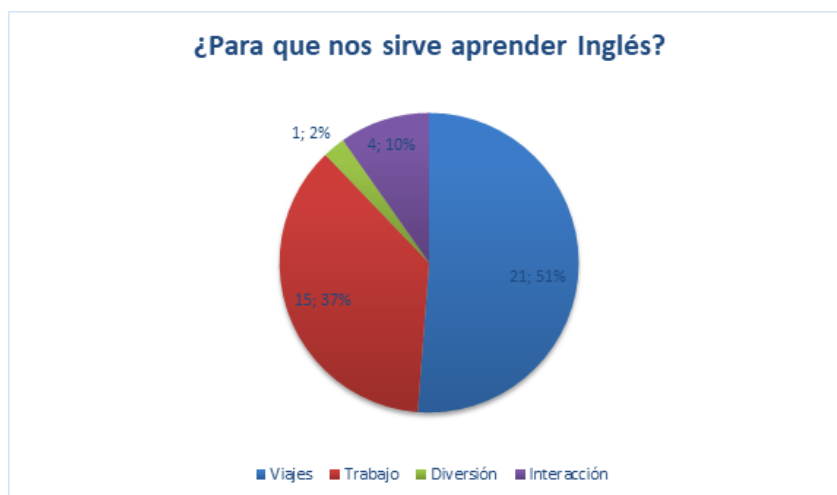


Figure 2. Image of the answers obtained from the question *¿Para que nos sirve aprender Inglés?*.

A second type of questions was included in the same survey, closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were tabulated directly from students' responses. A sample of this type of questions in my survey was this: *¿Te gusta el idioma Inglés?*. There were three options to choice: *Sí – Poco – No*. Thirty (73%) students answered *Sí* and the rest of them, eleven students (27%) the option *Poco*. It is evident that most of the students like English and no student does not like English.



Figure 3. Image of the answers obtained from the question *¿Te gusta el idioma Inglés?*.

Other closed-ended question that was included in the survey: *¿Hasta este momento en que crees que te va mejor en Inglés?* There were four options: *Leyendo – Escribiendo – Escuchando – Hablando*. The intention was to know in which of the four language skills the students considered they perform best. Sixteen (39%) students considered that they perform better writing, fourteen (34%) students considered that they perform better speaking, eleven (27%) considered that they perform better listening and no student pointed out the reading skill as the best performer. It lets us understand that in the group most of the students consider writing and speaking as the language skills they best handle when using English language.

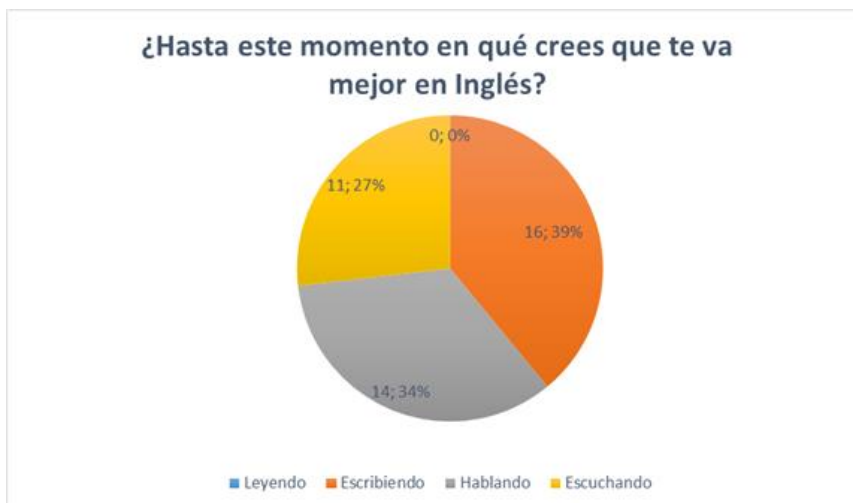


Figure 4. Image of the answers obtained from the question *¿Hasta este momento en qué crees que te va mejor en Inglés?*

Task Based Learning approach is based on cooperative learning, so it was important to know from the beginning of the project the students' liking for teamwork. To know that, I added the following question to the survey: *¿Te gusta trabajar con tus compañeros de clase? Sí - No*. As the graph shows, all of the students (100%) like to work with their classmates. This allow us to think that for them the teamwork it is not a problem at the moment of carry out specific tasks that require it.



Figure 5. Image of the answers obtained from the question *¿Te gusta trabajar con tus compañeros de clase?*

Information obtained from the video recordings is analyzed in this section. During the Action stage, a total of six videos were recorded with the small groups of participants performing the diagnosis activity. The data collected from video recordings and the journal give rise to analyze different general aspects as the videos' length, where the shorter video lasted seventeen seconds and the longer video lasted two minutes and 34 seconds. The participants intervened minimum 3 times in their videos and the most part of the information noticeably is given by them in Spanish; however, they did not sound completely natural. In relation to the discursive aspects, the participants presented a descriptive speech knowing the intention of what and for whom it is spoken. In respect of grammatical aspects, they did not use grammar structures (simple present and past) to present complete ideas in a correct way, it is possible to identify the use of somewhat basic vocabulary with some pronunciation mistakes. For instance, in the second video when a participant talks about the people with whom he lives, he says that he lives with his *mother* but pronounces that word like this: "*moster*". [Second video, transcription 1:21 seconds: "*I live ehh con mi father, moster y...y mis hermanos*"]



Figure 6. López, D. (Producer). (2020, March 03) Diagnosis task [Second video recording].

Other example is possible to identify in the fifth video when at the beginning of this, a participant introduce herself saying the word *name* erroneously. She says "name" like it would literally read in Spanish. [Fifth video, transcription 0:2 seconds: “Mi name is Evelyn Alejandra Rios M.”].

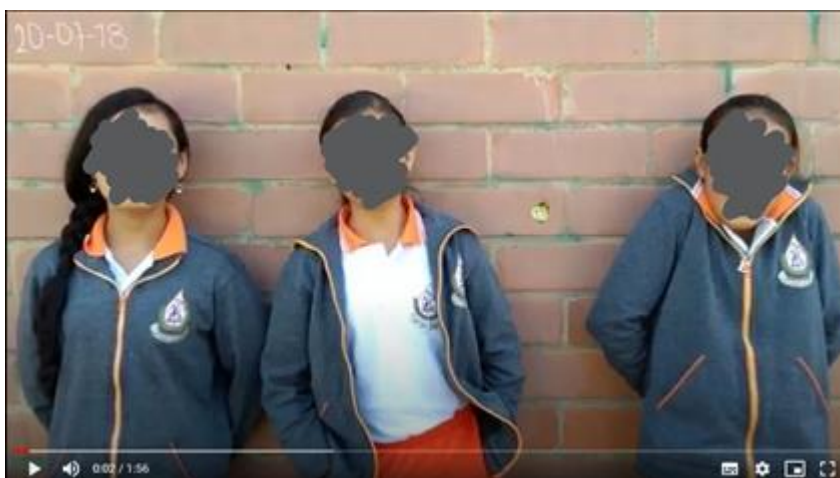


Figure 7. López, D. (Producer). (2020, March 03) Diagnosis task [Fifth video recording].

Within the pragmatic aspects, there was respect for others' turn to speak, but sometimes there was also slurred speech by some participants; besides that making recurrent pauses, for example: [Third

video, transcription 0:12 seconds: “*eeh nos dimos cuenta que eeh que vienen* [Nervous laugh] *bueno ay noo profe* [She covers her mouth with her hands and uncovers it again] [pause] *unooos, pues sí, unos atle..*[She makes a gesture of trying to untangle her tongue] *aatletas y yo los invito...*”]



Figure 8. López, D. (Producer). (2020, March 03) Diagnosis task [Third video recording].

In spite of the fact that there were no signs of conversational skills, there were attitudinal aspects to highlight as the participants’ interest in the completion of the task following the pre-service teacher’s instructions and seeking help to solve problems or clarify doubts.

FINDINGS

The project could not be carried out completely due to a cessation of classroom classes at the school for a few months due to the lockdown caused by the pandemic. The implementation of this stopped and it was not possible to teach the students the topics indicated in the curriculum

according to their middle school grade. The main task belonging to *Task cycle* stage could not be implemented and therefore it was also not possible to make a second observation established to perform in *Language focus* stage, with the aim of giving a feedback to the students. Having said that, the data analysis of activities that were possible to perform allowed me to find the following:

1. Based on my class observations and on the performance of my role as a pre-service teacher, I can determine that the students are active youth inside and outside the classroom and they are in a context that facilitates group interaction by sharing ideas and opinions among them. They are students who pay attention to what they find really interesting and ignore what they perceive old and boring. For that reason, I consider that the students need to perform activities in the learning English process that involve topics and current situations in their context that they consider relevant and appealing to improve their competences, in this case their oral production.

2. Castillo, Insuasty and Jaime (2016) as well as Ramírez and Artunduaga (2017) highlighted in their research projects the importance of authentic materials and tasks during the implementation of Task Based Learning approach, I ratify that since I could appreciate the interest arisen in my students when I showed them the model video, created especially for them and the main task was related with them and their context, La Unión, Antioquía. Based on their facial expressions and verbal expressions like "*Sí*" "*Genial*" "*Qué chevere*" when I presented the model video and when I used the television in the classroom to carry out some teaching activity, I can determine that the students always have an excellent reaction to the methods that use technology as the main tool.

3. Buitrago (2016) acknowledged her fault not presenting her students with a sufficient model of what they should do and vocabulary. I can affirm based on what she said and on my experience that the better way is to first show them a model of the main task during the *Pre-task*

stage. My students were not very clear about what the main task was about until I showed them a sufficiently clear model, making sure that all the students understood what the project was and what the objective was to achieve with participants. After seeing the model, I noticed that for everyone it was completely clear. Focusing on vocabulary, it is clear its importance. Looking at my diagnosis activity I found that the participants have scarce English vocabulary, they said some words in the target language and some of them with pronunciation mistakes during their participations. It can be assured that the *Task-cycle* stage in the TBL approach must have a big focus on vocabulary learning which allows a better accomplishment of the students when that stage is ending; in my case, a conversation among them as natural as possible given that my project is oriented to improve their oral output.

4. The diagnostic activity allowed me to verify that the students' oral ability is very little or almost nil, possibly for the reason that I mentioned in the statement of the problem, their teacher in the fifth grade was mainly dedicated to working with them on the grammar exercises and vocabulary learning through repetition. In addition, although the videos showed that the students' ability to speak English according to their age and level is poor, many students answered in the initial survey that they consider themselves doing better in English "speaking" (14 students) subsequent to "writing" (16 students). This raises a question for me: What exactly did they mean when they said they are good at speaking English?

5. As I mentioned in the data analysis, the survey indicated that 100% of students like to work with their classmates. That is something very positive and it would allow me to develop my project more dynamically because the approach is based on cooperative learning. It can be said that being in company gives them more tranquility and security. That could be perceived when I told them that the video recordings would be in groups. At the time of recording when a student

paused because he/she did not know what else to say, he/she gave the turn to another classmate by pointing at him/her, or expressing "usted" as evidenced in the sixth video when a student paused and said to her partner "*usted*" seeing her. The fact of expressing themselves orally in groups generates that from the intervention of a student, ideas or opinions arise in their classmates who later use them in their interventions, such as the fifth video when a student expressed her liking for skating and said that she attends to skating classes, then one of her classmates also expressed her liking for that sport and she added that they attend sports practices together.

ACTION PLAN

I consider that pre-service teachers and professional teachers always should promote deep reflection on how English is taught. We constantly can explore what our students know, what they think and what they really carry out inside and outside the classroom in order to provide the best learning experience to them.

As a pre-service teacher and as a person who has never done research in the field of pedagogy and foreign languages, I can express that this project was really an enriching experience. The perception of a problem caught my attention and I took on my role as researcher seeking to find out how a teaching approach can foster the oral production of my students in the target language. Everything I learned through literature review and the findings obtained through action research strengthen me as a future professional teacher. Furthermore, the final product can serve as a tool for people who want to know more about this focus topic.

The present study was limited, first by the lack of studies and theories related to teenager learners' oral production. In the literature there is general information about oral production but it

was difficult to find investigations with authors focused on oral production in young learners; second by the pandemic that affected our country during the time that I had established in my schedule for the development and completion of the project.

I consider that this study is one more example of the importance of developing approaches and strategies in teaching a foreign language, this allows us to learn more and discover things that we did not know and that can help us a lot to advance with new points of view and / or new strategies. For example, in my case when I was recording the participants, a student during her speech mentioned that she attends private English classes. Knowing that, I could make changes in the planning of the tasks to know how much she knows compared to her peers who do not attend private classes. Likewise, she could have been a great help to her classmates when developing cooperative tasks. That is something that maybe would take longer, but that can be studied later and that would be interesting.

As mentioned before, this project took place in a school in the urban area, thinking about that, it arises in my mind that this project could also be developed in a school in the rural area, it would be attractive because it is a totally different context and although there could be more limitations, it would be a challenge and a pleasure for those of us who like to discover new learning. New investigations should be carried out in order to help transform the educational system.

Finally, there is something that I had not thought about before and that at this moment I give it as a recommendation and it is the fact that when you are developing the entire cycle of the Task Based Learning approach, you could have an “observing colleague”. It means, have another teacher whom you allow know the tasks and activities that you are developing with your students so that that person gives you accurate feedback and that serves as a tool to improve your work. I also want to recommend to always have a schedule to carry out the activities, that helped me a lot

to have a sequence and all the time know what the next step to follow was.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Survey

CUESTIONARIO

Querido(a) estudiante:

Para comenzar a conocer más sobre lo que te gusta, te pido que por favor completes la información que solicito. Recuerda que no es un examen, solo quiero saber tu opinión. Te pido que seas muy honesto(a) con tus respuestas.

¡Gracias!

Tu profe Diego.

1. ¿Te gusta el idioma Inglés?

- Sí
 Poco
 No

¿Por qué?

2. ¿Para qué nos sirve aprender Inglés?

3. ¿Hasta este momento que estás en el grado 5to, en qué crees que te va mejor en Inglés?

- Leyendo en Inglés
- Escribiendo en Inglés
- Hablando en Inglés
- Escuchando Inglés

4. ¿Qué actividades realizas para practicar Inglés por fuera de la clase del colegio?

- Veo películas y/o programas de tv en Inglés.
- Escucho música en Inglés.
- Leo libros en Inglés.
- Practico videojuegos en Inglés.
- Asisto a clases particulares de Inglés con otro profesor.
- Ninguna de las anteriores.

5. ¿Te gusta trabajar con tus compañeros de clase?

- Sí
- No

6. ¿Te gusta hablar frente a tus compañeros?

- Sí
- Sí, pero cuando tengo más compañeros a mi lado que también hablan.
- No

7. ¿Tienes acceso a Internet en tu casa?

- Sí
- No

8. ¿Cuál de las siguientes actividades te gusta más?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Ver Tv |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Ver videos en YouTube |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Escuchar música |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Leer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Hacer ejercicio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Jugar videojuegos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Hablar con mis amigos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Chatear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Mirar redes sociales (Facebook, Instagram...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -Otra: _____ |

Appendix B

Informed consent

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN – LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS CON ENFASIS EN INGLÉS.

Carta de consentimiento informado

Aprendizaje basado en tareas que fomentan la producción oral en Inglés de los estudiantes del grado 5to de primaria en una institución pública.

1. Mi nombre es Diego López Mesa, soy estudiante de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Católica de Oriente.
2. Te pido hacer parte de este estudio porque estoy explorando la enseñanza y aprendizaje de Inglés mediante el desarrollo de unas actividades educativas que fomentan la producción oral.
3. Si estás de acuerdo en hacer parte del estudio, participarás en la clase, con naturalidad, sin prestarle atención a la cámara y/o grabadora que posiblemente habrá en el salón.
4. Te informo que este estudio solo tiene intenciones educativas entonces tu identidad no será revelada a nadie y en las fotos y videos tu cara será protegida.
5. Por favor toma tu tiempo para hablar con tus papas/acudientes antes de decidir si quieres participar o no. Aunque tus papás hayan dado el permiso, tú puedes decidir no participar.
6. Recuerda que ser parte del estudio es tu decisión y nadie se enojará si no quieres participar o si cambias de opinión durante el estudio.
7. Puedes hacer las preguntas que necesites sobre el proyecto. Si tienes alguna pregunta más tarde u otro día, puedes llamarme al teléfono: 568 6314, o escribirme a mi correo: diegolopezmesa@gmail.com
8. Al firmar este formato significa que estás de acuerdo en participar en el estudio.

Firma del participante

Firma acudiente

Nombre del participante

Fecha

Appendix C

Diagnosis Task

Institución Educativa Félix María Restrepo Londoño
La Unión, Antioquia.
English Class



Grade: 6th

Group names:

-
-
-

Situation:

The department sports championship will be carried out this year in our municipality, La Unión, Antioquia. Many young athletes will come from other municipalities and will be here for a week. Because of the hotels are few, some of the athletes are looking for family homes that receive them and allow them to stay during those days. In advance they made the publication because they want to know a little more about different families to finally choose the one they like best.

Task:

In groups of 3 students, you are going to create a video where you will show how excited and happy you are to know that these young athletes will visit you. Each group will offer them a place to stay in one of your houses throughout the week. You will introduce yourselves, talk about your families, your surroundings, your daily routine, your favorite sports and hobbies. Finally you will give them additional information about our municipality and say goodbye letting them know that you will be very happy to be chosen to live this experience. Each group will make a video of approximately 3- 5 minutes.

Adapted by Diego López Mesa
 From Natalia Arias

Appendix D

Final Task

Institución Educativa Félix María Restrepo Londoño
La Unión, Antioquia.
English Class



Grade: 6th

Group names:

-
-
-

Situation:

The sports institute of Antioquia, *Indeportes Antioquia*, because of its 50th anniversary this year, has decided to grant sports scholarships to young foreigners who want to visit our department to learn about the culture and traditions, and practice a new sport in a country different to theirs. There are young people in the United States who won the scholarship and now they are looking for a place to live during the year in our country. But they do not want to be in the city, they want to live in a nearby municipality that is calm and with a cool temperature. On the internet they found the municipality of La Unión as one of the best options, now they are looking for a house where they can stay and looking through several options to finally choose the one they like best.

Task:

In groups of 3 students, you are going to create a video where you will show how excited and happy you are to know that these young foreigners will visit you. Each group will offer them a place to stay in one of your houses throughout the year. You will introduce yourselves, talk about your families, your surroundings, your daily routine, your favorite sports and hobbies. Finally you will give them additional information about our municipality and say goodbye letting them know that you will be very happy to be chosen to live this experience. Each group will make a video of approximately 3- 5 minutes.

To complete this task successfully you need to:

Before the video recording:

- Remember that the video recording must have a greeting with the introduction and development of the topic and a farewell.
- Assign the roles and the speaking order of each one of the members of the group during the recording.

**Institución Educativa Félix María Restrepo Londoño
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- Write your script having in mind:
 - Possible vocabulary.
 - Correct order of words.
 - Presentation of complete ideas.
 - Content you will include.
 - Grammar studied in class (Simple present , Present progressive, My body, My house, My family Adjectives, Verb to Be, Verb to Have, Verb to Eat, Likes and Dislikes, Daily routine, The time, Sports and Hobbies, frequency adverbs...),
 - Check conjugation of verbs.
- Practice pronunciation.

During recording:

- Practice before recording the video.
- Don't read while interacting in the video recording. Make it look natural and use visual aids (cue cards) to better remember information.
- Make sure the video recording lasts no less than 3 and no more than 5 minutes.
- Stay calm and just express yourself.
- Each student must intervene 5 times minimum.

Adapted by Diego López Mesa
From Natalia Arias

Appendix E

Video transcripts (samples)

Fifth video, transcription from 0:56 seconds to 1:56 seconds.

Karen - *En mi casa viven tres personas conmigo, mi mother, mi sister y yo.*

Evelyn - *En mi casa vive mi mamá, mi papá, mi hermana y mi abuela.*

Isabel - *En mi casa viven mi father [pronunciation mistake: fater] mi mother y mis hermanos”*

Evelyn - *El municipio es muy bonito.*

Karen - *Tenemos un colegio donde hacemos muchas cosas, somos muy entretenidas, las clases son muy divertidas.*

Isabel - *Hay iglesias donde podemos ir a rezar, hay parques.*

Karen - *Estamos haciendo una transformación del parque Josam, que es un centro muy turístico.*

Evelyn - *Todo es muy turístico, el parque también.*

Karen - *Sí. Thank you, bye.*

Isabel - *Thank you, bye.*

Evelyn - *Thank you, bye.*



Second video, transcription from 0:38 seconds to 1:43 seconds.

Brayan - *We know [pronunciation mistake, know sounds like now] muy bien que ustedes van a venir a nuestro municipio, yo quiero que se queden en mi casa.*

Jhon - *We know [pronunciation mistake, know sounds like now] yes, yo también quiero que se queden en la casa y porque el municipio es muy lindo.*

Emmanuel - *Nosotros sabemos que ustedes van a venir aquí, a La Unión [pause] y y quiero que se queden en mi casa.*

Brayan - *Y La Unión es un lugar muy tranquilo, muy bonito, hace un poquito de frío y hay muchas cosas buenas.*

Jhon - *I live...father, mother, sister. La comida favorita es la pizza*

Brayan - *I live ehh con mi father, mother [pronunciation mistake, mother he said moster] y...y mis hermanos. Y mi comida favorita es..*

Jhon - *Las papas*

Brayan - *Papas con huevo y carne.*

