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ENHANCING EFL SPEAKING IN RURAL SETTINGS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MATERIAL DEVELOPERS

Bertha Ramos Holguín
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UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA

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Introduction

One of the main interests of the research group TONGUE (Teaching on New Grounds Unexplored English Possibilities) from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) is to reach and explore the rural school context in Boyacá, Colombia. The research group has started an endeavor to develop teaching and learning material for the EFL population in rural schools. This material not only aims at supporting rural school teachers but also at enhancing rural school students' possibilities to learn English. Part of this effort has been supported by the Vicerrectoría de Investigaciones from the UPTC to carry out academic research in this area. One of these initiatives is called "Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design and Implementation"

In this sense, the research report that we present in this book belongs to the aforementioned macro research project. It is focused on developing speaking skills with eleventh graders in two rural High Schools in Boyacá. This study also aimed at creating EFL material for teachers and learners enrolled in educational rural institutions.

Among the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) speaking was selected for this research because this is an active skill in which the students strive most. Listening and speaking are probably forgotten skills in the EFL rural school environment. This has to do with the fact that too much attention has been devoted to reading comprehension in the curriculum. Although educators in rural areas in Boyacá do an outstanding job and they hold teaching degrees in diverse fields, when it comes to teach EFL they are not experts in this specific area of knowledge. Then teachers opt to concentrate their efforts on what they feel comfortable teaching.

Speaking is one of the most intimidating, complex and demanding skill for foreign language learners (Celce-Murica, 2001). Teachers and students should strive to achieve progress in the foreign language learning process. This situation becomes even more difficult for students who attend rural institutions because they try to use the foreign language to communicate orally in a context where the foreign language is only used in the school setting. Hence, the teaching and learning processes need to be supported by appropriate material that encourages students to start developing the speaking skill by expressing feelings, thoughts, and emotions in a less intimidating way. From the previous statements and situations, the idea to design contextualized workshops to foster the speaking skill emerged.

In this book the qualitative action research aimed at analyzing what the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development. Three instruments were used to collect data: field notes, surveys, and structured interviews. Because of the nature of the study and the instruments we used, we present participants' voices through the analysis of the information.

We expect that the findings of this study can support more studies in the area of rural education and materials development. In fact, we agree with Canagarajah (1999) when he stated that pedagogies need to be appropriated to different degrees in terms of needs and values of the local communities. In the same thread of thought, Tomlinson (2003) added that "there is an increase in attempts to personalise the learning process by getting learners to relate topics and texts to their own lives, views and feelings" (p.7). Thus, this study presents primary results to understand how instructional materials can be used to address local needs and then support students' English learning in rural areas.

This book is essentially divided into eight chapters. The chapter of problem statement encompasses some background information for the study, the research question, and objectives. The chapter of literature review encloses the main theories and studies underpinning the nature of this paper. The instructional design depicts the procedure followed

to develop the materials (in this particular case, workshops). The research design includes the type of research and methodology, setting, population, and data collection instruments. Subsequently, the data analysis describes and exemplifies the categories and subcategories that emerged from the information collected, and analyzed in the light of the Grounded Theory proposed by Urquhart (2013).

Regarding the conclusions, this chapter presents the final assertions that emerged from the whole document, but especially from the one about data analysis. The last chapter, “Challenges and opportunities for material developers in rural settings”, entails aspects regarding what material design and the skill of speaking demand to the educational community when learning English in a contextualized way.

Chapter 1

Research Problem

1.1 Problem Statement

One of the main challenges that EFL students in rural areas face is that the content of the material in textbooks are usually not relevant or do not generate high interest in the students that belong to rural schools. Frequently, English textbooks used in Colombia address topics which are far away from the students' realities and ordinary life. Topics about metropolitan areas and big cities, conversations taking place in trade business centers, pictures of world icons are just some of the examples which are not close to the students' lives in rural schools. Images of farm animals, conversations of trading products in farmer markets are not included in those textbooks, for instance. Evidently, many of those textbooks were not intended to be used with the rural schools in Colombia. Neither were they thought nor were they written based on the needs the students' in Boyacá have. What is evident is that they are the kind of textbooks and material teachers have access to. This is so because this is the material teachers used to study with, the ones used in public schools in the cities, and the ones the EFL textbook market offers.

Besides the aforementioned issues, students in rural schools faced challenges in terms of the learning of the English language since they are in kindergarten. According to the Ministry of Education of Colombia (MEN, 2014) there are almost 2.5 million students in rural areas in Colombia. Among the many challenges the rural schools have to face every day, there are two issues that outstand. One has to do with lack of foreign language teachers in rural areas. Teachers working in the rural

sector graduated from diverse areas of education but few teachers hold degrees in EFL. It is common place to find teachers of Social Studies, Mathematics, Ethics, as well as many other areas of education, in charge of teaching English. It is mandated for teachers to schedule two or three hours of English per week to accomplish the EFL curriculum. A second challenge is that there are not enough material for teaching English, and the few material teachers have access to is not designed or intended for rural schools students in Colombia.

In 2014 the Ministry of Education in Colombia making an effort to better the education in the EFL field implemented a project called English for Colombia, (ECO), which derives from a larger project named Strengthening the Development of Foreign Language Competences (Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras), PFDCLE from its acronym in Spanish. This project aimed at training teachers who do not know English but they want to master a basic level in this language and improve their EFL teaching practice in rural zones with students from first to third grade (MEN, 2014). However, as Cruz-Arcila (2017) suggested, there is not real evidence that ECO for Colombia was available or knew by teachers.

The characteristics of rural schools in Boyacá are quiet similar to other rural schools in Colombia. Students live in rural areas and they have to walk long distances back and forth to attend school. Usually, elementary school teachers in rural areas are in charge of all students from Kindergarten to fifth grade using the *New School Pedagogy* model to serve their students.

This means all students are in one classroom and they are grouped by school grade level. Teachers provide instruction and support to their students to one group level while other students are developing their classroom assignments. Then the teacher moves and interacts with other groups inside the classroom. In this way, all group grade levels have access to teacher and the school system can serve the students. There are one to six students by grade level in each classroom. Therefore one teacher in an elementary school in a rural institution in Boyacá could have almost

thirty students all in multiple grade levels from kindergarteners to fifth graders in one classroom. *The New School Methodology* also emphasizes on a knowledge construction more than on a knowledge transmission because it is not based on teacher center class but on learner oriented sessions. Also this model mixes cooperative and collaborative work among students. All this situation, the amount of students per grade level, the methodology use for teaching, plus the diverse tasks teachers have to accomplish outside the classroom, creates a great challenge for teachers, adding to this that they have to teach English, school subject in which they do not have much expertise.

Because of the previous facts, students who enter secondary education are not confident enough in the English language. In the case of the population we worked with, eleventh graders, they suggested they were afraid and unmotivated to use the English language in class. Besides that, as it was mentioned before almost one third of the students in Colombia attending public education goes to rural schools, but there is not an equivalent amount of EFL material developed for this specific population.

The EFL material created for this target population in Colombia is very few. On the contrary, there is vast majority of EFL material designed for city schools and urban areas. A great amount of the population in Boyacá attends rural schools. As consequence teachers in rural areas lack the opportunity to integrate and use in the curriculum EFL material with certain characteristics that better suited the specific needs of the students in rural schools. According to Kumaravadivelu (2016), one of the causes is that EFL/ESL material promoted by publishing houses is mostly teacher center based material. The same author claims that this material is not developed by local teachers who better understand their students' needs and know the curriculum in each of the local areas they work.

In sum, and accounting specifically for eleventh graders realities regarding their English classes, we found that the lack of contextualized resources for teaching English Language at schools is one of the challenges

that teachers in Boyacá face out. Some educators claim that the available resources they have do not include the genuine academic needs students have in rural schools. Teachers usually select materials that, in many instances, are not created for rural school conditions. Accordingly, there is a huge distance between materials producers and users. Consequently, from one place to another there are some variations in terms of cultural and socio-linguistic norms. Because of this, those materials lack of relevance and engagement for the users (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2010). In this sense, it was necessary to develop relevant material that responds to users' local needs.

In our experience, providing support to teachers in rural areas, we found that students in rural areas did not have any contextualized material that included local background information for learning English that responded to their needs and preferences. The material that is available for sale, in many cases is focused on presenting a foreign culture which is not acquired by students because they do not have the opportunity to live those daily experiences. In this case, the workshops we designed accounted for students' voices and preferences when learning English. The workshops included information related to daily activities they do at the countryside when they are inside or outside the school. This means they could find information related to agriculture, local festivals, local sports and music, among others. In this sense, they had previous experiences and knowledge regarding the topics which were approached in the workshops and it motivated, fostered, and facilitated students' oral skills development in English.

One of many reasons to design contextualized workshops was because the material used by teachers at rural schools was usually limited to copies taken from Google TM at random and those copies were designed for grammar learning only with no emphasis on speaking. Likewise, there was a need to use more humanizing materials in the EFL classes, so contextualized workshops were a possible strategy to engage students in a social and meaningful learning process. Another motive was because students stated the necessity to use materials that favored learning English communicatively. Students felt the material selected

by teachers did not account for activities that promoted oral language skills and it relates to what Derakhshan, Khalili, and Beheshti (2016) asserted regarding speaking, “one of the obstacles of learning speaking is contradiction between class materials and courses, so that most of the teachers do not facilitate situations for real practice in speaking” (p. 178).

In addition to this, among many of the characteristics that distinguishes people from Boyacá, one is that they are not very talkative. Noticeably, people from this part of the country are more reserved and shy while socializing with others. This situation is transferred into the foreign language learning environment in classroom setting in which students have to play diverse roles for practicing speaking. This condition does not favor much the development of the speaking skill. If students have to play roles in conversations far away from their daily life and experiences, like those provided in regular textbooks, students are less motivated and less willing to perform conversations which are odd for them.

Any effort that helps students keep motivated would eventually reduce the dropping out numbers from schools attendance. Including speaking activities that engage students in their roles keep them motivated. For this reason, the topics of the contents for these workshops are more inclined to highlight activities students, in general people from Boyacá do, on a daily basis. In this way, we, as teachers, recognize and worth students' lives and acknowledge their culture values, by incorporating common activities for them in the curriculum. Bringing speaking activities and topics for developing skills more connected to their lives enhance not only the development of English as foreign language, but also it aims at having a more integrated curriculum.

Thus, we proposed the following research question to guide this study:

What do the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development?

To answer the previous question, we also wanted to address the next inquiry:

What is the role of the workshops in the enhancement of the speaking skill?

Based on the questions we posed, the main objectives of this study were: to analyze what the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development and to describe the role of the workshops in the enhancement of the skill of speaking.

The following section accounts for the state of the research in regards to this study.

1.2 State of the Research

The analysis of the state of research in regards to English language teaching (ELT) rural education in Colombia has shown that it is still an emerging category. As a matter of fact, according to Cruz-Arcila (2017), "up to date there is very little empirical evidence of how ELT practices have come about in rural contexts" (p.2). Nevertheless, there are basically two strong tendencies in relation to ELT rural education. On the one hand, there is the tendency to see how Colombian English education policies do not account for the rural context. On the other hand, there are some reports about empirical studies carried out to improve English language teaching conditions in rural areas.

Because of the interest of this research study lies on the fact that eleventh graders in two rural schools do not have contextualized materials to learn the English language, the next paragraphs will account for those empirical studies that are related to English language teaching in rural institutions. What is presented here is the report of those studies that are already published. However, we understand that there might be many more research studies related to ELT and rural education but they have not been presented to the academic community.

In this sense, Ramos, Aguirre and Hernández (2012) shared a pedagogical experience which was carried out in a rural school in Guavatá, Santander,

Colombia. The students involved in this study were eleventh graders. The main purpose of this experience was to integrate eleventh graders' rural context through the design of curricular units. After implementing the curricular units, information was collected through a journal, a semi-structured interview, and students' surveys. The outcomes of the experience showed that aspects such as students' sense of cultural belonging and intercultural understanding were enhanced.

Equally important, Pinzón (2014) conducted a research at a rural public school in Boyacá, Colombia which was focused on project based learning method to enhance eighth graders' English language skills. The research interest emerged from the lack of motivation to learn English students exhibited in that rural school. The researcher explained that students' demotivation was based on the previous experiences they had regarding the inappropriate correction of mistakes from teachers and the negative perception they had towards English as the classes were focused on both grammar and translation. The data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews, group interview, and artifacts. The results revealed that the activities were crucial to motivate students, and make them feel confident to speak in English. Likewise, students remained motivated to learn English when they addressed issues related to their context and they held in their mind the vocabulary when associating it with pedagogical activities in which they are involved.

Another study worth mentioning is the one conducted by Velandia (2016). Her study analysed how the oral interaction in tenth graders at a public semi-rural institution in Funza, Cundinamarca, Colombia, was enhanced through worksheets based on intercultural topics. The author implemented effective strategies and resources that improved students' oral interaction. In this action research, data were collected through field notes, video recordings, artefacts and a focal interview. The findings of this study enabled to conclude that worksheets helped students enhance their oral interaction in an embryonic way, thanks to the material developed.

In the same line, López (2017) carried out an exploratory and descriptive qualitative study in one of the branches of a public rural school located in the south east of Bogotá. The participants were fifth graders. This research aimed to describe the home-school connection, co-constructed, when the significance of both spaces is valued through the incorporation of the mother tongue (L1 henceforth) and the foreign language (L2 henceforth) literacy practices as complementary processes. In this way, she decided to conduct a research study based on the necessity to connect home and school.

The instruments used to collect data were field notes, interviews, students' artifacts and reflective journals. She found out that literacy practices based on the aforementioned principles, guided a connection that was born between both milieus corresponded to the possibilities of finding spaces for self-expression. In such a way, students recognized the valuable roles of their parents, as well as the community in their lives and in their English language learning.

After describing some research studies conducted or related to this specific area, in the following section, we present and discuss the main theoretical constructs underpinning this research study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this section, we will describe some supporting theories and studies related to the underpinning constructs set up in this investigation. The first one encompasses the skill of speaking. The second construct is material development and the third one accounts for the particularities of a rural setting.

2.1 Speaking Skill

The next lines describe some theories reinforcing the speaking skill: concepts, characteristics and stages, are explained. In any language, there are, basically, two kinds of skills: receptive and productive. Receptive skills are the ones that deal with reading and listening and productive ones are writing and speaking. With regards to the speaking skill, which is the first theoretical construct, we define it as “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (Chaney, 1998, p.13). The most important aspect of speaking is to be able to communicate feelings, thoughts, and emotions to establish social relationships, which is framed under principles of interaction that are inherent to every human being.

Likewise, Brown (1994) also stated that speaking is “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information” (p.276). Based on the previous facts, when developing the skill of speaking, the functions of language stated by Halliday (1978) can be addressed. They are: instrumental when language

is used to communicate wants, likes, preferences; personal when language expresses individuality; interactional related to the use of language to interact in groups; regulatory as a way to control; representational to explain something; heuristic when language is used to wonder about an issue; and imaginative to be able to be creative with the language.

In the specific context, where this study was carried out, students live in a social context where the English language is not used at all. It means they do not need the language to interact on daily bases. This issue made the speaking skill teaching conditions challenging. In this sense, this study wanted to provide students with initial steps to be able to develop speaking skills in English.

Brown (2001) suggested that when dealing with speaking, aspects such as the type of discourse to be used, the teaching of pronunciation, the accuracy and fluency, the affective factors and the interaction effect need to be clearly stated. In other words, the author argued that depending on the specific characteristics of the context, some of the previous elements might deserve more or less attention.

All in all, authors such as Cornbleet and Carter (2001) asseverated that speaking is a face to face action, it happens in real time and it is interactive. The authors further asserted that the speaking skill is divided into small sub-skills that are useful for language users to be effective in such a skill. In the case of speaking, opening and closing conversations, turn-taking, repairing, paraphrasing and interrupting are part of it.

Thus, the workshops that were applied focused on the sub-skills previously mentioned. Besides that, and considering the fact that students feel more anxious when they had to speak, we followed the following patterns: Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) suggested by Harmer (1998) as an effective way to deal with the teaching of speaking. The didactic strategies proposed to engage students were either warming up activities such as games, stimulating pictures, etc. or lead-in activities related to the review of vocabulary. All in all, the main objective of these strategies was to make students feel interested in the topic and to reduce the level of anxiety.

In the Study section, we focused on the language that was going to be used. In other words, the grammatical issues were addressed. Finally, in the Activate part, students were asked to put into practice what they had learned in the warming up activities as well as in the study section. This was the time when students had the opportunities to initiate their oral productions.

In addition to what was already mentioned, this study related to what Brown (2001) stated as principles for designing speaking techniques. He mentioned that when developing any kind of strategy to enhance speaking, one must be aware of students' needs, aspects that motivate students, the use of authentic and meaningful language, the provision of appropriate feedback, the link between listening and speaking, the opportunities to initiate communication and the expansion of speaking strategies.

2.2 Material Development

Materials development is an essential element in teachers' practices. It is because, as stated by Núñez, Téllez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009) "teacher-developed materials that fulfil students' needs can be seen as an innovative practice in the EFL classroom" (p. 18). Hence, teachers might move from passive to active agents in the teaching and learning processes as they innovate in their classrooms. Materials development is also significant for students since it provides them with meaningful input, which facilitates their foreign language learning development (Núñez et al., 2009). Besides, developing or adapting materials fosters learner-centered approach due to content can be contextualized (Clarke, 1989). Thus, materials development is beneficial for both, teachers and students.

Mainly materials development has been selected and evaluated by publishing houses. In other words, "It is common to see text publishing conglomerates offering teacher proof training programs, promoting the traditional one-size-fits-all methodological model, and commercializing

educational materials like textbooks and software” (Álvarez, 2008, p. 7). However, there is not a unique textbook that fulfills completely all teachers’ and students’ expectations and necessities to succeed in the foreign language teaching and learning processes (Núñez, Pineda & Téllez, 2004). Thus, “Developing materials for EFL/ESL [English as a Foreign/Second Language] classrooms should not be viewed as a task confined to textbook developers” (Núñez et al. 2004, p. 129).

For Ramos and Aguirre (2014), Colombian classrooms are characterised by diverse types of students, so one of the teachers’ role is to adapt and create material accordingly. It means that daily activities students do should be presented and discussed in the material used to teach English because it creates certain levels of empathy which facilitate the learning process. Also, this is the opportunity to engage parents in the teaching and learning process. Materials development is an endeavour undertaken by teachers since they know how people learn and are also acquainted with students’ diverse contexts, needs, interests, and learning styles (Núñez & Téllez, 2009). In short, developing materials is an opportunity for teachers to motive students and to innovate in the classroom considering them from a holistic perspective, in order to respond to the demands of the new society.

There are many authors who have defined materials development (Tomlinson, 1998; Candlin & Breen, 1979; Cunningsworth, 1984; Harmer, 1998; Núñez & Téllez, 2009). All of them are in agreement on the fact that materials development relates to the resources that are used to enhance students’ learning. For the purposes of this study, workshops were used as instructional materials. Thus, this study will consider the following definition related to materials:

It embraces an array of behaviors leading to fostering effective teaching and learning settings. Moreover, it includes the adaptation and/or creation of a learning-teaching exercise, a task, an activity, a lesson, a unit, or a module composed by one or two units. (Núñez & Téllez, 2009, p. 175)

When developing materials, it is important to keep in mind the following steps: to carry out a needs assessment, to establish goals and objectives, to conceptualize content, to design the syllabus, to select materials / activities, to organize contents/activities, to assess the material success (Núñez et al., 2004; Núñez et al., 2009). In such a way, teachers as material developers might guarantee coping with needs of students, teachers and institutions to improve pupils' motivation, creating significant materials, and enhancing learning outcomes. Therefore, the aforementioned procedures must be considered when designing materials.

Besides that, and according to Tomlinson (2011), there are some second language acquisition principles that materials developers should take into account. First, students must be exposed to a meaningful use of language in order to acquire more knowledge. Second, learners must be motivated with appealing materials to be involved in their learning process. Third, materials must be an easy bridge that connects students' experiences, needs and context with contents. Fourth, materials should be the tool for achieving communicative skills. Fifth, materials must be the opportunity to support the students' confidence. Sixth, students need materials that cope with their different styles of learning. Seventh, materials should power the students' cognitive, emotional and social skills. Finally, materials should provide the opportunity for outcome feedback among teachers and students. These principles are valuable suggestions to develop suitable material for learners.

At this stage it is worth highlighting that the first step for designing the workshops is to address students' academic needs in rural areas. Thereby, students' needs are the parameters or pointers to be taken into account when making decisions regarding teaching and learning. These parameters emerge from a diagnosis that compiles the aspects students lack in the English learning process in rural schools.

In this sense, knowing the academic population's needs allows to more effectively address the learning and teaching process. According to Núñez et al. (2009), "approaching our students' needs helps us know and understand them better to make teaching and learning decision" (p. 32).

When designing workshops, knowing students' needs becomes a pillar in this current study because it provides us clear insights to approach the topics that support their EFL learning process.

Another perspective that contributes to approaching students' needs is pointed out by Graves (2007). He stated that when assessing students' needs we must take into account "what the learners know and can do, and what they need to learn or do" (p.12). In this direction, the workshops we developed deal with the topics students are supposed to learn, but they also include themes that they are highly interested in covering in the English classes as they related to their previous knowledge and life experiences. Hence, the process of dealing with needs may include questions to identify problems, to look for priorities, to realise abilities, to regard attitudes, and to search for solutions (Rosset, as cited in Brown, 1995). Furthermore, recognizing and considering students' needs and perceptions is important because these opinions of how they would like to learn and what they need to learn in today's world should shape materials (Nuñez & Téllez, 2009).

2.3 Rural Schools

In our Colombian context, a rural school can be categorized as rural for its geographical location. If the institution is located in rural area it is just named as a rural institution. However, a rural school needs to be perceived as an institution integrated by students who live in the rural area and they are exposed to a great variety of challenges to attend school. These challenges have to do, for example, with lack of transportation and the amount of time some students spend to arrive at school. Also the students in rural areas help their families in their daily activities before and/or after school which adds tremendous amount of responsibilities on top the ones the students have to do for school in order to succeed.

Also, these institutions in rural areas are managed by teachers who need to be really sensitive to their students' needs and living conditions. Teachers who learn by doing on a daily basis by putting in practice what

theories about education lack. Educators in rural areas are professionals who, sometimes, are not trained in the area they have to teach, but they perfectly understand that students in rural settings are probably the most committed students to succeed just because arriving at school it is an odyssey for some of them. In a recent paper, Ramos and Aguirre (2016) suggested that:

The occupation of rural areas in Colombia has changed over the last few decades. Colombia was, by the middle of the last century, a country with half of its population living in rural areas, whereas now only a fifth of its total population lives in rural settlements. Thus, as rural areas have decreased, most schools' models have been developed with a focus on urban areas. (p. 212)

This change can be interpreted as failure for our educational system to keep the population in their regular habitat. It could also be understood that through education the population in rural areas has changed their minds and they perceive urban areas as place with more opportunities and more hospitality for them. As a result, less people who start their lives in the rural context want to stay there forever. Hence, our education system is failing at motivating and retaining local educated people in their home area. Often, society admires those individuals who succeed in life and they are even more admirable if they were born and studied in rural areas and then they moved to big cities to be successful. Society does not admire enough those who are born in rural areas and progress in their studies and later on go back to promote progress in the rural areas.

For Liggett (2010) rural is defined as 'territory, population and housing units not classified as urban. "Rural" classification cuts across other hierarchies and can be in metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas" (p. 67). In this sense rural is defined as opposed to urban which is not exactly true. A rural area has its own characteristics and uniqueness that it does not need to be compared to urban areas. Due to this fact when it comes to define rural education, it is defined in terms of what it lacks compared to education in urban areas which is in one sense a wrong approach. Rural education has to be recognized as a unique whole unit

composed by individuals who live and attend schools in a rural area and, as any other social group, strives for being better each day.

According to Triana *et al.* (2004), rural education is a group of complex educative practices that take place in rural zones. It has particular characteristics such as the low rapport between teachers and students and the need to attend students from diverse ages. In the same line, Parra-Sandoval (1996) suggests that this kind of education has four main objectives:

- To transmit cultural and social values.
- To teach based on cognitive bases.
- To be a place able to integrate individuals with local, regional and national scientific knowledge.
- To link production and training as part of teaching.

Rural education is also impacted by contextual and cultural issues such as poverty, inadequate health care, poor nutrition, limited prenatal care, home violence and early insertion in the work market. All of these aspects as asserted by Triana *et al.* (2004) permeate students' lives at schools. Thus, many students have difficulties when learning any subjects at school.

For Serrano (2007), in Colombia, the rural education system history shows that a big gap persists between rural and city schooling. Moulton (2001) highlighted that educational models designed for urban areas are not so relevant in rural areas, and then teachers need to be more aware of the students' environment in the rural areas. Therefore rural education needs to be seen and addressed from the inside, in a way that what whatever comes from the outside it is not imposed. Otherwise, the educational system will be perpetuating a colonization system, in other words, a rural education system mistakenly imitating an imperfect urban educational system.

The Colombian government has tried to implement diverse ways to address education in rural areas. They are Unitarian Schools, Rural

Development Concentration, The New School, Accelerated Learning, and Rural Education Service and the Sectorial Project for Rural Education. According to Ramon (2004), Unitarian School has to do with individualized instruction, active learning, and the use of guides as resource material for learners. This approach aims at mixing learners of several ages in order to multi-grade teaching. Toledo (1978) described Rural Development Concentration as a type of education that tried to connect education with training requirements of the labor force. The New School is an active school in which students participate in their own learning by developing projects. The connection between the school and the community is strong and the students are motivated to participate democratically in the schools' decisions (Serrano, 2007). In Accelerated Learning students are grouped into units or themes based on coverage, importance and relevance to student's cultural background. The curricula do not belong to one specific grade (Serrano, 2007). Rural Education Service and the Sectorial Project for Rural Education worked with students who are thirteen years old or older they had not attended school or they dropped out before finishing third grade (Serrano, 2007).

One of the missing elements in the Colombia rural education system is related to the lack of resources for teachers and students to address the curricula in an effective way. Also, one important missing part it is the lack of human resources. There are few foreign language teachers working in rural areas. Homeroom teachers try to do their best to help students at learning English as a foreign language but it is not their field of expertise. In doing so, teachers in rural areas take advantage of any kind of resource they have at hand to meet the curricula expectations in order to teach the foreign language. Often they select textbooks which are not intended for the students of rural areas. To this respect Moulton (2001) suggested that:

national curricula and instructional materials are usually written in the predominant language of the capital city, whether that be a national language, a foreign one, or the language of those in power, minority groups, many of which are in rural areas, are not always conversant with that language. (p.21)

As the main constructs and related-studies have been explained and discussed in this section, the upcoming chapter presents the pedagogical objective, theories related to education, language learning, and teaching. In the same way, the methodology and procedures followed to develop the workshops will be addressed.

Chapter 3

Instructional Design

In this chapter we present the objectives and the activities planned in order to design the workshops to enhance eleventh graders speaking skill in English. We tried to explore how through contextualized learning opportunities presented in the workshops, students developed their speaking skill.

3.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this proposal was to improve students speaking skill through workshops that aim at addressing their needs.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To provide students with contextualized opportunities to work on their speaking skill.
- To understand issues related to students' cultures and values.
- To make the learning of English a more meaningful experience through the creation of contextualized workshops.

3.3 The Theory of Education

The theory of education that we followed for the development of the workshops was social constructivism, which promotes individual as well as social growth. According to Vygotsky (1979), social constructivism emphasizes the critical importance of culture and the importance of the social context for cognitive development. The theorist further posits that the next four principles apply to a social constructivism philosophy:

- Learning and development are social collaborative activities.
- The zone of proximal development can serve as a guide for curricular and lesson planning.
- Learning should occur in a meaningful context and not be separated from learning and knowledge children develop in the “real world”.
- Out-of-school experiences should be related to the child’s school experiences.

3.4 The Approach

The communicative approach guided the design of the workshops. According to Nunan (1999), in the communicative approach language is a system for the expression of meaning. He argued that the primary function of language is interaction and communication. Celce-Murcia (2001) pointed out that, according to the communicative approach, it is assumed that the goal of language teaching is to develop the learner’s ability to communicate in the target language. It is also suggested that the content of a language course includes semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures. Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and if necessary negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that the other(s) lack.

In addition, Celce-Murcia (2001) asserted that students often engage in role plays or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social context. Also, she suggests that skills need to be integrated from the beginning; a given activity might involve reading,

speaking, listening, and writing; which was taken into account to design the workshops.

3.5 Theory of Learning and Language

According to Nunan (1999), activities involving real communication, carrying out meaningful tasks, and using language that is meaningful to the learner promote learning. This is further explained by Stern (1981) when the author proposed that “language is learned when the learner becomes involved in real communication so that he or she is a user of the language rather than a detached observer who analyses and rehearses the language for later use” (p.139).

In the same way, Littlewood (2002) clarifies that “foreign language teaching must be concerned with reality: with the reality of communication as it takes place outside the classroom and with the reality of learners as they exist outside and inside the classroom” (p. 94). In this sense, the tasks in each workshop accounted for students’ surroundings and prior experiences such as agricultural practices in their region, celebrated festivals, famous music, and sports of the department of Boyacá.

In line with the previous statements, the interactional view of language which claims that “Language is the vehicle for the realisation of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social interaction among the individuals” (Richard & Rodgers, 2001, p.21), was the framework for this research. From this perspective, language is a tool with which speakers can build up and maintain social relationships.

3.6 Methodology

The methodology for the instructional design was based on the principles stated by Harmer. Thus, the workshops followed the next steps: Engage, Study and Activate (Harmer, 1998), as illustrated in the following diagram.

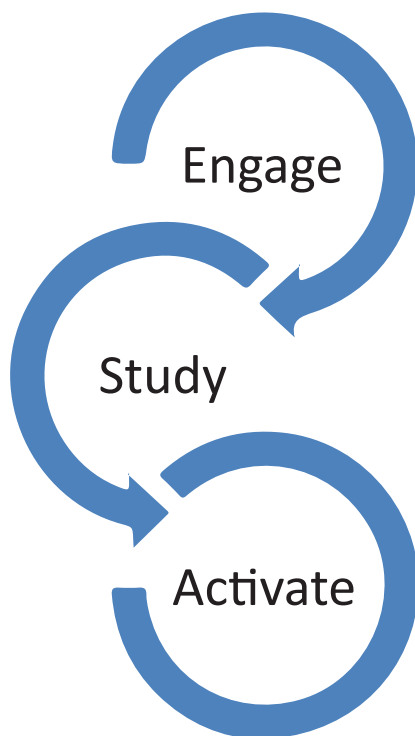


Figure 1. Principles of a language classroom used in the workshops.

Source: based on Harmer (1998)

In the first stage, Engage, the workshops presented students with activities that were motivating for them. Also, we included easy exercises so that students could develop them easily. Thus, this first part was usually composed by games and imageries. The main aim at this point was to engage students with the topic of the workshop (see Appendix A). The second stage: Study, focused on the language to be used in the workshops. In this part, we selected activities such as paragraph organisation, guessing vocabulary from context, filling gaps with appropriate language, etc. (see Appendix B). Finally, for the Activate stage, we proposed activities that guided students towards communicative purposes. These activities were usually carried out in groups (see Appendix C).

Along the workshops, students had the opportunity to work on individual bases, in couples or in groups. They were also asked to develop activities

in which they expressed their personal points of view, relate to others and use the language imaginatively. These elements helped them to feel more confident when trying to use the language.

Besides the aforementioned principles, we tried to account for what Nieto (2013) mentions when she refers to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. She says that this kind of pedagogy aims at respecting students' cultures, experiences and histories. Thus, we incorporated topics students were familiarized with: agriculture, music, sports and festivals. These topics were particularly meaningful because all of them were based on these eleventh graders' lives in rural zones in Boyacá. For instance, when addressing agriculture, there was emphasis on the way potatoes are grown. In the case of music, diverse genres were addressed but there was a special place for Jorge Veloza and his "carranguera" music. When the opportunity came to talk about sports, Nairo Quintana, the famous "Boyacense" cyclist, was the main character, and finally, in festivals, the outstanding festival La Tomatina that takes place in Sutamarchán was analyzed.

The following table presents the main topics of the workshops, the communicative function of each one as well as the general objectives. Aspects such as the skills developed and the grammatical topics are also shown.

Table 1. Content of the workshops

WORKSHOP	TOPIC	FUNCTION	OBJECTIVE	SKILL	GRAMMAR
1	Agriculture	Students will talk about the daily agricultural practices people do in Boyacá.	To describe and talk about the cultural endeavors in Boyacá.	Speaking Writing Reading Listening	Simple present tense
2	Music	Students will be able to talk about music using the present perfect tense.	To talk about experiences regarding music.	Speaking Writing Reading Listening	Present Perfect Tense
3	Sports	Students will be able to express opinions and likes about sports.	To express likes and opinions about different sports.	Speaking Writing Reading Listening	Frequency adverbs and “wh” questions
4	Festivals	Students will be able to describe different festivals around Colombia.	To describe the most famous festivals around Colombia.	Speaking Writing Reading Listening	Simple Present Tense

The selection of these topics and their inclusion of our students’ culture in the workshops helped us to start becoming responsive teachers. According to Nieto (2013), a responsive teacher views their students’ voices as a rich source for curriculum.

3.7 The Role of the Teacher

According to Brooks and Brooks (1993), the teacher is the person who will encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative; inquire about students’ understandings of concepts before sharing his/her own understanding of those concepts; encourage students to engage in dialogue with the teacher and with one another; engage students

in experiences that show contradictions to initial understandings and then encourage discussion; assess students' understanding through application and performance of open-structured tasks. Furthermore, the teacher has two main roles apart of the ones stated above. On the one hand, she/he is concerned with facilitating the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between the participants and the variety of activities. On the other hand, the teacher is an individual who acts independently within the learning-teaching group (Breen & Candlin, 1980; as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). To account for what the previous authors mentioned, our role was to design the workshops to be developed. We also directed the activities that took place during the sessions.

Besides that, our role was also to engage ourselves in critical reflection. In other words, we also tried to understand who we were and how we fit into our students classrooms. While developing the workshops we were constantly examining our own assumptions about this particular rural context. We were also learning and unlearning new things about rurality in Boyacá. In this sense, we found it useful to have as part of our team a teacher-researcher who has shared the same culture of the students. This teacher was born and she grew up in a rural area, as all the students we were working with. Then, the activities presented in the workshops were constantly evaluated under the bases of our own cultural bias.

3.8 The Role of Students

Students were active and constructed their own knowledge. Students had three main activities to fulfil. First, they had to develop the workshops, second, they had to present orally what they had achieved as part of the Activate stage and third, they were asked to share their learning experiences with the class. In this sense and because of the nature of this study, learners were central in the learning process.

3.9 The Role of Material

The role of the material (workshops) was also relevant in this study. The workshops provided meaningful, realistic and contextualized learning opportunities for students in order for them to use the prior knowledge and to construct and assimilate new one. The material also had the primary role of promoting communicative language use.

3.10 Instructional Phases

Having described the role of the teachers, the participants and the material, we will explain the three phases that we carried out to help our students to develop speaking skills in EFL through workshops, designed based on their needs.

3.11 Student's Profile on their Experience in EFL

In order to account for students profile and experiences in regards to the language and the speaking skill, we applied a needs analysis. This first phase belongs to what Graves (2007) calls needs assessment. This stage encompasses the weaknesses or deficiencies students let the researchers know through the application of some research instruments. At this stage, we applied two instruments to know what the situation was and what they lacked regarding the English learning process. The field notes and surveys revealed that students needed to improve their speaking skill. We will deeply refer to these instruments in the chapter entitled Research Design.

3.12 Exploration of English Language Teaching through Students' Cultural Background

In this phase we aimed at considering the way that our students reacted through topics that involved their own cultural experiences. Its purpose was to identify weaknesses and strengthens before tackling the workshops to avoid stereotypes and prejudices. For this purpose,

we informally asked them about their perceptions regarding the materials used to teach the language and if they considered it important and interesting to address their own realities in the materials for the English class.

3.13 Topic Selection

Afterwards, we started to develop four workshops. At this point we reviewed and examined the content or topics students were supposed to study regarding their syllabus for the scholastic year. For instance, the syllabus for eleventh grade reads that they needed to study the present perfect tense, frequency adverbs, likes and dislikes, and so forth. Here it is important to highlight that the topics, as presented in the syllabus of the schools, were based on grammatical structures. As this proposal was carried out during the second term of the year, we were asked by the teachers in the English department to review the topics they had already studied. They also advised us to review the topics in a non-linear way. That is why, the topics in the workshops moved from present perfect to adverbs of frequency. When the content was utterly revised, we set up the goals and objectives we desired students to meet by using the workshops, as the main material for the English class.

3.14 Activities Selection

The next procedure was to select and develop activities. This aspect was the beginning of scaffolding the body of the workshops. We began to design the activities taking into account the data portrayed in Survey 2, which aim to document students' perceptions, likes, preferences, and favorite topics they would like to talk about in their English classes. In the following lines, we will explain in detail how we developed this entire process.

The content of the workshops was related to students' interests, preferences, likes, needs, and empathy in terms of learning English as a foreign language. In this case, and based on the answers provided by students in a survey and an interview, we selected the following

general topics: agriculture, music, sports, and festivals. Likewise, the activities in the workshops favored the rehearsal of the speaking skill as well as the content related to the rural area. Among the variety of activities, the workshops included interviews, asking each other through games, finding someone who, acting from a script, role play and oral presentations, among others.

We also adapted the grammatical topics recommended in the syllabus to the content of the workshops, as suggested by students. Furthermore, when approaching the content itself, we included students' life experiences at the countryside, agricultural practices carried out by their parents and family, festivals or fairs celebrated in their region and what they meant to them. This process included items that were well-known in their surrounding context, which is the rural area. Hence, the content encompassed topics in regards to agricultural activities such as growing potatoes, corn, beans; items related to cattle, local music, and festivals. These topics were addressed because the nature of the workshops was to integrate prior knowledge and students experiences as much as possible in a contextualized way, which means to include information that surrounds students' lives and experiences to promote meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1968; Nieto, 2013).

3.15 Organization of Content and Activities

This stage basically consisted of shaping the workshops, which appealed for the order in which the activities probably looked more coherent and appropriate to approach the teaching and learning process. As previously mentioned, we followed the Engage, Study and Activate sequence as proposed by Harmer (1998).

Finally, evaluation was conceived as a process and not as a result. It was systematic and everything students produced was valid and appreciated. Thereby, it was focused on communication, construction, and interaction among learners. Each workshop was assessed by the teacher and the students (see Appendix D).

In sum, the steps we followed to develop the workshops were the following: setting up students profile in terms of their needs, exploration of students' abilities and difficulties in terms of speaking, and the topic selection and development. Hence, in the following lines we present the research design adopted in this research study, which includes the approach, type of study, setting, population, and data collection procedures.

Chapter 4

Research Design

4.1 Approach

Considering that in this study, plenty of observation, description, interpretation and analysis were required to point out the way the speaking skill developed in eleventh graders from two rural schools, we conducted a qualitative study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), “the word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on the process and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (p.10).

Additionally, qualitative research allows the researcher to be involved at the inner experience of participants and some of the questions posted for researchers can only be answered through qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). That was the case of this study that took place in a specific context, the rural area. Thus, it was important for us to observe people in their real context.

Also Richards (2009) suggests that qualitative research should be locally situated, participant-oriented, holistic, and inductive. In this research, we have analyzed participants’ development of speaking skills through contextualized learning opportunities provided in four workshops. We have also tried to identify their own views considering the context where they are and we have tried to interpret data from different perspectives.

4.2 Type of Study

The type of study that we implemented was action research. This model involves a reflective, systematic and critical perspective in which all the participants belong to the same educational community (Burns, 1999). Action Research also gives teachers the opportunity to improve teaching practices, since they can function not only as educational professionals but also as researchers (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) asserted that “classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative interpretive models of inquiry and data collection by teachers with a view to teachers making judgments about how to improve their own practices” (p. 561). Then, teachers interpret their own understandings and judgments and take into account that the emphasis is “practical” in order to solve a problem identified in real situations within the classroom:

Classroom action research is not just practical idealistically, in a utopian way, or just about how interpretations might be different in theory; it is also practical in Aristotle’s sense of practical reasoning about how to act rightly and properly in a situation in which one is confronted. (p.561)

According to Madrid (2000) there are four classic developmental phases to take into account in regard to action research. We followed this basic four steps proposed by Madrid because those stages were the most suitable and appropriate for this research study. Despite there are many research cycles to follow, we decided to pursue this one because it strongly depicts the process we followed alongside the investigation. The phases are the following:

- Phase 1: Develop a plan of action to
 - a) Improve what is already happening or
 - b) Identify and examine a “puzzle” or problem area in your teaching.
- Phase 2: Act to implement the plan.
- Phase 3: Observe the effects of action in the context in which it occurs.
- Phase 4: Reflect on these effects.

In such a way we identified and examined an area or situation that presented some weaknesses. In this particular case, we started with a concern found in the needs analysis and the daily observations that we made to students. Students seemed not to be interested in the English classes and they did not participate using the target language. Besides that, they did not have any contextualized material that really responded and accounted for their context (rural area), opinions, likes, and preferences to learn English.

After that, as part of the second stage, we focused on the design and application of the workshops, which were designed in the light of the themes or topics students stated by means of an interview and survey, as their favorite ones. The main topics were agriculture, sports, music, and festivals. We also considered the grammatical themes proposed in the syllabus. Thus, this phase was called Plan Implementation.

The third stage we followed was to observe the effects and contributions of the implementation of the workshops. This phase demanded us to collect data as these were emerging from the implementation of the plan of action. For this purpose, we used field notes, interviews, and surveys.

The last step was related to the reflection based on the effects of the plan. At this point, we analyzed the data collected through the principles of the Grounded Theory proposed by Urquhart (2013). This analysis helped us understand better and improve the plan implemented. The following diagram summarizes the steps we followed in this action research.

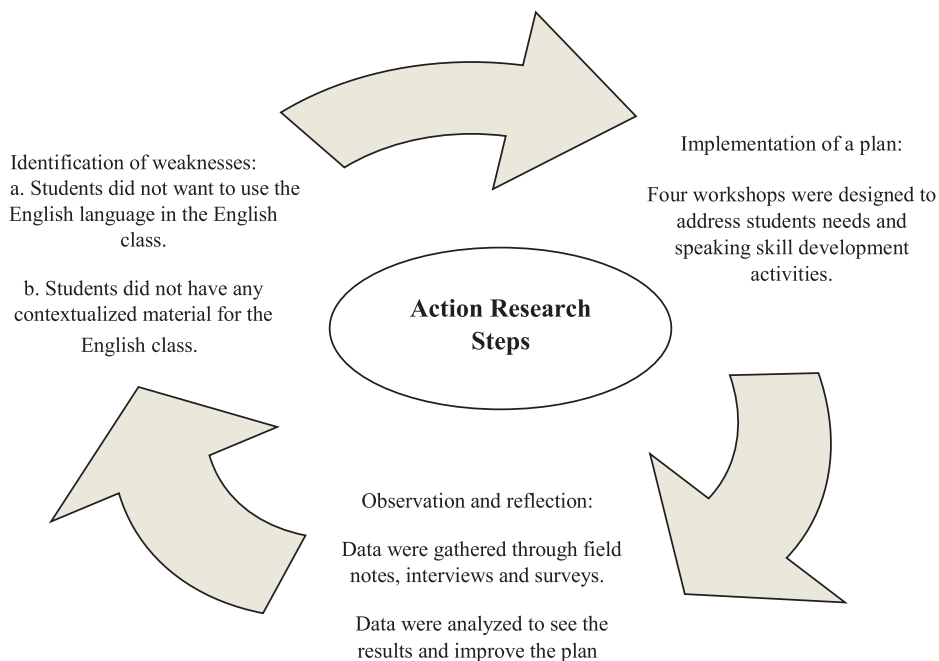


Figure 2. Action Research Cycle

4.3 Setting

This investigation was carried out at two rural schools located in Boyacá, Colombia. Both institutions intend to respond to the need to link education with training requirements of the labor force. Thus, the school's pedagogical project focuses on agriculture and cattle. These rural schools were public. They were the only institutions in the town and they served students from first to eleventh grade.

For the English class, the teacher used English textbooks designed for students who belong to the main departmental cities in Colombia. The main components of the class were grammar, reading, writing and listening. Students attended to three forty-five-minute sessions of English class per week, and each course had twenty students. Thus, the time allocated for the plan was an average of forty hours during the second semester of the year, which lasts sixteen weeks.

4.4 Population

The students who partook in this research study were forty. It is to say that all students who were part of the classes in both rural schools, agreed to participate. They were eleventh graders at both schools. Their age ranges around 16 and 18 years old. Although the students that attended the classes in which this proposal was carried out, had already taken the English courses provided by the school, during five years, they had a low English Language level. They showed difficulties when expressing themselves in English. It was evidenced when, informally, we asked them to answer a written test and speak about what they understood from a reading section related to animals care at the countryside. They could not express their ideas in English.

Instead of that, students were active and they liked to take part in the different activities with the little knowledge they had regarding English. They showed empathy towards writing instead of speaking because they were afraid of speaking in English. As a matter of fact, people from the rural areas in Boyacá do not talk too much, even in their mother tongue. Students' parents provided us with a permission to collect data that is evidenced through a consent form. Students signed it and wrote a pseudonym to be taken into account when referring to the information they provided, and everything related to the research itself in order to remain them under anonymity (See Appendix E).

4.5 Data Gathering Instruments

According to Sandoval (1996), to collect data it is necessary to deeply analysed if it is quantitative or qualitative, the type of information that is wanted, the sources of information and the time that is required for the process. Then, the instruments that we used to collect data for the diagnosis stage and for answering the research questions and sub-questions were surveys, field notes, and structured interviews. The instruments were applied before, during, and after implementing the workshops.

4.5.1 Field Notes

The first instrument was related to field notes following the observation technique. The observation helped us to find and analyze the phenomenon for the study. We observed English classes and we found that students did not have contextualized and appropriate material that responded to their needs and preferences. Likewise, this instrument provided us information in regard to the diagnosis because we realized students had certain apathy towards the topics approached in class, usually, North American stereotypes.

Field notes were also used along the study to take notes every session and observe specific aspects regarding the way students started to develop their speaking skill. Thus, they were also used to collect information while we implemented the workshops. Every class we wrote students behavior and attitude regarding the activities and tasks assigned through the workshops. Later, we categorized the information gathered through the observation and analyzed the data which were deeply connected to the core of the study, and the data that had commonalities with the ones found through the other instruments. Every slice of information helped us scaffold the emergent categories (See Appendix F).

Now, field notes belong to the observation technique and it is a written category. Field notes comprise finely detailed written accounts of what was observed. They are mainly written in the heat of the moment as events unfold before the researcher's eyes and tend to be the primary data collection tool during observation (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p.235). It is essential to bear in mind that taking notes implies the researcher to be non-judgmental. In this sense, we wrote just what we observed; we did not include our interpretation and comments. Furthermore, the researcher must focus on describing behavior, rather than "attributing meaning to it" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

4.5.2 Surveys

For the diagnosis stage a survey was implemented in order to contrast and validate the information gathered through the field notes, which was

related to students' perceptions and feelings in the English class. In fact, students stated they did not feel comfortable talking about something they did not know (North American famous people, North American cultural representations, etc). Surveys belong to a written category and to an open-ended technique. It is an instrument that allows gathering a range of written responses to set items from a specific population.

Also, this instrument is a useful tool for identifying trends and preferences across a large number of people (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Thus, we used surveys to account for unobservable data "In second language acquisition research, surveys or questionnaires are used mostly to collect data in phenomena which are not easily observed, such as attitudes, motivation, and self – concepts" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.172). This instrument was the initial stage for gathering information about students' preferences and needs in order to set a guide to design workshops.

We chose this instrument because the group we had the chance to be in touch was considerably large. Therefore, a survey was the instrument we found the most suitable to collect data from the entire group. In this way, surveys were answered by students before and after having the experience of learning English using the workshops as the main resource or material as a guide.

The first survey we conducted had as its main objective to discover the way students liked to learn English, including themes or topics. Through this instrument, students let us know the activities and content they were interested in. From this diagnosis that encompassed questions related to the resources they used to learn English inside the classroom, activities, and topics they would like to implement in the learning process. Therefore, the topics for designing the workshops emerged. These were agriculture, music, sports, and festivals (See Appendix G).

They expressed empathy for including activities that appealed for their experiences and background knowledge. In the same way, they stressed they were interested in approaching communicative tasks

and assignments. Hence, the objective we had set to fulfill with the instrument was achieved. It was to collect information that revealed students' preferences, likes, concerns, and empathy in order to select the content and direction of the workshops.

The second survey had as objective to collect information related to the experiences and insights each student had throughout the process of approaching activities that favored the skill of speaking by means of using the workshops. The survey included questions about the perception and usefulness of the activities regarding the EFL speaking skill. In the same sense, it comprised issues in regards to students' appraisal with respect to their performance and betterment alongside the learning process. We collected relevant data that helped us approach the research question (see Appendix H).

4.5.3 Interviews

The third instrument was a structured interview. Its objective was to confirm and collect additional information related to the progress in terms of the skill of speaking throughout the implementation of the workshops. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) stated that a "structured interview aims to maximize comparisons across responses to interview questions" (p. 201). We chose this type of interview because we aimed to confine informants to particular topics and themes, in this case, the ones regarding workshops. Furthermore, we wanted to collect the perceptions of each one of the students on the same issue. The upcoming chapter encompasses the analysis of the data gathered by means of the data collection instruments mentioned above. The following table summarizes the research design (see Appendix I).

Table 2. Summary of the Research Design

RESEARCH QUESTION	INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES	SETTING	RESEARCH TYPE
Main Question: What do the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students’ needs, reveal about their speaking skill development?	Field notes. Surveys. Interviews.	- Two rural public schools located in Boyacá, Colombia. - Course: English classes with 40 students in both schools.	- Qualitative research - Action research study - Teachers- Researchers
Sub-question 1: What is the role of workshops in the enhancement of the skill of speaking?	Field notes. Surveys. Interviews.		

After presenting the components of the research design in this study, in the following chapter we describe the approach to analyze data, the procedures followed, the triangulation and validity process, and the codification of instruments.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data analysis procedures we used once we collected the information for this study. It describes the approach to analyse the data, the steps we followed, the triangulation process and the categories of analysis.

5.1 Approach for the Data Analysis

As this research is considered as a qualitative study, which is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p.3), we followed a qualitative data analysis. It is a process that describes, interprets and comprehends information. According to Patton (2002), qualitative data analysis is characterised by being a systematic process where the researcher can be in closer contact with the participants and each case of study is particular. Also, because of that, the enquiry of the research is seen as an intricate event where any situation can happen. It is understood from a *holistic perspective*: “The whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts; focus on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot meaningfully be reduced to a few discrete variables and linear, cause effect relationships” (Patton, 2002, p. 41).

Another feature is that the process of analysis is *inductive*. For the author, the discovery of the details that form patterns and their connections, starts exploring and after confirming findings based on theoretical principles. Finally, in terms of Patton (2002), qualitative data research is

reflective; the *voice* and *perspective* of the researcher must be credible and authentic in order to validate the data gathered.

5.2 Steps to Analyse Data

The data analysis for this investigation was focused on the three principles of the Grounded Theory described by Urquhart (2013). At the first stage, we went through the data gathered. We underlined all relevant information that was found. This phase accounts for the first step, which is the “Open Coding”. Glaser (1978; as cited in Urquhart, 2013), he described open coding as “coding data everyway [*sic*] possible” (p. 23).

Afterwards, we followed the selective coding in order to highlight and select the suitable information regarding the research question we had. For this phase, we integrated the slices of data that were connected to the main categories and subcategories that were emerging. In this way, Glaser (1978; as cited in Urquhart, 2013) provided a definition for selective coding such “the stage when coding is limited to only those categories that relate to the core category” (p.24). From this perspective, we could identify two main categories and we attributed some subcategories to each one of them.

Regarding the last principle, the theoretical coding, once we had the categories and subcategories, we looked for theory that strongly supported them. Urquhart (2013) stated that “theoretical coding is when we relate the codes to each other and look at the nature of the relationships between those codes” (p. 26). At this stage, we looked at the codes we had and then, we looked for theory that was related to each one of the codes that emerged.

5.3 Triangulation and Validity of the Process

For this research, the instruments we used to collect data were surveys, field notes, and structured interviews, during an academic term in both

schools. In this sense, we followed the principles of the methodological triangulation that Denzin (1978) described as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (p. 291).

5.4. Codification of the Data Collection Instruments

Throughout the process of analyzing data, some steps were followed as explained in the lines above. In the process of indexing data, we used some codifications to identify the pieces of information from each data collection instrument. In order to better understand the source of the excerpts presented in the following chapter, we illustrate the codifications adopted in this research study in the chart below.

Table 3. Codification of Instruments

CODIFICATION	MEANING
Survey 1	Survey No. 1- The number changes according to the instrument from which the excerpt was taken.
Interview 1	Interview No. 1
Field note 3	Field note No. 3
Q4	Question No. 4- Surveys and interviews
Rose, Moon, Alex, etc	Pseudonym of students

As the procedures of the data analysis were described, in the following section we present the findings of this research study which are divided into categories and subcategories.

Chapter 6

Findings

6.1 Categories of Analysis

At the end of this process the following categories emerged. They were related to the main question. We divided the each category into two subcategories a as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Emerging Categories and Subcategories

RESEARCH QUESTION-SUBQUESTION	CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
➤ Research Question What do the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development?	➤ Category 1 Addressing speaking skill at an initial level	➤ Using background knowledge as a way to attain confidence ➤ Meaning Negotiation as a first step to deal with communicative competence
➤ Sub-question What is the role of workshops in the enhancement of the skill of speaking?	➤ Category 2 Workshops as a vehicle to address a culturally responsive pedagogy that fostered initial interaction	➤ Contextualized activities as sources of interaction in speaking ➤ The role of collaboration in speaking tasks

In the next lines, the categories and the subcategories are presented, characterized, and exemplified.

6.2 Addressing the Speaking Skill at an Initial Level

The name of this category is due to the first and initial stage of the speaking skill development. As students were not accustomed to speaking in English, they had to start nourishing the knowledge they gained every day. In this sense, the skill of speaking began to be part of students' language learning. Besides, it is worth highlighting that speaking in a foreign language is not an easy task. From this, eliciting the initial phase of speaking and having positive students' advancement are two essential components of this category.

Considering the aforementioned points, speaking a foreign language is difficult because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions and in various genuine contexts. The aforementioned aspects were taken into consideration when designing the workshops based on topics that students were going to talk about not only in class, but also outside with their friends, acquaintances, and relatives. Hence, there are many different interactions that involve not only verbal communication, but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as stress, pitch, and intonation. Likewise, not linguistic elements such as gestures, body language, and facial expressions are present when speaking (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

As described above, speaking a foreign language implies to master several linguistic elements, which seem to be, at a glance, the most relevant aspect to attain a communicative exchange in the target language. Nevertheless, the findings in this research study suggest that there are some other factors that help students meet their proposed goals in their language learning process. It means that students hierarchically stated that overcoming factors such as anxiety, tenses, inhibition, risk-taking, among others, was the most relevant achievement to them, rather than improving their language proficiency. The importance of acknowledging the factors influencing second language acquisition relates to the core of this category as discussed by Lightbrown and Spada (2013), and at the same time, connects with the fact of understanding the nature of such factors when dealing with studies related to second language learning (Torres, Fonseca & Cano, 2016).

Equally important, students were involved in a learning environment where interaction is the core in language learning. It is by means of interacting with their classmates and teachers that students clarify doubts and move forward to meet their learning goals. Regarding interaction, the negotiation of meaning is an underpinning element that provides students with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), and at the same time, their learning process becomes more meaningful and contextualized.

In this line of thought, the process of overcoming some factors related to second language learning are described and illustrated in the first subcategory, which is presented in the following lines.

6.2.1 Using Background Knowledge as a Way to Attain Confidence

The nature of the name for this first sub-category was based on the information and interpretation from the instruments. We found that the workshops, the activities themselves, favored students' betterment in terms of personal and academic aims. Students tried to overcome aspects related to fear, shyness, anxiety, self-consciousness, and tenseness. In this sense, we integrated those aspects in a general component that is the subcategory itself. This subcategory encompasses in a general way the nature of the aspects mentioned above.

“The English language class became something really useful to me, not only to have progress in English, but also to have trust in myself. I always thought that English should be perfectly spoken and I limited myself not to speak in English. Then, I realized that it is a process and we have to strive ourselves to improve. In my case, I overcome my shyness and fear to public speaking and my language speaking skill was improved”¹ (Survey 2, Q3, Rose).

“My biggest weakness was that I hesitated a lot when I tried to speak in English, I thought that what I said was wrong in terms of grammar and pronunciation. Also, I got very nervous and I forgot almost everything. When I started to talk about

1 Excerpts were translated from Spanish into English by the authors for purposes of this book.

my favorite singers, I was more confident and quiet, which has favored my academic performance in English” (Survey 2, Q5, Ximme).

The lack of confidence could be one of the main obstacles that prevented learners to succeed in the language learning process. At the beginning students did not take the risk to speak English because they feared that their peers made fun of them. The English classes lacked interaction and advancement in terms of learning the language itself. Then, the material used to learn English included activities and themes students were interested in. From this, the content motivated and decreased students’ anxiety to progress in language learning. In this sense, confidence was the first step to move forward into students’ desire to express their ideas, opinions, thoughts, and feelings. That is to say, having a grasp of the referents and language to talk about, students were more confident using the language. Likewise, confidence provided learners with betterment and progress when learning English as a foreign language. Learners felt more confident with themselves and others in the scholastic environment because they had a grasp of the referents and the language they talked about as shown in the following excerpts.

“At the beginning I was afraid of speaking in English and I could not express my ideas in this language, but little by little I learned words, phrases and am now able to say what I feel and think, this thanks to my partners and teacher with whom I could practice a lot” (Survey 2, Q2, Pily).

“It was very meaningful to me. I mean, the experience with the workshops because there were many topics of my interest and this pushed me to continue speaking with my partners in order to express my opinions and knowledge about the topics, Then, I felt English was being learnt day by day and step by step” (Interview 1, Q4, L11-16, Santi).

Through the structured interview, Pily and Santi are revealing that speaking was enhanced little by little. This learning process began from the acquisition of words to the expression of full sentences. The previous excerpts are a clear example of the initial stage of the development of the

speaking skill. It is necessary to highlight that the permanent use and rehearsal in context of each word the students acquired was a key to move forward in the language learning process. In this sense, the workshops fostered students' enthusiasm in order to let the speaking skill be born. Likewise, there were some aspects that influenced students to continue cultivating the skill that was beginning to grow.

Additionally, the fact that students had previous knowledge and experiences related to the topics addressed in class, it helped them enhance their speaking skill.

“Having a better understanding of the topic it helped me to improve my language fluency and at the same time, it gave me confidence because I could comprehend what I was saying as in some previous classes I had to learn by heart conversations or dialogues, but I was not conscious of what I was saying Nowadays, I am able to do more demanding tasks such as interviews, dialogues and oral presentations and it is not that hard as before” (Interview 2, Q4, L24-31, Paulis).

The excerpt above illustrates that the topic for each one of the activities was greatly important to learners. When learners understood what was being taught, their level of confidence increased and this allowed learning success. Confidence was one of the pillars that provoked an initial empathy towards the target language learning. As the previous excerpt shows, students had to do presentations and interviews, which were demanding activities. In this sense, those activities were not only challenging to students, but also greatly connected to Tomlinson's statement about confidence.

Additionally, it was expected that materials helped learners to develop confidence through tasks and activities that challenge students and move them beyond their current language level instead of simplifying the learning process (Tomlinson, 1998). Moreover, there is a premise that emphasizes that relaxed and self-confident learners learn faster (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; as cited in Tomlinson, 1998). In this sense, a faster learning was the result of self-confidence as the case of Paulis.

Understanding the topic drove the learner to gain confidence, and both, understanding and confidence drove the learner to the learning process and excellent performance in it.

Additionally, theoretical foundations stated by Harmer supported and contributed to what has been said about confidence. Harmer (2012) stated that “the experiences teachers offer to students affect students’ motivation positively or negatively, plus, materials designed by teachers play a key role in providing friendly experiences in the classroom” (p. 135). Furthermore, Ramos and Aguirre (2014) pointed out that “materials conceived by teachers are intended to increase students’ motivation, which also helps to decrease anxiety” (p.139).

“I had never thought that our voices and daily experiences were going to appear in the workshops. It was a great experience to learn English and speak about my life because it is more meaningful than talking about anything we do not have experience or do not know about. As I had background knowledge about the topics, I took risks to express myself and felt motivated and enthusiastic in the English classes” (Survey 2, Q4, Santi).

“In my personal experience I want to highlight the meaningfulness of the workshops because I always wanted to talk about agriculture, festivals and other topics which were close to my life and I was eager to ask and share about each single theme approached in English, Then I started to be secure when speaking because I used to get nervous and forget everything before learning English through these workshops” (Interview 1, Q4, L 42-49, River).

Alongside the whole research experience the material development was carefully thought on students’ preferences and it is evident that students felt and realized that the workshops included their voices and experiences. Hence, students’ investment increased when they were immersed in the learning process using content and activities that were connected to their interests. According to Norton (2011) investment is different from motivation, since a student can be highly motivated to

learn a language, but can also be not invested in the practices in the classroom. Therefore, contextualized topics favored students' language learning exposure because their level of anxiety diminished and their level of curiosity increased. In the same line of thought, foreign language classroom anxiety can freeze learners, leaving them unable to produce or comprehend the foreign language. Besides, high levels of anxiety negatively affect learning and performance (Horwitz, 2001).

Based on Horwitz's (2001) ideas about anxiety, we can say that students overcame difficulties related to anxiety and thus they could leave the static learning world and welcome to the progress in learning a foreign language. Likewise, the success in overcoming this weakness favored not only the individual, but also the entire group. Indeed, as the core of this research study was focused on speaking, students really enhanced such skill. This enhancement was achieved by reducing anxiety, having in mind that the oral production tends to be a particularly anxiety-producing factor. In this way, low levels of anxiety drove the learners to the path of Confidence.

"Currently, my attitude towards the English learning process is different because it is positive and I want to learn this language because I now find it interesting. When I was learning other topics which were not related to my life, I saw English as something very difficult and I felt I was obliged to learn it, even when I did not like it" (Survey 2, Q3, Paulis).

"Students were asked three questions and they seemed to be shy. At the beginning they did not answer, afterwards they were excited when listening to music. They took the risk to sing in English and express their opinions about 'Boyacense' singers and music genre" (Field Note 1).

By reading the statements above, we notice that learning a foreign language stopped to be seen as a punishment or duty, but it was conceived as an interesting subject to talk about their lives. At the beginning of the process, students were anxious and nervous that they avoided all kind of participation. Oxford (1999) stated that anxiety damages language learners' achievement "indirectly through worry and self-doubt and

directly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language” (p.60). Based on this statement proposed by Oxford and analyzing the excerpt from the Field Note 1, we can conclude that anxiety affected students in both directly and indirectly way. At the first stage of involving students in the English learning process through workshops, the English classes lacked participation and each student feared to speak in English, but over time, they were more willing to partake in the English classes.

“I did not like to share with my partners because I was not secure and sure whether what I was going to say was right or not, so I preferred to be silent. Fortunately, it changed and I began to talk to my partners and I really liked it because I could participate and learn in the class” (Survey 2, Q5, River).

“Students were willing to partake in the activity, interview their peers, and pass in front of the class to share, compare and discuss the answers and opinions from their classmates” (Field Note 2).

The previous fragments illustrate that once students overcome anxiety, they felt comfortable and confident in the classroom; they began to enjoy and take pleasure of learning English in their teamwork (friends and closest classmates). Moreover, this self-confidence was not only increased in small groups, but also in the entire group as they wanted to share their opinions and feelings with their classmates. In every activity they showed some pleasure for learning English in a very comfortable environment. Then, the result of coping and overcoming anxiety was highly positive because there was a huge raise in participation in the English classes.

“Reading and writing were the skills developed in the English class, speaking was not approached at all and I think it is a very important skill to communicate with people, so I have been very interested in developing such skill and I have tried to practice the most to speak with certainty” (Survey 2, Q2, Sara).

“What we say and how we do it could define what we are so I care when speaking in English because sometimes we can be

criticized but by practicing with my partners I have improved speaking and there are fewer chances to be insecure and criticized” (Interview 1, Q6, L 87-91, Pily).

Based on these excerpts, we can say that students’ interest in participating in class increased. In addition, confidence is always needed by learners when speaking in daily transactions (Bygate, 1987). Hence, it seemed that when students were more confident, they did their best effort to successfully accomplish speaking tasks.

“The workshops included topics I already knew something about them. Then, it was easier to talk about it and share with my partners my experiences and opinions” (Survey 2, Q3, Moon).

“Students were excited and motivated when describing what their parents and they did at the countryside. They expressed their ideas, opinions and life experiences with agricultural practices, cattle rising, and trade in livestock and agriculture” (Field Note 3).

Including students’ own experiences and likes was an essential strategy that facilitated students to gain confidence in order to enhance speaking as they liked to share information about their lives. We define experiences as a set of accumulated memories that revive lived past actions and *likes* are the inclinations people have towards objects, actions or people. Thus, the material was contextualized and students could relate it to previous knowledge and experiences they have had, students’ interest emerge in order to acquire the English language. The previous statement is related to the relevance of bearing in mind students’ voices and life experiences when designing contextualized material.

According to Núñez *et al.* (2004), “materials designed by teachers should include prerequisites that are indispensable to promote an adequate atmosphere for learning; a crucial aspect here is the activation of prior knowledge” (p. 130). In this sense, activating prior knowledge helps students recall previous experiences, which is connected with the theory of meaning learning. Ausubel (1968) claimed that “the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already

knows” (p.7). This activating process favored students’ interaction and facilitated the enhancement of speaking in the English classes as it is illustrated in the following fragments.

“My background knowledge I had about the topics was quite essential to take the risk to speaking in English because it is more likely to make connections with new information and share fluently our experiences with our classmates. Besides, it is easy to describe what do every day, for example, helping my parents to milk the cows, growing potatoes, planting sugar cane, among others” (Survey 2, Q5, Alex).

“I find the workshops very interesting and I like the English class as now I am willing to participate because I feel comfortable talking about music, agriculture, and topics that call my attention, so it is exciting to share my opinions and experiences. I can say I have improved speaking” (Interview 1, Q4, L-62-67 Red).

By reading these responses we can say that including students’ likes in the material helped students to gain interest towards learning English. It is evident that when students feel identified with the material, it is more likely to promote students’ expression as one of the main sources that facilitates learning. Moreover, including experience and pleasure in the learning process is crucial to achieve success (Kolb, 1984).

Learning and pleasure go hand in hand to achieve effective and meaningful learning processes. In this case, pleasure encompasses the empathy that students have with the content of each English class. These two terms coexist together thanks to terrific experiences that allow learners move forward. From this, when students feel they can comprehend and relate the topic to their realities, they achieve some advancement in sharing and expressing their opinions and perceptions about the theme that is being addressed. The excerpts below show some patterns of pleasure and previous knowledge.

“With all these activities about topics that I know and like, my mind captures everything and it allows me improve my English expression” (Survey 2, Q1, Marry).

“A theme of my interest was approached in class. It was when we talked about sports and sport players. Then, when Nairo Quintana, James Rodríguez, and others were mentioned, it was easier to me express ideas on what I knew of them” (Survey 2, Q2, Peter).

“In yesterday’s class, the workshop was about sports. That theme favored my oral expression because I dared to say a few things about my local sports and my favorite sport players” (Survey 2, Q4, Paulis).

In the previous excerpts some essential topics are emphasized once again. For instance, experience, likes, empathy, different preferences and familiarity with the contextualized topics are features that facilitated oral production in English. In this sense, it is essential to highlight the importance of experience in language learning because in many cases, there is no recognition of the role and relevance that experience has in the learning process, and in this particular context, it is vital to empower students to recall their experiences in the rural areas as a way to foster the sense of belonging to the rural community. Likewise, learning occurs everywhere and it is all around us and this community is not the exception to be taken into account in order to promote emancipatory practices in these contexts which sometimes are alienated. Learning requires personal commitment, interaction with others, expression of emotions and feelings. All of these peculiarities are influenced by the context and experiences of each individual regarding learning (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993).

“With our partners we shared opinions, what we thought, what we did not like, and what we liked too. Therefore, I think it encourages one to be able to speak English very well with our peers and make progress in speaking” (Survey 2, Q4, Tom).

From the previous excerpt, we were able to conclude that the content of the workshops provided students with opportunities to talk about their feelings, thinking, likes, and experiences. In this sense, as Tom stated, this kind of topics foster students to share their preferences, experiences and facilitate the enhancement of speaking. Willis (1996) pointed out

that “learners need opportunities to communicate what they want to say and express what they feel or think; using language for real purposes give learners chances to record and use the language they know already” (p.13). From this perspective, activating previous knowledge and sharing preferences are two components that favored students’ progress in language learning, especially, in the betterment of the skill of speaking.

“We all love sports, singers, and agriculture. We all had something very different to share, a very different sport and we could contribute with something in class to gain knowledge. It was a pleasant exchange” (Survey 2, Q5, Lover).

“I felt free and excited to share my life experiences because we learn from each other and past experiences are constitute knowledge per se” (Survey 2, Q4, Bean).

By doing a more careful reading of the results, we suggest that the topics which encompass likes and relevant aspects to each individual’s life elicited information exchange. Likewise, talking about oneself is naturally important because this allows sharing part of our identities and making sense of existence. Everyone has different likes and experiences to let others know. Castrillón (2003) highlights that “it is important to include learners’ life aspects in the process because these increase their interest and desire to participate” (p.63). From this statement, inherent life’s experiences are highly essential components of participation.

“The workshops encompassed issues that were very close to us. At least for me, they were known and very important and could make sense of my actions, behavior, way of thinking, likes, dislikes, so I now better understand who I am. I think that making connections with our own lives and contexts one can really learn English” (Survey, Q3, Juliet).

With regards to the topics that were very close to her, we can state that including themes that the learner has had the opportunity to listen about, allowed sharing perceptions and experiences on the known issue. Furthermore, experiences are part of the environment in which the individual lives in. Monsalve and Correal (2006) pointed out that “if

the teacher uses the environment that surrounds children's lives to be expressed in English, young learners will see the foreign language as a means to express their experiences in their daily life" (p.137). In relation to this fact, every experience in learners' lives is a source of expression that allows perceiving language learning as a necessary communicative process in daily life transactions.

At the same time, Castrillón (2003) arrives to the conclusion that "meaningful situations for students' interaction in English should include their experiences. Authentic situations create suitable conditions to develop oral communicative competences as students understand better things that are relevant to their lives (p. 64). Approaching students' insights and experiences does help to enhance language oral skills. Besides, when students talked about themselves, they felt they were vital in the teaching and learning process and it was more likely they made connections between relevant information and cognitive structures to let meaningful learning happen (Ausubel, Novak & Hanesian, 1978).

The fact of including activities and topics that were of students' interest was a way to overcome some factors that prevented them from expressing their feelings and thoughts in English. At the same time, they started to enhance their speaking skill little by little. Another essential aspect, students found in their learning process, was the role of negotiation of meaning in their English class as a way to communicate in the target language. The role of meaning negotiation and some other elements are better explained and illustrated in the following subcategory.

6.2.2 Meaning Negotiation as a First Step to Deal with Communicative Competence

This is the second sub-category that emerged. Its name is due to the initial stage of negotiating meaning as students showed their abilities and cooperation to negotiate meaning in order to achieve a single and essential aspect, communication. Students took advantage of some communicative strategies such as gestures and movements to express their ideas, feelings, thoughts, and opinions about the target topic.

Negotiation for meaning has been defined as “the process whereby interactions are modified between or among conversational partners to help overcome communication breakdowns” (Long, 1983a, 1983b; Long & Porter, 1985; Porter, 1986).

“Sarah was excited and she asked her partners some questions in order to interact and make sure her language constructions were right. She asked River how old was James and he answer James was twenty two ‘años’. So, Sarah confidentially clarified that ‘años’ was ‘years’. River accepted and he expressed his gratitude for her completion and repeated the complete sentence: James is twenty two years old” (Field Note 2).

“Oye, yo juego soccer with my friends los fines de semana. Teacher, how do you say ‘fin de semana?’ T: It is weekend. P: o sea que la oración quedaría: I play soccer with my friends in the weekend. T: Very good! You can use the preposition ‘on’ when you are referring to weekend. I mean, the sentence is the following: I play soccer with my friends on weekends” [sic], (Field Note 2).

By reading between lines, we can say that the students and the teacher were trying to negotiate meaning and content to effectively exchange messages and acquire language knowledge to communicate. Students shared experiences, opinions, and background knowledge that students had lived or heard about which related to their preferences. This negotiation of meaning was mediated by experiential learning as experiences played an essential role in speaking development (Kolb, 1984). Learning was a continuous process based on grounded experiences framed under the transactions occurring between people and the environment; that is to say, students were involved in an interactive learning process in which sharing, reflecting, re-learning, and reconstructing life experiences were the main components framing experiential learning.

Equally important, Doughty and Pica (1986) asserted that the feature of negotiating meaning or sequences is “the opportunity that is provided to the learner to process utterances in the L2 which become more

comprehensible” (p. 43). From this perspective, negotiating meaning offers the chance to better understand what the other person wants to communicate. At this point, it is imperative to emphasize that the effort and interest in negotiating meaning has a unique purpose, to approach communication. Meaning negotiation plays an important role in learners’ language development as it can promote modified output (Bitchener, 2004).

“Fabian: My favorite finger is Juanes and I like his music.

Amanda: finger? Do you mean your favorite singer is Juanes?

Fabian: yes, sorry I was confused” (Filed Note 3).

“Students asked the teacher for the pronunciation of some words, the teacher replied and students repeated. When they mispronounced some words, the teachers pronounced the words again in order to clarify the appropriate pronunciation” (Field Note 4).

By doing a careful interpretation, we can say that negotiation of meaning has an emphasis on achieving mutual understanding, so students need to repeat something, rephrase ideas in different ways, ask their conversational partners or teacher to repeat or clarify something. It is also based on getting the learners to do lexical repairs and syntactic, clarification requests, confirmation checks, and repetitions (Morris, 2002).

“Working in groups was a good strategy to interact with my partners and teacher because I could ask them for the vocabulary and meaning I did not know” (Survey, Q3, Paulis).

Pair group activities was a strategy that provided students with the opportunity to learn from each other among students, and from the teacher, so it represents an important impact on meaning negotiation and language acquisition (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). From this, the teacher’s role is very important in terms of providing feedback in order to have progress with respect to vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, pragmatics, and some other aspects of the grammatical competence. It is worth emphasizing the grammatical competence because this is a sub-competence underlying

the communicative competence. In the next lines, the grammatical competence will be described in the light of Bachman.

Approaching communication as the general goal when learning a language, we account for some components of Bachman's model of Communicative Language Ability. According to Bachman (1990) the model can be described as "consisting of either knowledge, or competence and, the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use" (p.84). In this sense, the acquired language knowledge is used to communicate in contextualized contexts, which relates to pragmatics. This category is not only framed within the first aspect of the communicative language ability model, which is language knowledge, but also it is complemented by the second component which is the capacity to use language knowledge in context as stated in the following excerpts.

"I am now able to speak spontaneously in English and communicate what I think and want to share. I know that I make some mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, word choice, but when I realize my partners and teachers understand what I mean that is very positive because that is the main purpose of learning a language" (Survey 2, Q5, Amanda).

"My previous experiences learning English were meaningless because I had to memorize an endless list of vocabulary which I did not know how to use it in context so I think that learning a language has to be purposefulness and communicative; otherwise, we just learn few isolated words" (Interview 1, Q6, L 94-98, Sarah).

By reading and analyzing the excerpts above, we can notice that Sarah and Amanda were emphatic at stating that learning a language implies an emphasis on communicative purposes and negotiation of meaning. Then, language knowledge used in context is the basis to communicate daily life utterances. The more contextualized vocabulary a learner acquires the more possibilities the learner has to express what wanted. Furthermore, mastering language matter knowledge in context and appropriate pronunciation enables the learner to become a proficient speaker.

“Students were concerned with the pronunciation asking their partners and teacher to make sure they were expressing acceptable language constructions” (Field Note 4).

By reading between lines, we notice that students were concerned with grammatical aspects. Grammar is a very essential aspect of the communicative competence because this is a set of bases students need to construct correct sentences in both written and oral way. Despite communication focuses on transmitting meaning and communicating desired messages, it is essential to approach communicative competence as a whole component. In this sense, communicative competence accounts for some others sub-competences. Therefore, having some advance in the grammatical competence is very essential to approach effective communication. Good language users produce utterances that are grammatically correct and acceptable. Hence, grammatical competence is a very essential component of the communicative competence.

“I learned a lot of vocabulary, pronunciation and word order, so I can express my ideas in English” (Survey 2, Q1, Fabian).

“I have improved the pronunciation of some words that before I mispronounced because I did not know some hints regarding pronunciation and grammar” (Survey 2, Q4, Paulis).

In this cornerstone, Bachman and Palmer (1996) contributed to these responses in regard to Grammatical Competence. They refer to the usage of the language related to grammar. Therefore, grammatical knowledge includes independent areas of knowledge such as knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology, and graphology (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Broadly, these are the areas in which students progressed in relation to English language learning which they interiorized rather than just learning them theoretically. Students took advantage of learning vocabulary in context as they had prior knowledge about the topic. They did not learn a list of isolated words, but they learned and used them in a contextualized way.

“Through workshops I have learned a lot. New words and things that could serve me in my everyday life to exchange information with my partners and friends” (Survey 2, Q4, Diana).

Based on this response, we can point out that workshops were a tool that favored the acquisition of new words and the use of them in daily life situations. From this, every word is very essential to sentence formation because students learned and used them in the most possible contextualized way. In this sense, when teaching and learning a foreign language it is essential to enable students to learn and acquire a lexical basis in order to achieve success in language learning (Lewis, 1993).

Similar to what has been discussed regarding the findings; the following lines describe and explain what the second research question revealed about the contextualized workshops. The research question was related to the role of workshops in the enhancement of the skill of speaking. From this, a second category emerged which is called workshops as vehicle to address a culturally responsive pedagogy. This category basically responds to the role that workshops had alongside the teaching and learning process. In this way, the upcoming lines present the aforementioned category.

6.3 Workshops as a Vehicle to Address a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy that Fostered Initial Interaction

This category was named in this way because the aim of designing the workshops was not only to boost students' speaking skills in two rural schools, but also to include their life experiences, background knowledge, history, and preferences to foster the development of the speaking skill. This with the purpose of including students' voices in the workshops as a way to respect and honor students' experiences and cultural background in accordance with a culturally responsive pedagogy as proposed by Nieto (2013). Through the workshops, students found a way to identify themselves with their daily activities, common topics to talk about, and communicative exchanges they had had or they are likely

to carry out in their rural contexts. These particularities showed that contextualized activities were relevant sources of interaction in speaking tasks. In this respect, and accounting for the nature of the culturally responsive pedagogy, students stimulated their ability to learn from and relate respectfully with their partners of their own and different cultural backgrounds (Rogoff, 2003). This allowed prejudice reduction, knowledge construction, content integration, and relationship-making in order to grow collaboratively in the learning process.

In this sense, the identification and increase in students' interest towards the content of activities are described in the following subcategory as a way to explain one of the roles that workshops had in the learning process of English, especially in the development of the speaking skill.

6.3.1 Contextualized Activities as Sources of Interaction in Speaking

The name of this subcategory is due to the contextualized activities of the workshops, which favored students' interaction in the development of speaking tasks. In this way, in each English class students faced vocabulary and expressions related to their daily activities and experiences. Therefore, students' production and interaction was contextualized because this was as close as possible to their realities and lives. Contextualization is a great aspect that encourages students to partake and share information that was really important to them. According to McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Kraemer and Parr (2009) contextualization means:

teachers connect the lesson with students' past experiences from home, with peers, or previous lessons in school [...]. Building background is essential for all learners, but it takes the explicit linking of past to present for ELLs because they are learning content simultaneously with language. (p.20)

"The final activity students developed was an interview. The activity was related to their own experience students had had regarding music. The students were very interested in sharing their experiences and asking their partners about music. They asked each other if they have heard Juanes, Maluma, Jorge Velloza, San Miguelito and others" [*sic*] (Field Note 3).

Having in mind the lines above, students speedily engage in classroom's interactions because their experiences and prior knowledge are included. From this, students took advantage of the target content to express their own perception and involvement in any particular situation they have lived. Therefore, contextualized content helps students to remember, modify and assimilate input to interact with each other. Although the theme is as much as possible contextualized, it does not mean that the learner is just exposed to what she/he knows.

Rather than limiting the learner, a contextualized topic provides students with the bases to start the learning process, which requires constant acquisition and production of content. In this sense, Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff (2009) stated that contextualization:

helps students find and create meaning through experience, drawing from prior knowledge in order to build upon existing knowledge. A primary principle of Contextualized Teaching and Learning is that knowledge becomes the students' own when it is learned within the framework of an authentic context. (p.8)

The following excerpt portrays what has been said:

"A student was talking to his partner and he said: 'Ay, qué chévere, me gusta buscar palabras. Yo sé qué es cycling, boxing, baseball, soccer, and, basketball. Oiga, yo juego soccer with my friends los fines de semana. Teacher, how do you say fin de semana?' T: It is weekend. P: o sea que la oración quedaría: I play soccer with my friends in the weekend" [sic], (Field Note 2).

Based on this excerpt, we found a connection with McIntyre, et al. (2009) assertion about the aspects that contextualization implies. They state that experiences must be understood as a whole, it means, everything that has influenced the learner in and outside the classroom. Regarding the student's utterances, he mentioned some activities he lives or has experienced far from the scholastic context. From this, each learner has quite different experiences to share and these differences arouse students' interest to know and hear others' interventions.

“Students read a dialogue between Nairo Quintana and a Journalist. A student read the name Nairo Quintana and said: It is about ciclismo. Profe, ¿cómo se dice soy fan de Nairo? T: I am a fan of Nairo. J: I want to be un ciclista famoso. S: uff, se dice I want to be a famous cyclist” (Field Note 2).

Analyzing this passage, the topic really boots students to enhance speaking through interaction. When students feel the topic is not weird they find it easy and interesting. Moreover, when students find the way to hook the knowledge to something that is relevant to their close environments, they can acquire meaningful learning (McIntyre et al. 2009). Therefore, it is matter of connecting what needs to be learned to the learners’ existing schema about objects’ properties and texture to their context and experience (ibid).

Subsequently, McIntyre *et al.* (2009) highlighted some indicators of contextualization that support this subcategory with regards to the importance of encompassing contextualized input. Beginning with what students already know from home, community, and school is the first feature that the material has to cope with. Likewise, the design of a variety of activities that include students’ preferences, from collective and individual choices is a relevant factor that promotes input in authentic educational contexts. Finally, instructional activities that are meaningful to students in terms of local norm and knowledge are part of another characteristic that allows contextualization happen.

The following responses evidence some of the aforementioned peculiarities in terms of contextualization.

“As the workshop of music approached the music of Eminem, Tito Nieves, and other artists that I did know, I could talk about my favorite singers, as the workshops provided me with information to express and share my ideas with my partners” (Survey 2, Q2, Omar).

“I had experience and knowledge regarding the issues to discuss about music, but at the same time, there was new information to learn and it was not difficult to understand because I could

make connections with my experience and my partners' one"
(Survey 2, Q 3, Amanda).

Regarding the previous responses, students were immersed in a mutual interactive environment in which they made communicative transactions. Thus, the workshops presented new vocabulary, phrases and content to the learners and once students were familiarized with the language pattern, they engaged in interactive exchanges. In this case, contextualization is strongly related to students' experiences and prior knowledge to produce utterances about close and well-known environments. Therefore, workshops were great guides that drove students to relate the content to their realities and thus they advanced in language learning, especially, in terms of speaking by means of interaction.

Working collaboratively was another strategy that helped students to interact and mutually develop oral language skills. It is to say that the role of classmates was essential in providing feedback, suggestions, corrections and completions when discussing on different contextualized topics. Thus, students made progress in vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, grammar and some other language aspects which are vital to enhance speaking. Thus, the following subcategory explains the way collaboratively developed tasks took place in the enhancement of speaking skills.

6.3.2 The Role of Collaboration in Speaking Tasks

The nature of this subcategory relies on the relevance students found in their learning process when they worked collaboratively to enhance speaking. This relevance is explained with the definition of collaborative learning provided by Dillenbourg (1999) as "a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together" (p.1). In this sense, students were mutually engaged to meet a common goal: enhance the speaking skill. This process of constructing shared meanings not only helped students to work together, but also to integrate their individual particularities in such process. Hence, students could explore

and strengthen their learning strategies, preferred ways of expressing their feelings and thoughts, and own background knowledge as claimed in a culturally responsive pedagogy. The following excerpts illustrate what has been described.

“In all activities I had to interact with my partners by sharing opinions and points of view, so I learnt new meanings of words that facilitated the understanding of the activities and helped me speak English” (Survey 2, Q4, River).

“I can say that through speaking activities I learned vocabulary and pronunciation about familiar topics because I asked my partners for the meaning of the unknown words and they helped me saying what they knew. In the same way, I practiced speaking a lot because I wanted to share my past experiences and my goals in English” (Survey 2, Q6, Peter).

The participants highlight their personal achievements in speaking by means of working together. Students learnt vocabulary and pronunciation through their interactions with the aim to communicate in the target language. That is to say that the workshops enabled students to grasp the information needed to start communicating in English. That is why the workshops as materials development contribute to the process of learning and language teaching (Telléz & Castellanos, 2013, p. 12).

“I think that developing the activities in groups was something essential because we were committed in each task and everybody participated. I liked to share with my partners because I learn by means of listening to others and expressing my experiences” (Survey 2, Q6, Paulis).

By doing a careful reading of the excerpt, we suggest that providing students with opportunities to explore their learning strategies and activities which are relevant and engaging to them is a crucial starting point to promote the development of speaking skills. Accordingly, those specific features in students' language learning make part of the nature of accounting for a culturally responsive pedagogy. Thus, students' voices and particular ways of learning, behaving, thinking, and interacting

become part of the classroom agenda. Likewise, developing speaking tasks is a very purposeful process which needs to be relevant enough to engage students in the learning process. Sometimes, teachers can provide tasks to develop oral language skills but they do not have the expected success as they fail to motivate students to speak (Pachler & Redondo, 2007). From this, we can say that the topics about their context, preferences in learning, collaborations, and teaching methodologies were essential to motivate students to speak in English independently and spontaneously.

“The workshops included activities with open-ended questions to discuss in small groups, so I liked it because my classmates were a great support to learn because I asked them for pronunciation, meaning, vocabulary, and others to express my ideas” (Survey 2, Q5, Elkin).

The excerpt above shows that collaborative learning allowed students gain language knowledge related to meaning, pronunciation, and the acquisition of new vocabulary, which are vital components involved in the development of the speaking skills. It means that students were involved in a learning scaffolding process to make progress in their language proficiency. In accordance with the nature of collaboration, it is worth highlighting that when students are developing collaborative activities, they can elaborate explanations about their own understandings and at the same time, construct and reorganize their language knowledge (Van Boxtel, Van der Linden & Kanselaar, 2000). From this, the learning process becomes purposeful and meaningful for learners.

“When I was developing the activity about agriculture with three partners I really learnt from them. They corrected me when I was wrong and they provided me with possible ways to express my ideas” (Survey 2, Q5, Paulis).

Another evident characteristic of the collaborative learning, as shown in the excerpt, was the importance of providing feedback among students to negotiate meaning, make completions, clarifications, and restatements. This represents students’ willingness to learn from each other by taking advantage of their background knowledge and collaboration to meet

their learning goals. In addition, students practiced their speaking skill when providing feedback, explaining what they had understood, and assimilating new knowledge and understandings. Therefore, as language has a social and communicative purpose, students attained a language use with such purpose and within a collaborative environment.

The findings suggest that the workshops supported students from two rural schools in their language learning process in various ways. In a first place, the workshops were tools that helped students overcome personal goals in relation to the factors influencing second language learning. Then, the role of the workshops was to be a guide to facilitate meaning negotiation in the classroom. In the same way, students were provided with opportunities to make connections with their previous background knowledge and the topics addressed through the workshops in a culturally responsive perspective. Interaction and collaborative work were some other strategies that students adopted in order to enhance speaking. The upcoming lines present the conclusions drawn in this research study.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

Since the main objective of this research study was to analyze what the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development, we can state that students really started to develop such skill when they found a connection with the material. Likewise, the betterment was due to the contextualization of the content and opportunities to talk about personal interests. This contextualization was framed under the purpose of including students' voices in the workshops as a way to respect and honor students' experiences and cultural background to stimulate their ability to learn from and relate respectfully with their partners, in a context where different cultural backgrounds are brought together. This allowed prejudice reduction, knowledge construction, content integration, and relationship-making in order to interact and grow collaboratively in the learning process. Hence, when students had background information to make connections with the target topic, it facilitated oral expression.

Using contextualized material allowed students to start developing the speaking skill; nonetheless, students expressed that through the implementation of the workshops they also overcome personal weaknesses which prevented them from starting to communicate in the target language. Then, students could manage some factors affecting second language learning such as their anxiety levels when speaking, their tenseness, self-consciousness, inhibition, among others. Consequently, two essential components fostered students to move on the path of progressing in language learning: the fact of gaining confidence and negotiating meaning to express perceptions, likes, experiences,

feelings, and opinions. When students could share experiences and likes with their peers, the level of anxiety decreased and language learning occurred. Furthermore, students began to feel comfortable and learning English became an enjoyable task.

Including content students already knew does not mean that they were not immersed in activities that demanded language progress. The purpose of previous knowledge was to set up bases to start expressing general ideas and deducting language content from the context as the topic was recognized. Prior knowledge also allowed sharing common perceptions and newness among students as well as a means for setting interactions. Thus, the English class could be an environment of interaction where communication was the main goal to be attained.

Having in mind students' interests was a huge strategy that promoted participation because students felt they were the center of the learning process. In this sense, students found highly important to share personal issues with their classmates. In general, the purpose in implementing contextualized workshops favored students' opportunity to be heard, express likes, be self-confident when developing any task regarding language learning, honor their culture and experiences, and move beyond their current English language level.

Additionally, the role of the workshops was to guide students to develop a series of activities that required students to explore previous experiences and state points of view. In this way, the skill of speaking started to arouse in students' language learning process. Likewise, the workshops promoted students' commitment, contextualized teaching and learning, confidence regarding oral expression, advancement in terms of communicative competence, and undoubtedly, enhancement of the skill of speaking.

Finally, contextualized material designed by teachers really includes students' needs and preferences since the material development begins with students in mind; it means that a culturally responsive perspective is followed. The teacher is the person who has more opportunities to

get to know students' realities. Hence, making an effort to address in the most effective way the language learning needs is one of the tasks teachers have in today's world.

Chapter 8

Challenges and Opportunities for Material Developers in Rural Settings

Throughout the development of this research study, we realized that there are some challenges that we perceived as opportunities for teachers as material developers and teacher education programs. These challenges relate mainly to the need of developing more humanized materials for rural institutions. In other words, it is concerned with the fact that classrooms should be more culturally responsive. Thus, educators and tertiary institutions in charge of working with future English teachers should work towards more meaningful teaching.

Tomlinson (2003) stated that materials should be humanized. He further argued that a humanistic teaching material is the one “that respects its users as human beings and helps them to exploit their capacity for learning through meaningful experience”(p.163). Bearing in mind that the teaching and learning process at any institution requires the use of material, much more attention should be paid to the way these materials help to humanize students’ learning experiences. Designing contextualized material has been demonstrated, through this research study that is meaningful and useful not only for students, but also for teachers. Thus, workshops, in this research, were more humanized than the ones developed by publishing houses.

As we, as researchers and material developers, knew about this rural context beforehand, we were able to respond to the geographical and cultural context of the learners through the workshops we developed. Thus, we used topics that were commonplace for the target population. This helped us to “acknowledge students’ cultural heritage validating their home culture” (Ramos & Aguirre, 2014, p.140). Besides that, working with topics that were common place for students allowed them to decrease anxiety and then, start speaking in English.

Since speaking is an anxiety-producing skill, it is not an easy language skill to be effectively attained. Approaching speaking requires many aspects to be taken into account in the classroom. The activities must be suitable and contextualized to foster students to be immersed in an initial stage of expressing what they want to share. Of equal importance, a comfortable environment is crucial to help students feel at ease and have advancement in their oral expression. Likewise, a good rapport between teacher-students influences language learning performance. All these aspects must be considered to develop valuable materials that provide friendly and motivating experiences in the classroom (Harmer, 2012).

Designing material requires extra efforts and strong desire to fulfill students’ expectations and preferences. It is an issue that has to deal with time-consuming tasks that need to be developed at home. Furthermore, it demands commitment and desire to think of appropriate and suitable activities according to students’ features. The activities must cater the differences in learning styles, encourage learners to talk about themselves and their own experiences, be varied, and humanizing.

Creating contextualized material inquired about being creative, enthusiastic, and active; having patience, dedication, some expertise, and the most important aspect, knowing students’ realities. Thus, creating material should be the task of every teacher who has the opportunity to know and address students’ necessities in a more close and contextualized way. In this sense, materials development is one more element within the larger concept of teachers taking responsibility for what happens in their classes. Besides, if we are to be reflective practitioners in the field

of ELT, we need to think about all aspects of our teaching. Preparing our own materials is one of those many aspects. In this respect, Ramos and Aguirre (2014) argued that:

one of the most relevant sources for teachers to develop their materials from is students' opinions. These opinions need to be heard in order to improve the content, the topics, the kind of exercises, the instructions, and so forth, of the in-house materials. (p. 139)

If materials are to be more humanized, students' voices need to be recognized and considered as the most important input to develop materials. In this way, students will be seen as human beings and their interest will guide the teaching and learning process. In this line of thought, instructional materials need to foster a culturally responsive pedagogy. This can also be done by understanding the concept of culture and thinking about possibilities to incorporate students' home culture in the teaching materials.

García-Canclini (1997) suggested that culture is related to those practices, socially constructed, that provide meaning to the world. In this sense, from a culturally responsive perspective, materials need to promote a concept of culture that is dynamic and ever changing.

One way to promote this view of culture relates to the inclusion of aspects that refer to intercultural competence. "The intercultural competence is understood as the knowledge, skills and attitudes at the interface between several cultural areas including the students' own country and a target language country" (Ramos, 2013, p.209). In what has been called the intercultural dimension, the speakers are not only supposed to master communicative competence but are to become mediators in a communicative exchange that acknowledges the differences in language use, accents, etc. as well as in all cultural particularities.

This approach aims at breaking the stereotypes by allowing participants in conversations and exchanges to be themselves; at the same time, to be aware and respectful of the differences of their interlocutors. The

objective is not to make the learner an alien to her or his own culture or to make him resemble a member of the target language culture. The goal is to strengthen the values, belief systems and behaviours of the source culture while relating to the values, belief systems and behaviours of the target language culture.

Another aspect worth analysing is the incorporation of students' home culture in the teaching materials. As Canagarajah (1999) states, pedagogies need to be appropriated to different degrees in terms of the needs and values of the local communities. The inclusion of home culture may happen when materials developers contextualize the materials they design based on students real contexts. When aspects related to students' home culture are taken into account, students may feel more engaged towards learning the foreign language. Likewise, they may feel that the teachers are valuing the knowledge they bring to the classroom environments. This kind of knowledge is built at home with students' parents, community and the context where they interact outside the school context.

The teacher education programs must be prepared to provide student-teachers with the appropriate tools to start developing material for specific academic contexts. In the same way, it is vital that student-teachers get in touch with different students' needs and realities in order to gain experience when addressing educational demands. In this line of thought, Kumaravadivelu (2007) reminds us about the necessity of sensitizing practitioners to diverse students' social and cultural background and needs. Thus, the previous student-teachers' tasks should be one of the main concerns for the teacher education programs.

In the same sense, Ramos and Aguirre (2016) suggested that "Teaching Programs should insert pre-service teachers into the rural context as part of their teaching experiences" (p. 218). In this way, pre-service teachers can be more sensitive towards their students' realities and thus, build dialogical relationships that facilitate English teaching and learning processes. Along the same lines, Quintero (2009) mentioned that education should be seen as a way to build knowledge by considering

a dialogical relationship among the members of a community. Then, teacher candidates need more pointed opportunities to develop their sensibility in real teaching contexts.

In addition, university teacher educators can emphasize specific ways for teacher candidates to begin initiating collaboration with rural schools. In order for such relationships to grow, there should be a common goal among pre-service teachers, school teachers and administrators. By expanding on the possibilities for collegial relationships, teacher candidates “become more knowledgeable about language learning processes, learn ways to more accurately scaffold content information, and address any socio-cultural issue that may arise” (Liggett, 2010, p. 229). In so doing, pre-service teachers move closer to the context of culturally diverse students.

By carrying this research, we understood that issues in teaching EFL in rural areas in Boyacá outnumber the favoring factors in this teaching and learning process. But it could also be perceived as a challenging scenario full of opportunities to incorporate in the curriculum as a set of strategies supported by a pedagogy based on the real students, teachers, and institutions’ needs to better the curriculum.

During the last decade one main objective of the Colombian Ministry of Education policy has been to reach and provide access to population with education in all areas of the nation’s territory. The inclusion of EFL in rural schools’ curriculum is also one main purpose of this policy. These two broad objectives favor the implementation of an appropriate curriculum with a set of EFL teaching and learning materials accurately designed and developed for students and teachers in rural area institutions. In this way, the possibilities to enrich this EFL educational context are in a first step growing process which could initiate the practice of forming, reforming and transforming all elements in the curriculum. This is just the precise time to rethink the erroneous idea that one size curriculum, textbook, material for EFL could fit and satisfy the entire rural school population’s needs in Colombia. Then, the development of EFL material

for rural schools should grow from research based studies taking into account the needs of this target population.

The fact that a significant amount of the population attends rural schools in Boyacá is a factor that cannot be left aside. On the contrary, close attention needs to be paid to this situation. On one side, it is because more resources need to be allocated to the institutions in rural areas. The idea of having more educated people in rural context does not simply happen by hiring teachers and placing them in schools and/or by buying inadequate textbooks and materials. Accurate material for the teaching and learning process has to be placed in those schools, too. In the case of EFL, these resources need to be enough for the students in the schools and this material is expected to be well designed for this target population. We need EFL material which promotes students' motivation and full of contents that not only fits the curriculum but also reach the students expectations in terms of motivation, challenge, and content related to the regular activities they perform on a daily basis, in other words we need a more humanized material.

We also believe that creating appropriate materials for EFL in rural institutions is not enough to tackle the EFL situation in rural schools. There is also a need for EFL teachers to go and teach this population. The material itself does not help much if there are not enough EFL educators in the institutions. School Boards adopt *New School Methodology* for their rural institutions because there is not sufficient number of students in the schools to hire more teachers. The ratio of students in grade level by teacher is low. We also know that those teachers barely know English because they have teaching degrees in diverse areas of education but in EFL teaching. Thus, an adequate training for those in-service teachers who do not know English language it is needed. They would also need training sessions in how to teach English as a foreign language in order to have a much better complement for the EFL material. These efforts need to be united with the purpose of reaching the objective of teaching and learning English in rural context in Boyacá with enough EFL educators in schools and appropriate material for the students and teachers.

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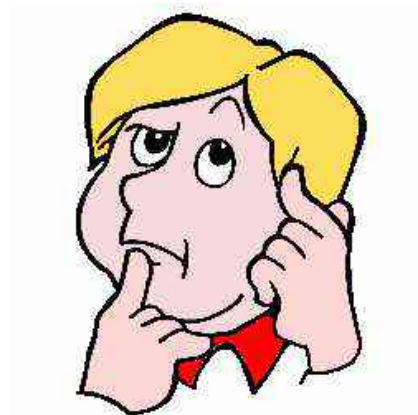
Appendixes

Appendix A: sample of activities to engage students



Have you ever listened to these five songs? Write the genre they belong to and read them aloud.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Circle twelve words related to sports in the Word Search.

SQSBGSXGNVLGTYS

DCLEKCENYOXLNVO

EWIAAIIKLQXACKH

ITMTMTLLDSOBCVDQ

DXAMEEEILHVEMKXS

UPIRYLCNBRS CZGX

YWLBAZHIIGAASNGP

SEAFCKITZSBIBGG

VLLFOCJNAAZFNBSP

LOTBKGXMO SA NZAW

GMXZZDBIBTBREEIK

LLABTEKSA B ETQL E

AREPWDDA YAGFWIB

ZBSRCBWD CYCLIN G

ETLGNI XOB SRQS GD

ATHLETICS	BASEBALL	BASKETBALL
BOXING	CYCLING	GOLF
KARATE	SAILING	SKATING
SOCCER	SWIMMING	TENNIS

Look at the pictures. Tell your partner the main character in the picture.
Now, read and listen to the following interview



Journalist: Hello Nairo.



Nairo: Hi



Journalist: How are you?



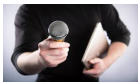
Nairo: I am fine, thank you.



Journalist: You are one of the most famous cyclists all over the world. How often do you practice cycling?



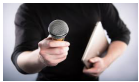
Nairo: OK, It is not quite easy. I always practice cycling. The practice is about three hours a day.



Journalist: Is it an intensive rehearsal?



Nairo: Yes, it is.



Journalist: Where do you practice cycling?



Nairo: I like to be in my hometown. I usually practice cycling in Cóbmita.



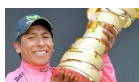
Journalist: Interesting! Who do you practice with?



Nairo: Sometimes I am accompanied by my friends and fans.



Journalist: Thanks a lot for your answers. See you in a next opportunity.



Nairo: Ok. You are welcome. Bye.

Appendix B: sample of activities to study grammatical aspects

Frequency Adverbs

Percentage F	requency Adverb
100%	Always
90%	Usually
80%	Normally
70%	Often
50%	Sometimes
20%	Seldom
5% R	arely
0% N	ever

Subject + adverb + main verb

James always practices exercise.

Subject + be + adverb + main verb

Nairo Quintana always practices cycling abroad.

WH QUESTIONS

What

We use 'What' for people animals and things.

Who

We can use 'who' to ask for people.

How

It describes the way we do something

Where

It names places

Check (✓) the frequency with which you practice the sport

Sport	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I practice cycling				
I play tejo				
I play baseball				
I commit fouls when I play soccer				
I practice taekwondo				

Reading time

THE MOST FAMOUS EVENTS AROUND COLOMBIA

Colombia is a folkloric country with several celebrations that highlight its heritage and traditions that represent many regions. Those celebrations are divided into carnivals, festivals, and fairs. There are three outstanding events that reflect customs, beliefs, and traditions of Colombian people.

The first one is the Barranquilla's Carnival, which is one of the most representative events referring to culture. It takes place in Barranquilla, the capital of Atlantic state, and it is celebrated four days before Ash Wednesday. It is characterized by a "battle" of color, flowers and beauty that actually runs in peace. The most distinctive activity is the Battle of Flowers which is a parade with floats and dance with the show of Momo King, "el Hombre Caimán" (alligator man), "marimondas", hooded figures with long noses, and "gigantonas", dwarfs with large heads.

The second one is the Festival of the Flowers that takes place in Medellín in early August and lasts ten days. Its main events include a horse fair, an orchestra festival, the national *trova* festival (singers in duels of improvised verses), an old and classic cars parade, musical and cultural platforms, and folk songs. The most emblematic show of the fair is the "silleteros" parade. *Silleteros* is the term used to refer to the farmers who make beautiful flower ornaments on a "silleta" (a chair-like contraption for carrying flowers on a person's back). This parade is recognized as a cultural heritage of Colombia.

The third one is the International Cultural Festival of Boyacá, celebrated in Tunja, Boyacá's main city, in the second semester of the year. This festival offers symphonic and chamber orchestras, choirs, soloists and also folkloric and classical ballet, traditional groups, street theater and puppet shows, lectures, movies, art exhibitions, popular art, and even a book fair.

Read again and answer the following questions:

- a. How many days does the Medellin Flower Fair take?

Answer: The Medellin Flower Fair takes ten days.

b. When do Boyacenses celebrate the International Cultural Festival?

c. What characteristics does the Medellin Flower Fair have?

d. When do Barranquilla people celebrate the Carnival?

e. What activities do people attend in the International Cultural festival?

f. What does a Silleteiro make?

Tom and Susan are talking about celebrations around Colombia. Write in the gaps the simple present:

SUSAN: Hello Tom! How are you today?

TOM: Hi Susan! I am fine.

SUSAN: Tom, I am interested in knowing about popular celebrations of Colombia. Do you know any of them?

TOM: Yeah, Colombia _____ (have) some carnivals, festivals, and fairs in different places.

SUSAN: It really _____ (sound) amazing! What is the most interesting one for you?

TOM: Personally, I love the International Cultural Festival.

SUSAN: Where does it take place?

TOM: It _____ (take) place in Tunja.

SUSAN: What do people do in that Festival?

TOM: People _____ (attend) the variety of activities that people from different countries show.

SUSAN: What do the activities include?

TOM: The activities _____ (include) music, theater, dance, literature, visual arts, cinema, and others.

SUSAN: I want to participate in this Festival. Thank you so much for the information.

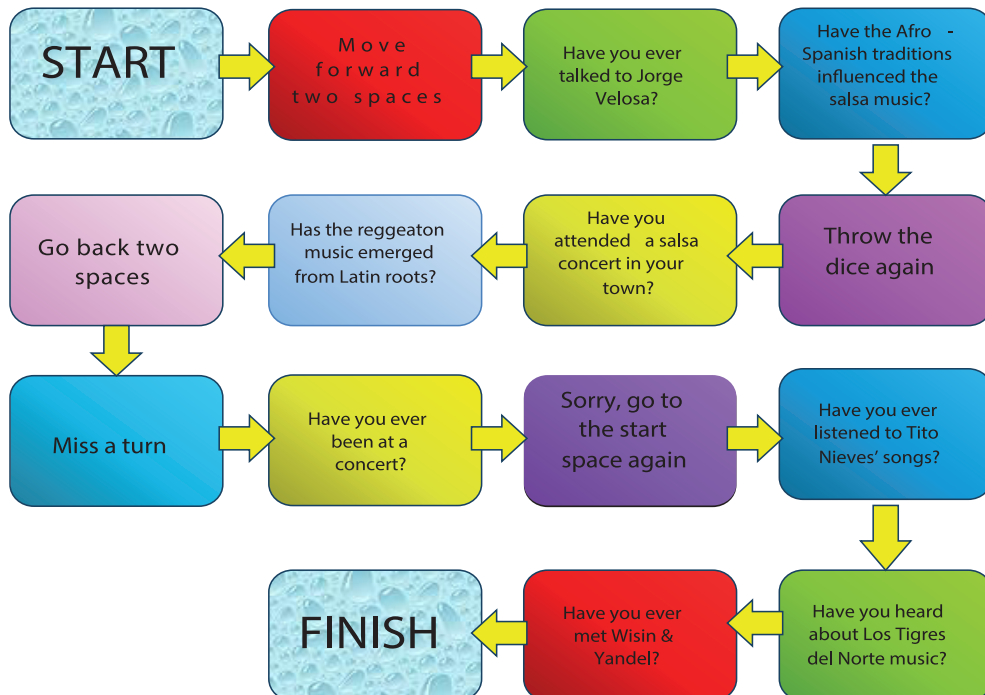
Appendix C: sample of activities to activate speaking skills

BOARD GAME

In pairs play the following board game.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Each one throws the die and who gets the largest number is going to start. The student who starts will be the student A and the other one is going to be the student B.
2. Student A throws the die and based on the number, he/she is going to move on the corresponding spaces. Student B asks student A the question in the colored box.
3. Student A has to answer correctly, if he/she does not answer right he/she goes back to the previous space.



Walk around the classroom and ask questions using adverbs of frequency

EXAMPLE: How often do you ride a bike?

Based on the answers gathered, complete the following chart. Do not forget to ask an extra question. Find a different student for each sentence.

Name		Further question (Why do you.... Where do you... Who do you ... At what time do you...
	often runs to school	
	usually rides a bike	
	never plays soccer	
	Sometimes practices Tejo	
	Always practices a sport	

Now, report your findings to your class.

Appendix D: sample of the self-evaluation activity

MY SELF ASSESSMENT

Check the list and tick according to your work.

			
I was able to develop the activities proposed in the workshop...			
My self-confidence when speaking was...			
The activities were...			
My work in my team was...			
I review grammatical topics...			
I talked in English			
I participated in the group activities			
I learned something new			
The content of the workshops were...			

Appendix E: consent form

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA

FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS ESPAÑOL-INGLÉS

“Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design and Implementation”

Tunja, _____

Estimado señor (o señora) padre (madre) de familia,

El grupo de investigación TONGUE, adscrito a la Escuela de Idiomas de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC), se encuentra adelantando el proyecto “Diseño e implementación de material instruccional para colegios rurales”, el cual será cofinanciado por la Dirección de Investigaciones de la UPTC. El objetivo principal de la investigación es diseñar material instruccional que pueda ayudar a los estudiantes a ver sus realidades reflejadas en el material usado para la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés y, por tanto, impactar en su motivación y en el desarrollo de competencias en el área de inglés.

Como parte de este proyecto, también nos encontramos trabajando en un subproyecto relacionado con el desarrollo de materiales para fomentar la habilidad de habla en inglés en dos colegios rurales de Boyacá. El objetivo de este proyecto es, precisamente, analizar cómo se desarrolla esta habilidad con material (talleres) que contenga actividades que promuevan oportunidades de aprendizaje contextualizadas.

Durante varias sesiones recolectaremos datos escritos a través de documentos institucionales como el Proyecto Educativo Institucional, los contenidos programáticos del área de inglés y el inventario de los recursos didácticos para la enseñanza de este idioma. De la misma manera, se observará a los estudiantes, se les aplicará una encuesta y se les hará una entrevista. Para el propósito de esta investigación, la participación de su hijo/a es de vital importancia y es de carácter voluntario.

Este proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales o finales de ninguna asignatura del plan de estudios del estudiante, se usarán nombres ficticios para mantener la identidad de los participantes en el anonimato, y se brindará la posibilidad de poder conocer los resultados de la investigación a los estudiantes o padres que así lo soliciten. Se mantendrá la identidad de los participantes en el anonimato y se brindará la posibilidad de conocer los resultados de la investigación a los formadores que así lo soliciten. En este proyecto, el manejo ético y de confidencialidad de la información se suscribe a las normas colombianas constitucionales y legales relacionadas con los datos personales y de derechos de autor.

El estudiante hará parte de este estudio durante dos semestres académicos (marzo-junio/ julio- noviembre) y se puede retirar del estudio cuando lo desee. No habrá una compensación económica por participar en este estudio. Cualquiera de los investigadores principales podrá brindarle información acerca del estado del proyecto. Los resultados de esta investigación se utilizarán únicamente para elaborar informes de esta investigación, presentar los resultados de la investigación en eventos académicos y para la elaboración de artículos o libros de tipo científico. En último término, esta investigación no traerá ningún tipo de perjuicio para el estudiante. Por el contrario, se espera que este proyecto lo beneficie, en cuanto el estudiante tendrá acceso a material para la enseñanza de inglés. En cualquier caso, el estudiante se puede retirar de la investigación cuando lo desee.

Apreciaríamos sinceramente su autorización para poder contar con su hijo/a como participante en este proyecto.

Cordialmente,

BERTHA RAMOS HOLGUÍN
JAHIR AGUIRRE MORALES
NANCY MARÍA TORRES CEPEDA
Investigadores principales

Si está de acuerdo con que su hijo participe en esta investigación, por favor complete la siguiente información:

NOMBRE _____

EDAD: _____

SEUDÓNIMO: _____

FIRMA _____

Appendix F: field notes format

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA
FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS ESPAÑOL-INGLÉS

“Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design and Implementation”

Date: _____ Observation No. _____

Time: _____ Place: _____

No. of students: _____

Activities carried out:

Description	Comments

Appendix G: needs assessment survey

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA

FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS

“Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design, Implementation and Adaptation”

SEUDÓNIMO: _____

Por favor completa la siguiente información cuyo objetivo es conocer la manera como te gusta aprender inglés.

1. ¿Te gusta hablar en inglés? ¿Por qué?

_____.

2. ¿Qué material emplea el docente para la enseñanza del inglés?

_____.

3. ¿El material se relaciona con tus gustos, intereses, familia, amigos y vida cotidiana?

_____.

4. ¿Consideras que el material debería incluir aspectos relacionados con tu vida diaria, gustos e intereses? ¿Por qué?

_____.

5. ¿Qué actividades debería contener el material utilizado para la enseñanza del inglés?

6. ¿Qué temas son de tu interés?

7. ¿Te gustaría hablar en inglés sobre los temas que te interesan? ¿Por qué?

8. ¿Qué técnica de aprendizaje aplicas con mayor frecuencia? ¿Por qué?

- Trabajo en grupo
- Trabajo individual
- Otro, ¿Cuál?

Appendix H: students' experiences after developing the workshops

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA
FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS ESPAÑOL-INGLÉS

“Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design and Implementation”

PSEUDONYM: _____

Por favor responde las siguientes preguntas con el objetivo de conocer la experiencia que has tenido a lo largo del desarrollo de los talleres, en relación con la expresión oral.

1. ¿Cómo describes tu experiencia en relación con las actividades desarrolladas que favorecen la expresión oral?

_____.

2. ¿Consideras que las actividades trataron temas de tu interés?

_____.

3. ¿Qué actividades fueron de tu agrado y por qué?

_____.

4. ¿Qué aspectos crees que se pueden mejorar durante la aplicación de los talleres? ¿Por qué?

_____.

5. ¿Cómo te sientes al hablar en inglés?

_____.

6. ¿Quisieras aportar algunas otras ideas acerca del tema?

Appendix I: protocol of students' interview

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA
FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS ESPAÑOL-INGLÉS

“Instructional Material for Rural Schools: Design and Implementation”

PSEUDONYM: _____

Por favor responde las siguientes preguntas con el objetivo de conocer la experiencia que has tenido a lo largo del desarrollo de los talleres, en relación con la expresión oral.

1. ¿Qué recuerdas de las clases de inglés del segundo semestre? Piensa en actividades, temas, dinámicas, compañeros, etc.
2. ¿Por qué crees que esa experiencia que recuerdas fue importante?
3. ¿Cómo te pareció el trabajo en grupo que desarrollaste durante las clases de inglés? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Qué actividades, de las trabajadas en la clase de inglés, te gustaría seguir desarrollando? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Qué actividades, de las trabajadas en la clase de inglés, no te gustaría seguir desarrollando? ¿Por qué?

Esta obra se terminó de imprimir
en el mes de marzo de 2018 en los Talleres
Gráficos de SB Digital Tunja, con un
Tiraje de 200 Ejemplares
Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia.

COLECCIÓN INVESTIGACIÓN 77

There are several reasons why English language teachers may embark on the endeavor to develop teaching and learning materials for the EFL population in rural schools. This book presents some of those reasons by means of illustrating the fluctuating challenges and opportunities while developing contextualized materials to enhance the speaking skill in rural settings. In the same way, it displays some theoretical constructs and results which emerged from an action research study that sought to analyze what the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, revealed about their speaking skill development. Consequently, the authors suggest that using contextualized material increases students' possibilities to overcome personal weaknesses which may prevent them from communicating in the target language and manage some factors affecting second language learning. Then, they conclude that developing contextualized material becomes meaningful and useful for the teaching and learning processes when it integrates humanizing perspectives.

