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Editorial

Eliana Edith Roberto Flórez¹

This eleventh edition of *Shimmering Words: Research and Pedagogy E-journal* brings a variety of issues from two countries: Mexico and Colombia. As you can perceive in the contents, every work included in this journal is the result of meaningful experiences and research processes achieved by teachers in their academic contexts. We find issues related to bilingual literacy, reading and its connection to motivation and social issues, adjectives and adverbs essential for English as a foreign language learner, curriculum for research training, speaking skills, English for Specific Purposes, MOOC in French courses, listening skills and the language, in sight of building knowledge and discourse legitimization. The Editorial Team at *Shimmering Words* hopes readers, teachers and researchers at all levels of education enjoy and find motivation with the studies reported for this issue.

We gathered nine articles, two in Spanish, one in French and six in English. There are interesting studies about the way academic community faced the COVID-19 pandemic such as Bernal and Monsalve investigated the implementation of Maria Montessori's principles in children's bilingual literacy before and during confinement caused by the pandemic. Acevedo, Alcalá, Gaviria, Orrego and Suescún lead us strategies about how to increase reading skills in our students through social features of real context.

We can also find some contributions about a pedagogical experience aimed at sharing the findings emerged from the development of the literacy competence to create writing workshops. Guerrero, Carvajal and Vega confirmed the necessity to promote the appropriation of research-innovation capacities, through training, immersion and practical processes to consolidate students' profile discipline and critical-scientific thinking. Peña and López report the findings of a pedagogical intervention, which implemented communication strategies to foster university learners' speaking skills. Rivera, Rodríguez and Flores explored the needs of including English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in university students and the positively impact it has for their professional development.

Another recent interest, generated by the pandemic, is the experience of creation of MOOC courses in French as a foreign language for an academic community as an answer to the teaching difficulties emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic directed by Ruiz. Besides, there is an interesting study related to the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening comprehension skill at a private language institute conducted by Valdés and López. Last of all, in their article, Vargas and Vázquez stated two great inquiries: how does language construct the knowledge? and how language constructs the human being?

We inspire our community in general to continue sharing their research papers and contribute with new knowledge. Thank you for all your support.

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La alfabetización bilingüe de estudiantes de preescolar adoptando los principios de Montessori en clases de inglés a distancia

Pre-schoolers bilingual literacy adopting Montessori's principles in Remote English lessons

Alphabétisation bilingue des enfants d'âge préscolaire adoptant les principes de Montessori dans les cours d'anglais à distance

Andrea Bernal¹

Yury Tatiana Monsalve Gaviria²

Abstract

During the lockdown due to COVID-19, the traditional educational processes have moved to a remote environment, generating new challenges, and realities. This qualitative documentary research between a student and a professor who belong to students' a research seedbed called RELATE of the bachelor in English as a Foreign Language of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios seeks to examine the implementation of Maria Montessori's principles in children's bilingual literacy before and during confinement caused by the pandemic. The articles reviewed were released in 2020 and 2021 in the data basis ProQuest and the peer-reviewed journals Childhood development journal, Early Childhood Research Quarterly, and Childhood development. The analysis was done on 50 articles to determine the development of children's bilingual literacy in remote learning environments and to what extent Montessori's principles could be identified. Findings show that the principles such

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as freedom and a child-friendly creative and resourceful environment of Maria Montessori's theory are applied in some of the articles and some teaching practices actually foster children's bilingual literacy before and during COVID 19 pandemic.

Keywords: Bilingualism, preschool literacy, Montessori method, bilingual education, remote learning.

Résumé

Pendant le confinement dû à COVID-19, les processus éducatifs traditionnels se sont déplacés vers un environnement éloigné, générant de nouveaux défis et réalités. Cette recherche documentaire qualitative entre un étudiant et un professeur appartenant à une pépinière de recherche des étudiants appelée RELATE du baccalauréat en anglais comme langue étrangère de Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios cherche à examiner la mise en œuvre des principes de Maria Montessori dans l'alphabétisation bilingue des enfants avant et pendant le confinement causé par la pandémie. Les articles examinés ont été publiés en 2020 et 2021 dans la base de données ProQuest et les revues à comité de lecture Childhood development journal, Early Childhood Research Quarterly et Childhood development. L'analyse a été effectuée sur 50 articles pour déterminer le développement de l'alphabétisation bilingue des enfants dans des environnements d'apprentissage à distance et dans quelle mesure les principes de Montessori pouvaient être identifiés. Les résultats montrent que les principes tels que la liberté et un environnement créatif et ingénieux adapté aux enfants de la théorie de Maria Montessori sont appliqués dans certains des articles et que certaines pratiques d'enseignement favorisent en fait l'alphabétisation bilingue des enfants avant et pendant la pandémie de COVID-19.

Mots clés: Bilinguisme, alphabétisation préscolaire, méthode Montessori, éducation bilingue, apprentissage à distance.

Resumen

Durante el confinamiento por COVID-19, los procesos educativos tradicionales se han trasladado a un entorno remoto, generando nuevos desafíos y realidades. Esta investigación documental cualitativa entre un estudiante y un profesor pertenecientes al semillero de investigación de los estudiantes llamado RELATE de la Licenciatura en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera de la Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, busca examinar la implementación de los principios de María Montessori en la alfabetización bilingüe de los niños durante el confinamiento causado por la pandemia. Los artículos

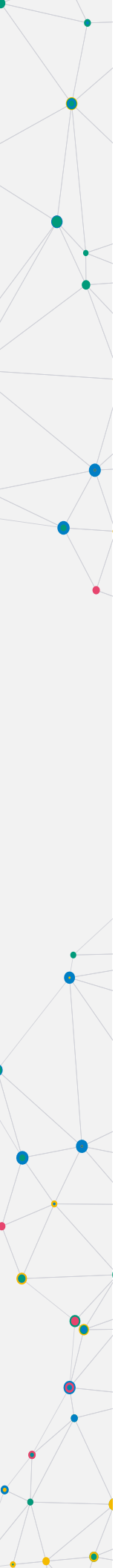
revisados se publicaron en 2020 y 2021 en la base de datos ProQuest y las revistas indexadas Childhood development journal, Early Childhood Research Quarterly y Childhood development. El análisis se realizó en 50 artículos para determinar el desarrollo de la alfabetización bilingüe de los niños en entornos de aprendizaje remoto y hasta qué punto se podían identificar los principios de Montessori. Los resultados muestran que los principios como la libertad y un entorno creativo e ingenioso amigable para los niños de la teoría de María Montessori se aplican en algunos de los artículos y algunas prácticas de enseñanza fomentan la alfabetización bilingüe de los niños antes y durante la pandemia de COVID 19.

Palabras clave: Bilingüismo, alfabetización preescolar, método Montessori, educación bilingüe y aprendizaje remoto.

Introduction

During the last year, pre-school education faced a very big challenge related to the transfer of classroom teaching and learning dynamics to remote environments. This new reality affected millions of children's right to education. There have been many challenges, but also there have been many rewarding experiences in the adaptation of teaching children in remote learning environments. This process represents an opportunity that may improve and definitely innovate learning conditions and also make visible successful teaching experiences. Some teachers have already adapted some tools to continue working on a regular basis; for example, educational platforms, digital books, and learning webs with free access. Others had to look for training opportunities or develop empirical knowledge during their teaching practice to generate well illustrated and clear guides to bring the school closer to the children. All in all, both teachers and children have adopted the reality of taking part in remote learning dynamics.

On the other end of the spectrum, some children had the opportunity to have access to the internet and technological equipment to connect to the classes, either through their cell phones, tablets, or computers, and some were not so fortunate to have those resources. This claim is supported in governmental statistics. In fact, the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística -DANE- published the percentages of internet use at the regional level in Colombia, children older than five years from three of the five regions have the lowest statistics of internet use in places such as the Atlantic, Orinoquia and the Amazon (cited in Tiriati Tovar, 2020). Also, according to Angel Perez Martinez cited by the newspaper El espectador (April 13th, 2021), five million state school students don't have internet connection or computers at



home. In Colombia, every day the news presented us with cases of children who walked for kilometers to have access to the internet signal and a computer which oftentimes they had to share. Others didn't even have electricity utilities. These are examples of real scenarios that many children face to be part of remote learning environments in Colombia during the pandemic.

Teachers have learned from remote learning and this experience has been different for state teachers and private school teachers. In general terms, teachers have the direct experience of moving from a physical classroom to a remote classroom. This means, they had to change usual teaching tools like chalks, markers, erasers and boards and had to start delivering lessons through computer screens projecting PowerPoint slides, Word formats, and learning webs. Many teachers developed their classes synchronously, but in the rural areas many others assigned paper worksheets that parents had to pick up (El Espectador, April 13th, 2021). Many teachers interviewed by the newspaper state there is a gap between the resources, lesson delivery and results reached by students in the state schools and the ones from the private ones.

In the teaching field, many teachers share different testimonies and, of which their experiences are divided, some assume it as a challenge but not a difficult task. Others yearn for on-site lessons since they claim remote teaching is not the same as the former. Teaching English to preschoolers in remote sites generated great challenges. Teachers must think about catching their attention, keeping them motivated to participate in online lessons, and making them feel at ease. If we consider the crucial role that preschool education fulfills in the educational process of every child, we could acknowledge that they discover the world of letters and numbers in this stage. They go through different developmental stages that make them become more independent beings. In other words, people who like to explore the world. For all these reasons, remote sites for teaching and learning at a preschool level urged educator to search for new strategies to continue such meaningful educational processes.

In this scenario, we defined our research problem as the need to know how to develop children's bilingual literacy and performance in remote digital learning environments based on the revision of articles published during 2020-2021 about preschool bilingual education and the analysis of the principles of Maria Montessori identified in the articles selected.

This reflective paper focuses on ongoing results of the documentary research described before and it is relevant for researchers, teachers, parents, preschoolers and the community. The main findings presented are the identification of Montessori's principles applied in characteristics of the classrooms, the teachers and the use of

resources. These results are relevant for many audiences. Educators interested in developing children's bilingual literacy based on Maria Montessori's theory in or out of remote learning settings can identify some of such principles in this paper. Teachers, educators, parents and all the community involved in preschoolers' learning process can identify principles, tools, and practices that they can replicate or adapt to their teaching or learning practices to benefit a child's development of bilingual literacy. In the next lines, the research problem is described in detail.

Research Problem

The research problem identified is the need to understand how teachers can develop children's bilingual literacy in remote digital learning environments. In the situation previously described, we decided to interview English teachers and preschool teachers who work in a bilingual kindergarten in Boyacá. They stated that neither they nor the children were ready to take part in a remote learning environment, but they managed to adapt and continue developing children's bilingual literacy with the limitations of adopting these new learning conditions. One teacher explained it was difficult to have control of a class through a computer screen despite the fact that they can see the children, since they felt they could not lead other dynamics different from working facing a computer screen. Another teacher said she spent much time exploring new strategies, entertaining material, different PowerPoint templates, and images to develop English classes. Also, they have started to adapt digital materials like videos found on YouTube. As a result of these efforts and despite the shortcomings of remote learning, they noticed children continue attending lessons and producing some of the expected learning outcomes. Reflecting upon this situation, we identified teachers need to know diverse teaching and learning possibilities to foster children's bilingual literacy in digital environments.

Children's bilingual literacy is developed by both English teachers and preschool teachers in a bilingual kindergarten in Boyacá; however, we noticed the need to articulate more both fields of knowledge in the teaching practices. On the one hand, some preschool teachers recognized they may not have certain strategies to teach English and on the other hand, English teachers may need to understand more the developmental stages and performance needs of preschoolers to plan lessons and learning goals accordingly. This situation may affect the process of reaching children's bilingual literacy. For some preschool teachers there is the need to apply more teaching practices in digital environments that lead to children's acquisition of English as a foreign language, and for some English teachers, there is an interest in adapting

bilingual teaching practices to the development needs of preschoolers in virtual learning environments.

This research focuses on the analysis of articles about teaching practices that aim at fostering children's bilingual literacy in remote learning environments and where we identified the implementation of the Principles of Maria Montessori. This way, we may identify teaching practices that articulate both the characteristics of teaching preschoolers, as they implemented Montessori's principles, and the practices that lead to children's bilingual literacy to respond to the needs identified in the research problem. According to the aforementioned, we developed a documentary revision that allowed us to identify diverse teaching practices guided by the following research question: To what extent the principles of Maria Montessori's theory about children's literacy have been applied in the development of children's bilingual literacy in remote learning environments? In order to understand children's bilingual literacy, we reviewed the following theoretical principles.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Stage

Children have more ability to acquire languages than adults. Bickerton (2001) cited by Cruttenden (2019) asserts this is a sign of a biological condition or limited opportunity in time to develop. This limited time is known as "*the critical stage*." The biological characteristics can be summarized in three points. Firstly, the critical stage relates to very specific activities and behaviors that can be acquired. Secondly, the duration is limited to a definite time and with a termination foreseeable and thirdly beyond the stage, the desired behavior is not acquired (Lorenz cited by Garcia and Garcia, 2003: 5)

Learning English includes not only the phonetics of a language but also the grammar, syntax, intonation, etc. However, Kuhl (1994) suggests learning a phonetic system is more age-sensitive than learning grammar. Therefore, the critical stage is very important in terms of pronunciation. Language acquisition depends on the plasticity of the two hemispheres of the brain. He further suggested if the acquisition has not occurred when the boy reaches puberty, he will never achieve full command of the language. Garcia and Garcia (2003) speak of three implications for students of a second language starting after a critical stage: the student cannot reach a native speaker level, learning requires higher effort than it takes during the critical stage, and

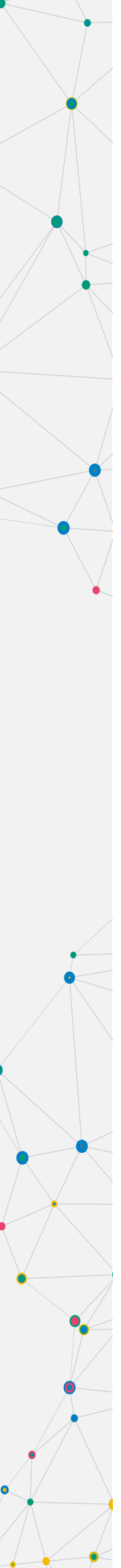
the student cannot use the same mechanisms that he had used while he was learning his mother tongue.

Doughty, C and Long, M (2003) quote VanPatten (2002) who defines input in learning processes as contextualized language that is part of a message with a clear meaning. Gass and Selinker (2008) point out that the quality of the input is the main fact in the acquisition of the second language. Within the critical stage, the brain performs '*fast mapping*' and can find out the syntactic structure. Dulay and Burt (cited by Gass and Selinker, 2008) argue we have innate mechanisms that allow us to create hypotheses about the language system and then solve the problems of spoken structures that do not match what is heard. Dulay and Burt call this process "creative construction": The construction of the language occurs gradually, in such a way that children synchronize the language heard with the one they are producing, using their own and innate instrument, which leads them to formulate hypotheses about their learning until it has its adjustment and the language is produced correctly. (Dulay and Burt cited by Gass and Selinker, 2008: 127). If the language is not acquired at the critical stage, but is learned as a second language in school or later in adulthood, learners likely need "grammar rules" to learn effectively. In this way, the student uses his cognitive abilities to process the rules and then forms the structures of the second language. This is the big difference between learning a language and an acquired language.

Fillmore (1996) suggests bilingual children can be very communicative and sociable. He states the need to communicate in one or the other language is a good motivation. Although the needs are very different for adults, a bilingual child will learn more quickly what he needs to communicate. Fillmore proposes a model for creating a thriving environment for teaching communicative and social skills. Consequently, a learner is more motivated if he has the requirement to communicate in the desired language, the opportunity to communicate, and interact with native speakers, and an environment that generates those opportunities to happen frequently (p. 52-53). He also argues that children's bilingual literacy development depends on social, linguistic and cognitive processes; social refer to interaction with others; In the linguistic, reference is made to the way in which the speaker of the desired language can change the language chosen to address the learner to better understand what is socialized and finally, in the cognitive, they consider processes in which knowledge is acquired in this case related to the language.

Children bilingual literacy

According to Cameron (2001), literacy is the ability to learn, write, and read different kinds of texts within different purposes. Literacy is part of people's lives, both adults



and children and it is not a task that only has its stage in school but also in homes, and on the street, since written texts are found everywhere. Written texts are no longer just paper books, but the modern era allows us to have digital forms. Children from early childhood are immersed in the literacy process; for example, when they learn to write their names or participate in the reading of a story. Teachers can take advantage of these conditions to start and enhance children's bilingual literacy.

Learners who are learning to read in a second or foreign language explore different dimensions and components of language. To give meaning to a text, skilled readers use a combination of visual, phonological, and semantic information, taken from the letters, words, and sentences of the text. Readers build up an understanding of the text as they go along, sometimes called a “*text base*.” (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Kintsch 1988). Also, reading comprehension entails analyzing different components or scales of the language. In order to comprehend, the reader relates morphemes, words, letters, syllables, sentences in a paragraph, or textual contexts (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Kintsch 1988). That is, the reader focuses his gaze on the text at different points according to the information which suggests his interest the most and depending on his cognitive capacities. In order to understand a text, all scales must be integrated, that is, from individual letters to the complete discussion of the text. The children who learn English need to develop abilities and knowledge in each scale. Children need to progress in every scale or level, and they need to practice the integration through the levels. As teachers, we can plan reading strategies and material that bear in mind this scaffolding.

In the process of bilingual literacy, the brain tries to associate the first language with the second and teachers can use strategies to cope with patterns that do not match among languages. In the case of children whose first language is Spanish and are learning English, both languages have the same graphemes, but phonemes and some consonant combinations change. In that case, a comprehension strategy is repeating several times the pronunciation of words or ideas. This helps to accelerate the process of learning an aspect of the word which is part of the reading ability. In regards to the meaning of words, in the early stages, children can comprehend new vocabulary, when teachers explain the meanings or they could be inferred from the textual or graphic context. Other processes happen in the writing process. For these reasons, as teachers we should be mindful of the importance of L1 and the strategies we can use for developing children's comprehension of new vocabulary as part of their initial reading and writing ability.

Reading and writing can be complex activities for 6-10 years old. They may not be able to transfer even the most general concepts about a text and printed reading if they

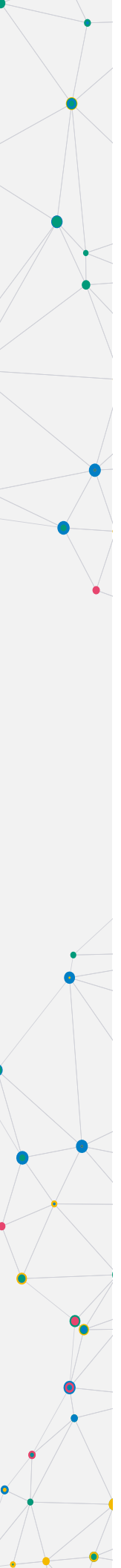
don't have some basis. (Milan, T & Basurto, N. 2019). Children are still developing fine motor skills that will allow them to form letters, join words, which means that producing a sentence will take more time, even children's attention and memory periods are also limited by what they remember. Children begin to learn a language through oral skills, then pre-reading and writing which begins at a very simple level by identifying single words and their name in simple sentences. To teach a 6-year-old to write, teachers can use the teaching methods used by children whose first language is English so that by the time children reach 10 they can understand how texts work, think and speak about the differences between languages. (Milan, T & Basurto, N. 2019). Early English literacy activities give children the opportunity to see, hear, manipulate, touch, and feel. The idea is to establish a relationship between the process of creating meaning, sensory exploration and the expression of ideas, generating a close relationship that involves a total of the senses, that inspires and is motivational to achieve synchronization with learning.

Research design

This research deals with a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2012) because it aims at analyzing children's bilingual literacy through the identification of teaching practices that have characteristics of Montessori's method. This paper reports ongoing results of a documentary research about children's bilingual literacy through the principles of Maria Montessori. Documentary research is defined as the "systematic, methodical and organized study of documents" (Uribe in Paramo, 2016, p, 198). Consequently, we did a methodic revision and analysis of articles to identify the teaching practices that articulate both children's bilingual literacy and the principles of Maria Montessori in remote learning environments. We selected articles about the development of children's bilingual literacy, preschool bilingual education, and Montessori's method published in peer-reviewed journals. These criteria allowed us to guarantee the principles of credibility, representativeness, authenticity and meaning in the documents (Ahmed, 2010).

Data collection instruments and analysis

As in the initial search on the data basis, we selected forty-six articles that included in their abstracts and titles the key words of this study. We decided to create a matrix to characterize the main features of the articles. The matrix was validated by an external research expert. This matrix helped us write referencing information about the articles such as the data basis where we found them, their title, kind of publication, main



constructs developed in relation with our research and a final concept that depended on the analysis of each article's textual structure and content.

To classify the articles depending on their textual structure, we used two checklists to determine whether articles selected reported quantitative, qualitative or mixed research studies. These checklists were taken from Efron and Ravid (2018). Using checklists allowed us to reach the first specific objective, which is to identify peer-reviewed research articles published during 2020 about children's bilingual literacy and preschool bilingual education.

We found that all the articles that reported results of research were about developing children's bilingual literacy and the articles that focused on pre-school education during COVID 19 sanitary crises had other textual typology. They were mainly reflections, essays or notes of the editor, so we decided to add articles with this typology since they provided relevant information about the teaching and learning conditions of bilingual preschoolers during the lockdown, and that was one of our research objectives.

To analyze to what extent the content of the articles selected was relevant to answer our research question we used analytical note taking index cards or as ANTICS as they are called by Efron and Ravid (2018) because of their letter initials. This instrument is a document with a form where the reader identifies key issues or concepts described in the articles, analyzes them, and writes a personal comment about them. This instrument helped us research the second specific objective consisting in analyzing the most relevant peer reviewed articles about children's bilingual literacy and preschool bilingual education in remote learning environments. The form was taken from Efron and Ravid (2018).

To find relationships among the content of all the articles we used a graphic organizer called thematic concentric circles. The circles allowed us to determine aspects of children's bilingual literacy development in the teaching practices described in the articles released in 2020. The form was taken from Efron and Ravid (2018).

To identify Montessori's principles and relate them to the articles about children's bilingual literacy in remote learning environments, we created a matrix with categories and codes about Montessori's method. We also design it to keep a record of the emerging codes based on the articles about Montessori's method to determine its main characteristics. In the analysis of articles about children's bilingual literacy in remote

learning environments, we identified teaching practices that may apply the principles of the Montessori method or that could be closely related to such principles.

Qualitative data analysis was developed based on a hermeneutical approach (Gadamer, 1982 as cited by Efron and Ravid, 2018). Firstly, there was a scanning process to identify the articles that suited the general research criteria, then there was a process of skimming, analyzing, interpreting, emerging coding and a priori coding where we labelled meaningful fragments related with the constructs of bilingual children's education and Montessori's method. Finally, codes were organized in thematic concentric circles to make their relations explicit and build up a new interpretation.

Findings

Montessori's principles applied to teaching preschool students.

Maria Montessori is a tenet reference for early childhood education since her work focuses on preschool children and has current relevance. Her educational methods are based on allowing children to be free, to interact with the environment, to be independent from their parents, which allows them to express themselves more freely, to be themselves (Ghaffari, Kashkouli, & Sadighi, 2017; Labrador, 1998). There have been studies that articulate Montessori's method in the process of children bilingual literacy (Jian, & Pane, 2020; Ghaffari, Kashkouli, & Sadighi, 2017; Faryadi, 2009; Akhsanova, & Salyakhova, 2016). As an example, Akhsanova and Salyakhova (2016) included the educational methods of Maria Montessori for teaching English in Russia. They showed that individual and group work allowed learners to work in free spaces and have choices which are principles of the Montessori method. Furthermore, preschoolers increased their motivation and communication skills in English classes. Montessori's protocols are based on children's nature of exploration, freedom, and thinking skills which has generated learning gains. This implies that if English teachers adapt their teaching practices (usually focused on teenagers or adult learners) incorporating Montessori's principles, they can respond to children's needs and the impact of this decision has proven to be children's progress towards their bilingual literacy.

Figure 1 highlights the fundamental categories and codes inferred based on the analysis of articles about Maria Montessori's method applied to the field of English teaching (Jian, & Pane, 2020; Ghaffari, Kashkouli, & Sadighi, 2017; Faryadi, 2009; Akhsanova, & Salyakhova, 2016; Cardinal, & Chiappe, 2016; Bonilla, 2019; Díaz-Bajo 2019; López, , & Blanco, 2020). Maria Montessori places children as the protagonist, as unique, free, and independent beings in the development of their learning experience.

The school classrooms are special, with creative colorful materials and diverse choices. The learning environment shouldn't have the intervention of adults. Teachers are supervisors, guarantors, and motivators of the process. To respond to learners' needs, teachers can resort to extra methods to complement and enrich children's learning.

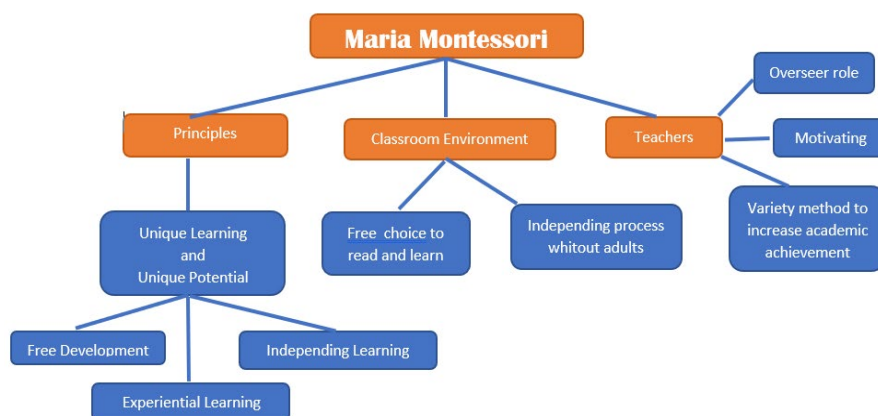


Figure 1. Fundamental principles found in the analysis of articles about Maria Montessori method (Jian, & Pane, 2020; Ghaffari, Kashkouli, & Sadighi, 2017; Faryadi, 2009; Akhsanova, & Shlyakhova, 2016; Cardinal, & Chiappe, 2016; Bonilla, 2019; Díaz-Bajo 2019; López, , & Blanco, 2020). Own creation.

Unique Potentials Learner in a Free Development

The pedagogical proposal of Maria Montessori has as one of its main principles providing children opportunities and independence. According to a series of articles analyzed in the development of this documentary research (Akhsanova, Salyakhova, 2016; Faryadi, 2019; Pane, Jian (2020), we found that Montessori's educational proposal aims to allow children to have a free development. This means, the learning environments are specially prepared for children so they can explore, develop, and grow increasing learning. The role of teachers in the process is to give freedom for learners to explore. The combination of a prepared environment for exploration and the flexibility to scout it contributes to the development of their personal qualities, increases the level of learning motivation and satisfies the educational interests of children (Akhsanova, Salyakhova, 2016). All in all, the pleasant environment in their in-situ classes, remote digital sessions, and homes motivates children to be part of their educational process and may bring about bilingual literacy.

The Montessori Method can have an effect on children's communication skills. This happens because children are the protagonist of free, active, diverse, and motivating learning environments and dynamics that motivate them to speak. By the same token, this approach to learning achieves quality in their personal development. When a child

feels pleased in a space, they feel more confident, which allows them to perform better in communication skills and supports them to improve and expand their vision of the world. A suitable and appropriate environment stimulates children's learning and performance.

Experiential learning with free choice of reading and learning plan.

The Montessori Method also suggests that students should have the opportunity to choose their own reading and learning material (Ghaffari, Kashkouli, Sadighi, 2017). As mentioned earlier in the article, students develop their activities in free environments, this includes freeing children from the pressure of adults when directing activities. This entails, the class needs to have a prepared environment organized according to a theme, with materials within the reach of children. In doing so, children are motivated to study - they learn based on their interests exclusively (Akhsanova, Shlyakhova, 2016). The setting should also have wide spaces, free of obstacles, with small furniture. This in turns, allows them free choice of objects they wish to work, and they feel at ease. Montessori students can learn on their own through critical interaction with the material that is scaffold from basic to advance thinking skills (Ghaffari, Kashkouli, Sadighi, 2017). She suggests that preschool teachers promote the construction of independence by allowing learning surrounded by these preplanned challenging resourceful environments prepared for free transit and exploration. In remote learning environments, these principles might be applied by setting virtual session dynamics, platforms, materials, and layouts where teachers deliver the classes and requesting or guiding parents to set a motivating learning ambiance at home. Also, the activities done in virtual, remote synchronous sessions should be contextualized, diverse and planned to take children from simple to more complex thinking and expression outcomes through the diverse learning experiences.

Discovering the main characteristics of the articles about children's bilingual literacy and its development during COVID 19

To identify teaching practices that aimed at guiding children in the process of becoming bilingual, we selected, reviewed, and analyzed peer-reviewed articles released in 2020 in Proquest database and the peer-reviewed journals Childhood development journal, Early Childhood Research Quarterly, and Childhood development. The searching criteria were the key words, children's bilingual literacy and preschool bilingual education. 46 open-source articles were downloaded and after using the checklist to assess research articles taken from Efron and Ravid (2018), 24 articles were

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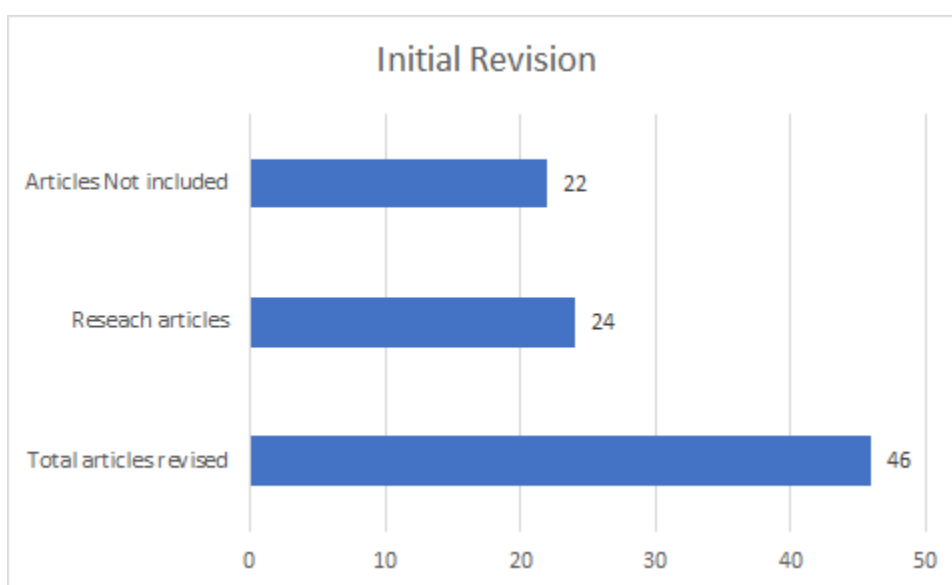


Figure 2. Results of the initial revision. Own creation.

Unfortunately, in this initial revision, none of the research articles was about the development of children's bilingual literacy during COVID-19. Therefore, a second revision was done to include other typologies of articles that provided information about children's bilingual literacy development during COVID-19. As a result of this, figure 3 shows that we selected 8 articles that read about children's learning English during COVID 19 in 2020 and 19 articles that reported results of empirical research.

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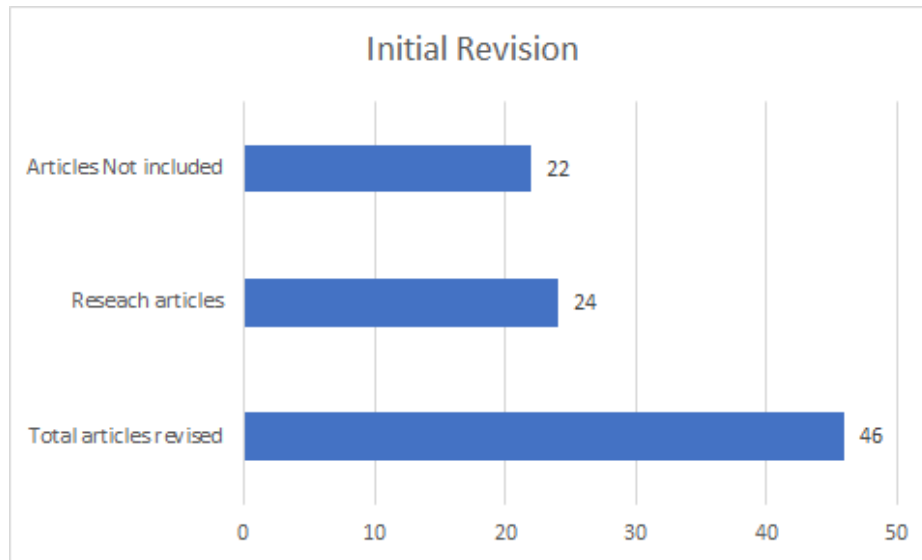


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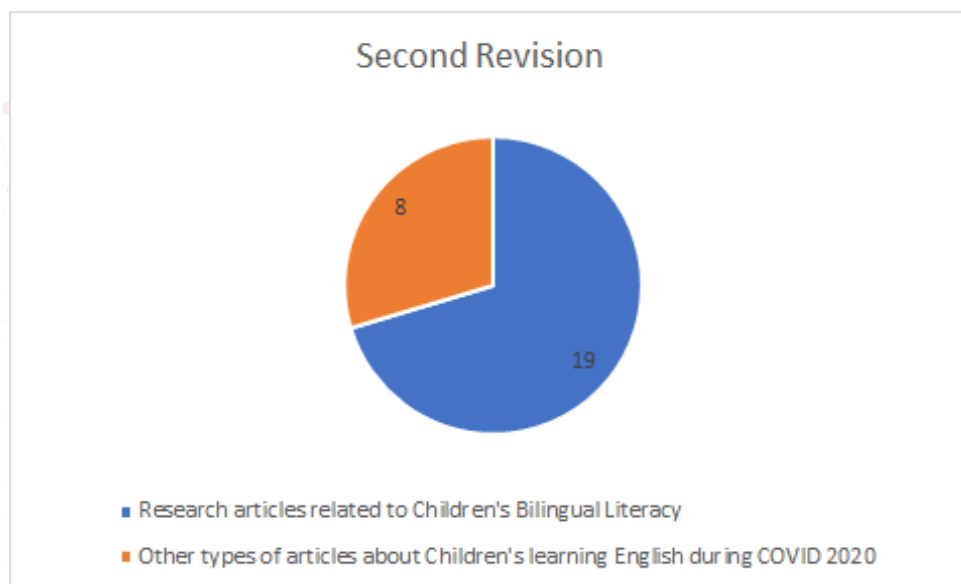


Figure 3 Results of the second revision

Using the same sample of articles, a scanning process was done to identify the topic of the articles and their main structural characteristics. We found 19 articles were about children's bilingual literacy development and 8 about the same topic during COVID 19, but they were not articling about empirical research. Instead, the 8 articles were mainly noting to the editors or reflection papers. The following results show the reflection about the content of the articles.

Pre-schoolers bilingual literacy, teaching and learning practices during 2020

We included eight articles published during 2020 and 2021 with the intention of discovering how bilingual literacy could have been promoted during the confinement (Ferdig, Baumgartner, Hartshorne, Kaplan-Rakowski, and Mouza 2020; Khamsuk and Whanchit 2021; Kolak, Norgate, Monaghan, and Taylor 2020; Carrillo, and Flores 2020; Rivera Pérez, Hart, and Lund 2020; Nikolayev, Reich, Muskat, Tadjbakhsh, and Callaghan, 2020; Wright, Einhorn, Labin, Perez, DiSalvo, and Truglio, 2021; Baoqi, Loh, O'Brien, and Silver. E. n.d.) we found that some researchers had done projects in remote learning environments during previous years and published last year. Also, other articles were reflections or notes to the editors about the effect of COVID 19 confinement.

In regards to preschoolers' bilingual literacy, we found a variety of topics. We found an article about developing children's reading literacy (Khamsuk and Whanchit 2021) and another about the increase of children's bilingual leisure reading for enjoyment during COVID 19 (Baoqi, Loh, O'Brien, and Silver, n.d.). An analysis of vocabulary learning clues identified in children bilingual TV programs (Rivera Pérez, Hart, and Lund 2020). Authors stated characteristics such as applying game-based learning and routines in Sesame Streetworkshop (Wright, Einhorn, Labin, Perez, DiSalvo, and Truglio, 2021), and the relation between feedback provided by games and children's learning process (Nikolayev, Reich, Muskat, Tadjbakhsh, & Callaghan, 2020). Finally, there was an article about assessing the learning potential of preschoolers' apps (Kolak, Norgate, Monaghan, & Taylor, 2020).

In the following section, we present the findings of the analysis of the previous articles. We mainly focused on the following three categories: firstly, bilingual literacy, secondly, assessment of learning apps and their potential to enhance bilingual literacy,

and thirdly, bilingual literacy and the digital divide. We also stated and explained principles of Montessori's method in those articles.

Bilingual literacy development through storytelling

Khamsuk & Whanchit, (2021) fostered children's bilingual literacy by designing bilingual tales that both teachers and parents read to children in class or in non-school hours. Teachers read short stories written in children's foreign language that included a few words in English, then ask children some reading comprehension questions. They could read the same story twice or three times. At home parents repeated the same reading and procedure. In the reading comprehension tasks, children had to relate the words in English with images that represented their meaning. For instance, children could remember simple words such as moon and sun that were part of the context of a story. This mixed research contrasted results before and after children received this reading training, and proved children have increased their capacity to remember the words in English presented in the stories. The authors state that storytelling promotes English vocabulary learning in preschoolers in and out of class and it could be done using adapted material that has a mix of both children's L1 and few words in L2. Nonetheless, parents should be guided in the process and have the necessary reading material.

Storytelling should generate children's sensorial exploration. It means, reading should be an active activity where children use their senses as part of their active interaction with the content of the text. For example, if a story says the protagonist smells the flowers, then children should be encouraged to act out the action of smelling. Both teachers and parents are responsible for inviting children to discover the world of reading and exploring books through sensorial experiences. Montessori's principle of creativity matches this view of reading because this approach to reading promotes the exploration of the senses as a means of checking comprehension and motivating learners.

Storytelling is an activity many parents do with their children and it can be done in the bilingual classroom as well, but this activity should have specific procedures to develop children's bilingual literacy. Actually, storytelling bilingual stories may initially be done at home. However, in Khamsuk and Whanchi's study (2021) preschoolers were introduced to mono-syllabic concrete words and only up to three words in each story. Also, both teachers and parents read the same story three times, one after the other, and asked comprehension questions. Additionally, the researchers designed and adapted the material so that most part of the stories was in children's native language

and only three monosyllabic content words were introduced in parts of the story. Preschool teachers and parents must be aware of the multiple possibilities we have to help children in their bilingual literacy process.

Khamsuk & Whanchit's study (2021) was chosen because it has results of children's increased bilingual literacy and principles of Montessori's method. The International Montessori Society (IMS) listed 20 protocols cited in Ghaffari, Kashkouli, y Sadighi, (2017). We identified the following Montessori protocols in Khamsuk & Whanchit's study (2021). First, the researchers promoted children's interest by involving them actively in the sensory reading process; for instance, by asking them questions and having them look at the images. Second, the reading comprehension activities should focus on the main points of the story, simplifying the complexity of the activity which is another Montessori protocol. Finally, another protocol is establishing and keeping the same routines which was implemented in Khamsuk & Whanchit's study (2021) study as they set the same reading routine that consisted in reading the same story three times in a sequence and then asking reading comprehension questions to check children's understanding of the meaning of the words in English.

Other characteristics of Montessori's theory identified in Khamsuk & Whanchit's study (2021) are the role of the teacher and the effectiveness of the method. In Montessori's theory, teachers' role should be active when they teach children from 0 to 9 years since they should show children how to do the activities and use the material (Ghaffari, Kashkouli, y Sadighi, 2017). Kahmsuk and Whanchit stated that teachers and parents read the stories to children and guided their responses to the reading checks. Finally, children exposed to Montessori's principles may learn to read before age 6 (Edwards, 2002) cited in Ghaffari, Kashkouli, y Sadighi, (2017) and actually children in the storytelling study increased their reading bilingual literacy.

Bilingual vocabulary and reading literacy development during COVID 19

Bilingual children can understand and use more words in a second language by their exposure and guidance to bilingual TV (Rivera Pérez, Hart, & Lund, (2020) with some principles of Montessori's method. Researchers found that there are bilingual TV programs that have implicit and explicit vocabulary learning clues that may benefit children's learning. Some of the explicit clues are translation of the words present first in L1 and then in L2 to support scaffolding of meaning based on children's knowledge of L1 and providing a simple definition of the word so that the learner infers the meaning. Implicit clues include fostering the association of a new word with

its visual representation and repetition of the words presented in diverse examples. Visual illustration fosters semantic processes and meaningful repetitions enhanced pronunciation learning. In both explicit and implicit clues provided in bilingual TV programs, we identified two principles of Montessori Method such as promoting inferential thinking and making simple complex processes as well as using colorful attention-getting material to catch children's interest.

Bilingual children felt joy when reading bilingual books preferably in paper format during COVID 19. In Baoqi, Loh, O'Brien, and Silver, (n.d.) mixed research, they studied a population of Asian bilingual children and found that in general terms, and all children reported they liked reading and preferred using paper books since most of them related digital tools to entertainment. Whereas reading books was perceived as an activity that allowed them to feel out of the usual habit of taking remote learning sessions or doing assignments on a computer screen. We inferred that the Montessori's principles identified in this study are promoting children's well-being, enjoyment and learning materials that suit their needs.

Assessment of learning apps and their potential to enhance bilingual literacy.

Kolak, Norgate, Monaghan, Taylor (2020) created a tool to assess the quality of learning apps mainly designed for children between 2 to 5 years. Their findings show that the most relevant aspects evaluated by expert educators and designers about the quality of learning apps are whether their design is suitable for children and the quality of the language used. Nonetheless, they concluded that learning apps can have a high value in their design, but a low educational effect since they failed to foster cognitive skills and social interaction. One of Montessori's principles is that learning material should be carefully designed and chosen to foster inductive and deductive learning which the learning apps assessed lacked. This principle served as another argument to have a critical stand when promoting learning apps that children can use to learn English.

Children's bilingual literacy and the digital divide

Recognizing practices that promoted children's bilingual literacy in remote learning environments was the main factor that motivated this research; however, responding to children's bilingual literacy needs in a context with a digital divide was also part of the problem investigated. In summary, the remote learning practices reviewed foster bilingual vocabulary, reading and pronunciation literacy by means of materials that

do not necessarily require technological mediation. For instance, vocabulary literacy by storytelling was promoted through the adaptation of stories with bilingual features, vocabulary learning may take place with the selection of bilingual TV programs with learning cues. Furthermore, leisure reading is associated with reading paper books in English. These practices are examples that Colombian teachers can adapt in their remote learning teaching practices directed to children to enhance their bilingual literacy. Practices that are not affected by the reality of the existing digital divide among Colombian regions.

Conclusions

The Maria Montessori method seeks to put the world within the reach of children, facilitating educational processes through the free discovery of their own world, adopting practices that respond to children's natural needs, preferences and likes, but at the same time planning and supervising children's development of cognitive and personal features. Cognitive processes that are fostered are making inferences and deductions from the experimentation with specially designed learning materials. The method also promotes personal characteristics like children's self-confidence, motivation, and autonomy. Adults either parents or teachers should guide children but not rule every single activity or reaction.

We could see specific teaching practices during the COVID19 confident that enhanced children's bilingual literacy and applied some of the principles mentioned before. Those practices were storytelling through reading routings that lead to reading inferences and recognition of new words in English, the use of bilingual TV programs that use vocabulary clues where children also make inferences or are allowed to be exposed to L1 to make sense of new words. In conclusion, in regards to our initial research question, we can assert that Montessori's principles have been applied to develop children's bilingual literacy and that the sanitary crises did not refrain teachers from continue adapting and developing children's bilingual literacy creating adapted reading material or using open access sources that respond to both Montessori principles and by the same token are coherent with children's educational needs.

Limitations

There were some difficulties finding articles that specifically or literally applied Montessori's principles in children's bilingual literacy development during 2020 and 2021 in the databases accessed. We overcome this obstacle by identifying teaching practices during the same time and to develop children's bilingual literacy and articles

about Montessori's principles applied to teaching English articulating both kinds of papers. Another limitation we found was the lack of access to the documents, since at the beginning, we found many abstracts that promised enriching content for our research, but access to the full document was limited and closed, which limits the initial purpose of the research.

Ideas for further research

Teachers and educators can apply the findings about vocabulary and reading bilingual literacy presented in this article in their teaching practices to develop children's bilingual literacy development, do research and report their findings. If preschool teachers foster bilingual literacy using books in English, adapting stories, selecting bilingual TV programs or adapting strategies to learn vocabulary, they may find similar results as the ones reported in this paper. Teachers can also adopt and undertake research about sensorial storytelling practices in their remote sessions and incorporate parents in the teaching practices. Also, there could be studies where the tool to assess the quality of learning gaps is used or adapted for evaluating the impact of popular children's learning apps in the Colombian context. These are some of the examples on how this paper can contribute with ideas for future research and preschool English teachers' practices.

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La Lectura en la Educación Primaria y su Conexión con la Motivación y los Problemas Sociales

Reading in Elementary School and Its Connection to Motivation and Social Issues

La lecture dans l'enseignement primaire et son lien avec la motivation et les problèmes sociaux

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to increase the levels of reading motivation in English as a foreign language in fifth-grade students from a Colombian public school located in the municipality of Bello, Antioquia, by means of the social features of their immediate context. It was first necessary to diagnose which key factors influence students' level of motivation to intervene appropriately by implementing short-illustrated stories, such factors were: their attitude towards reading in English, how their social context triggers learning in them, their reading preferences in general, as well as their current language proficiency level. Only by regarding these aspects, an alternative to

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approaching literacy processes could be applied by teachers and also be beneficial to students' learning experience. This research was conceived from a qualitative approach and an action research method to achieve a better understanding of the study object and raise awareness among the academic community about being critical towards students' own context. Thus, participant observation, journals and semi-structured interviews were selected as the research instruments to test the initial categories of the study.

Key words: Literacy, Reading Motivation, Social Context, EFL, Social Issues

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio fue aumentar los niveles de motivación lectora en inglés como lengua extranjera en estudiantes de quinto grado de una escuela pública colombiana ubicada en el municipio de Bello, Antioquia, a través de las características sociales de su entorno inmediato. Primero fue necesario diagnosticar los factores clave que influyen en el nivel de motivación de los estudiantes para intervenir adecuadamente mediante la implementación de historias ilustradas cortas, tales factores fueron: sus actitudes hacia la lectura en inglés, cómo su contexto social desencadena el aprendizaje en ellos, sus preferencias de lectura en general, así como su nivel actual de dominio del idioma. Sólo con base en estos aspectos, los docentes podrían aplicar una alternativa para abordar los procesos de literacidad y también ser beneficiosa para la experiencia de aprendizaje de los estudiantes. La investigación fue concebida desde un enfoque cualitativo y una metodología de investigación-acción para alcanzar una mejor comprensión del objeto de estudio y crear conciencia entre la comunidad académica acerca de ser crítico con el contexto de los estudiantes. Por lo tanto, la observación participante, diarios y entrevistas semiestructuradas fueron seleccionados como los instrumentos de investigación para testear las categorías iniciales del estudio.

Palabras clave: Literacidad, Motivación hacia la Lectura, Contexto Social, ILE, Problemas Sociales.

Introduction

This research is as a response to the gap between the low English level in fifth grade students of a public school in Bello, Colombia and the social issues that surround the neighborhood in which the school is located. This gap needs to be reduced by increasing the levels of motivation of these students in vulnerable circumstances regarding reading in EFL (English as a foreign language). Thus, the project aimed

at encouraging meaningful reading within the social issues that students are familiar with as a means of creating a social change that promoted reflection upon those issues.

Regarding social context, it can be said that it is both “a background variable affecting the learning” and “an essential part of cognitive development” (Mondada and Pekarek Doehler 2004, as cited in Glohami, Sharifah, & Mustapha, 2012, p73). Context deeply influences teaching and learning processes (Jacknic, 2008, as cited in Gholami, Rahman, & Mustapha, 2012); as a result, it would not be appropriate to state that “learning does not occur in context”, since “the context actually shapes cognitive development” and it is a result of the individual’s interaction with it (Butt, Khan, & Wilayat, 2012, p. 84).

In this regard, it is important to learn about the influence that social issues have on students’ educational process as, in turn, such social issues are presented in the context where learning takes place and permeate the development of learning. On the other hand, there is an emerging question about how social issues from learners’ context can specifically permeate EFL in Colombia, as the Ministry of National Education acknowledges that English owns a strong importance as a universal language, so it intends to enhance the quality of English teaching to achieve a better performance by Colombian students so that they have a language in common to access today’s world (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006). For this reason, learning English has become mandatory and several language policies have been created along last decades to address the need to communicate in English as an essential competence to attend the demands of a globalized world; however, results of standardized tests prove Colombian learners’ English proficiency have not been fully satisfactory, and shows that one out of every six students have a poor development and performance on this competence (ICFES, 2016).

This situation has a strong impact on the quality of education and the development of the country if the importance of speaking English is considered “to reach social, academic and economic progress around the world” (Escobar Fandiño, Muñoz, & Silva Velandia, 2019, p. 1). Thus, by considering the given results and lack of successful performance of speaking English at a basic competence in Colombia, it can be inferred that there is a problem with the learning process of EFL due to decontextualization and lack of attachment in terms of learners’ context and the intended curriculum that is developed and carried out in schools along the country. In this sense, motivation for learning a foreign language can arise if learners find learning attached to their contexts, given that each student has a particular culture with specific characteristics, which influence him or her, which is precisely expressed “in terms of one’s attitudes,

beliefs, personality, characteristics, ideals, expectations, etc.” and applies to language learning (Gardner, 2007, p. 13).

Motivation facilitates attitudes toward the target language and the resulting outputs that come from the learning process of it (Kazantseva, Valiakhmetova, Minisheva, Anokhina, & Latypova, 2016, p. 7). Regarding that factor, as well as students’ social contexts, could serve as a strategy for promoting learning and specifically, for enhancing reading processes in the language classroom, since “motivation plays a fundamental role in the learning process” (Dörnyei, 2001, as cited in Vibulphol, 2016, p. 64). In addition, it “nourishes” the engine to keep going, therefore “without motivation”, students may lose the will of learning and those who have decided to learn, may not be able to deal with motivation once they have difficulties in the course (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2007 as cited in Vibulphol, 2016, p. 64). It should also be considered that not all students learn at the same pace, so several strategies or should be devised, so that everyone is active and motivated to respond positively to what is asked in class. On the other hand, if there is no relation to what is taught and students’ reality, then students will lose interest as it usually has happened in school classrooms.

In this sense, reflecting upon the repercussions of using the students’ context as well as analyzing the chosen public-school setting was essential to determine a possible relationship between the development of reading motivation and students’ social issues. In order to get enough input from students to define the research process action path, a series of interviews and observation journals were implemented as data collection tools to determine how should be the most appropriate way to intervene. Short stories specifically designed took place according to students’ likes, social problems, and motivation features, this will be discussed later.

Claire Kramersch and Thomas Nolden (1994) state that reading in a foreign language is not a passive procedure, but an “active bottom-up” and “top-down process”: by relating the words on the page with the general meaning coming from it, and in turn by relating the words on the page, readers construct for themselves configurations of expectations called “schemata” that provide them with the tools to preview the meaning of words regarding the context. Researchers have stated that the meaning of “authenticity of a text is not in the text itself”, but instead, that it comes from the “negotiation between the reader and the text” (p. 28). Given this, reading is not about (or shouldn’t be about) discovering the secret meaning the author has put carefully behind his/her words, but

of a process of discovering a relation between what the text says and what reader infers. In other words, reading is a form of “authentication” (Kramersch & Nolden, 1994, p. 28).

However, the linguistic and cognitive perspectives of the act of reading are sometimes not enough to implement a good pedagogical methodology. Approaches to reading are different depending on several factors, such as: cultural development and its features, particularly if these backgrounds, as well as socio-economical ones, parents’ lack of literacy, accessibility of literacy or nonexistence of it, etc. are present, so attitudes towards reading surely will vary because of the stated factors and probably more (Ridgway, 2003, p. 126).

On the other hand, “socio-cultural elements such as styles and attitudes may have a part to play in preempting the engagement of the cognitive ones” when it comes to literacy (Ridgway, 2003, p. 126). That is why having a clearly linguistic perception of it becomes fundamental. The results of the current educational model prove so. What is left then for foreign language teachers who want to promote literacy processes in the classroom? To go to the usual methodologies which are not really working or do something about it?

Rather than using theoretical models taken from international language literacies, it is argued that literate activities should be carried out in a pragmatic, contextualized and student-centered manner. Because only by regarding students’ background, likes, social issues, perceptions of the language, them as people, literacy would be meaningful.

Appropriation of a foreign language is quite “important to professional success, personal development, and academic studies in many parts of the world” (Shin, 2013, p. 159). It has been considered an important language feature when it comes to EFL, to such an extent that it determines students’ academic success. In that sense, motivation becomes an important factor that aims at improving their performance regarding reading and as well as their skills gradually because of the learner’s cognitive effort when “understanding texts and decoding unfamiliar words” (Logan, Medford, & Hughes, 2011, p. 124).

On the other hand, lack of motivation might trigger problems in classrooms that teachers generally face (Huang, Ruan, & Capps, 2012, p. 55). This leads to highlighting the role of teachers to cooperate with students’ learning process, that is, helping the child to be more interested in reading a second or foreign language. Furthermore, some studies have been carried out to demonstrate the positive, cognitive, social, and psychological development when positive learning motivation is evident, but such studies have also shown that motivation can decline as students “progress through

higher grades” (Lau & Nie, 2009, p.3). For this reason, it is necessary to have a deeper look at motivation in order to deal with a lack of it by distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. By considering such differences, it can be said that intrinsic motivation has to do with the individual willingness to carry out a learning process, because of curiosity matters that come from students’ inside. Lungu (2019) states that “Intrinsic motivation represents joy and satisfaction learners get from the learning process, exploration, and understanding something new” (p.141). Thus, the student chooses to learn despite the challenges that may arise, since, from a subjective perspective, each competition is a race to reach the goal. In other words, without effort, it is not possible to reach the expected result and, therefore, students must be encouraged to achieve the goal of learning the language in a friendly and fun way. This is because teachers should “create a healthy class environment so that students are intrinsically motivated and self-determined” (Santrock, 2009, as cited in Aguilar & Ye, 2017, p. 254).

Likewise, several specialists are responsible for giving comforting guidelines to instructors so that students are intrinsically encouraged, but when it comes to extrinsic motivation, the hope of students is based on external elements and not by the effect of satisfaction when executing the task. In the case of second language learning, Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (2001) precisely mention that in extrinsic motivation, learners are encouraged to learn due to external influences and social rewards, so their expectations lie on the external factors and not on the sense of pleasure when performing a task even though psychologists tend to ignore the incentives that influence extrinsic motivation such as “rewards and punishments as positive approach to student learning” (Santrock, 2009, as cited in Aguilar & Ye, 2017, p. 254).

According to Wigfield and Guthrie’s motivation model, reading motivation is influenced by the individual reflections of students regarding their performance, their own objectives for doing learning activities and the influence of the environment around them. With regards to second language reading motivation, some scholars have explained reading motivation using a translated version of the MRQ (Motivation for Reading Questionnaire), such as Mori (2002), in a study where she identified several sub-components of reading motivation, apart from extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which shows that there should be revised in terms of the research context. In a study replicating Mori’s research, Nishino (2005) showed that reading motivation in another language is defined by multifaceted characteristics such as intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation, highlighting the importance of intrinsic motivation to “enlarge the quantity and breadth of reading in an ESL/EFL setting” (p. 39).

It has been established that students can engage in academic activities when they find the outcome interesting, useful, important, and easy to carry out; hence, motivation is triggered and attached to emotions regarding studying and school (Parhiala, Torppa, Vasalampi, Eklund, Poikkeus, & Aro, 2018, p. 197). Thus, it can be said that reading motivation is possible if students are engaged in meaningful tasks, since enjoyment at school leads to higher academic achievement, but it is necessary a certain degree of achievement in order to enjoy one’s learning process as well as control and value cognitions, which, in turn, are related to cognitive approaches to emotions because of “the mediating role of cognitions” to explain the correspondence “between achievement and enjoyment” (Hagenauer & Harscher, 2014, p. 20).

Hence, it can be claimed that a learner’s environment or context plays a crucial role in the process of developing reading motivation, but there are some factors, which are also necessary to consider among which personality characteristics may be highlighted. Previous researches have evinced that “personality is a strong predictor of children’s reading motivation” in which experiences and traits also play an important role, meaning, the level of reading and reading self-concept that learners have; that is, intrinsic reading motivation is the result of children’s personality, experiences, and attitudes toward reading, which may result resistant to change (Medford & McGeown, 2012, p. 790-791).

Beyond personality and its influence on reading motivation (either intrinsic or extrinsic), demographic variables, such as age, sex, and socioeconomic strata, have also been suggested as predictors of motivation, but they do not actually have a strong impact on learners’ attitudes toward reading as self-efficacy and conscientiousness do (McGeown, et al., 2014, p. 284).

This is important to highlight as learners’ social context does not determine the degree of reading motivation. The lack of it in the classroom is an issue that emerges from the academic context itself, but the social context can certainly be used to promote EFL reading by means of strategies implemented by the teacher like storytelling, which can be helpful to understand one’s and other’s culture, and to discern the world around us (Rahimi & Samaneh, 2017, p. 2).

After all, there has been consensus regarding the importance of language learning in the current globalized world; therefore, language learning must go beyond grammar rules and learners need to be enough equipped in order to communicate effectively,

that is, to consider the “intercultural dimension of language learning” (Morgan, et al., 2018, p. 10).

Given the previous literature, it is necessary to consider learning cannot occur without social interaction (Gholami, Rahman, & Mustapha, 2012, p. 2). Social issues permeate students’ processes directly as well as school settings which are designed to provide real life situations. In that sense, “social context is crucial in the development of attitudes towards the target language, its speakers, and the language learning situation”, as a result, motivation is enhanced” (p. 2). Learning opportunities also depend on the social configuration surrounding learners and their institutions. According to the previous statement, students are conceived as social beings who take part in social scenarios, therefore, social contexts and their relationship to students take precedence in this study, since it is in this social environment that student’s language is happening (Gholami, Zainab, & Mustapha, 2012, p. 2).

Finally, second and / or foreign language learning takes place in social environments, which can be evidenced in the attitudes and feelings generated by the context in learners towards the language they are developing and the possibilities their communities provide for such learning (Gholami, Rahman, & Mustapha, 2012, p. 2).

Methodology

In order to comprehend complex realities, flexible methods are needed which suit those complexities, and to provide consequently, different perspectives or understandings of a single phenomenon. That is why this research has aimed to be a qualitative one. As stated in Savin-Baden and Howell (2013), “qualitative researches look for deep meaning about local settings in context and at a particular time” (p. 3). Following the above, a qualitative focus has matched that horizon and also, with the challenging students’ situation to be addressed.

There has been growing acceptance regarding the acceptance of action research as part of the methodology of the research process in the field of education. Furthermore, this method allows researchers to create specific changes in the context in which the research is being carried out. Thus, when it comes to action research in educational settings, teachers are involved in the process “of creating educational change” as well as aiming at the development of “increased knowledge and understanding of their own

practice” by means of constant reflection (Elliot, 2011, as cited in Gallagher-Bett, 2019, p. 30).

Only by considering this fact and the scope of our research project, it is intended to increase the levels of reading motivation in fifth grade students from the selected public school by using the social issues that surrounded the students’ immediate context, such as drug addiction, gambling, gun control, violence, criminal gangs, and murders. However, it was firstly necessary to diagnose key factors that influence students’ level of motivation, such as attitudes towards reading in English as a foreign language, as well as their current level of competence at the time this study was carried out, which must have suited the material to be used and the actions to be considered during the research project.

The most appropriate manner that fitted better the stated path of the research project was participant observation, journals and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. It is only by going deep down students’ insights and taking into consideration their attitudes towards reading in a foreign language that a possible relation between the factors mentioned above might be perceptible.

Didactic and contextualized reading material was used. These were short stories based on students’ interests and of course, on their particular context so that the material fitted rightly to the fifth graders’ level and likes by taking as guideline their reactions and comments about them, as reading preferences influence the selection of the material to be used (Aydin & Bağcı, 2018, p. 129).

This interest from students is understood in terms of sociology, which, along with correspondence between the content of children’s book and the learners’ level, language, and printing are considered four important elements when it comes to book selection as reading material that can influence positively (Aydin & Bağcı, 2018, p. 129).

The method of observation plays a fundamental role in society, since it allows researchers to analyze the object of study by means of their objective perceptions. On the other hand, to make social observation three types of observations must be considered: Participant observation, which allows the observer to perform a submersion in front of the specific objective. At this stage of observation, it is allowed to take a deeper approach as a certain period. There is also a non-participating observation method, which refers to an observer without seeing a relationship compared to what has been observed. Its observation function is without any interaction with the social context. Finally, observation is presented as direct and indirect. Direct observation refers to observation of the exact moment, that is, that the observer is looking at and analyzing the social context at the

moment. On the other hand, indirect observation refers to the subject's observation in the face of his study of interest through observations made by others, being recordings, documents, etc. (Ciesielska, Boström, & Öhlander, 2018, p. 34).

Regarding the type of observations presented, the best observation tool for this research project was participatory, since the research was intended to be carried out in an elementary school for which was crucial a relationship in terms of face-to-face interaction because it allowed a relationship with students. On the other hand, this participatory observation provides interviews and analysis' deeper understanding.

Regarding interviews as a data collection tool, it could be said that they allow us to collect information by means of their “friendly” nature due to the regularity of talking in everyday life with ease. By interviewing, it is even possible to support data that has been previously obtained through other data collection tools during the research project and thus, different data can be contrasted and compared to explain given interpretations when analyzing it (Griffiee, 2012, p. 160). This is, interviews help to enrich the results of the research project when thoughts and ideas are conveyed and expressed in the form of words by the interview; thoughts and ideas that will later be coded by raters in order to establish the degree of reliability of the obtained data, that is to say, its consistency and replication in different contexts over time (Griffiee, 2012, p. 166).

Besides, interviews are well known because of their flexibility due to the different manners in which it is possible to carry them out. That is why, many types of interviews can be distinguished and, among which, semi structured written interviews were chosen to conduct the present research. This type of interview combines both open and close questions and even though there is an established topic to be discussed, respondents do not have to stick to it and their position regarding the topic may be favorable or not (Batista, Matos, & Nascimento, 2017).

Finally, journals were also considered as a data collection tool for this study, as they also provide useful information and data that were analyzed to find specific results. Journals are commonly used in qualitative research to support “written dialogue between students and teachers, to assist self-assessment by teachers in training, and enable individual researchers to investigate their own learning processes” (Griffiee, 2012, p. 199). Given this, the last purpose is precisely the one for which journals were selected as part of the data collection tools for the research. They contribute to develop a deep reflection on the data that is being obtained from the research by means of

other data collection tools and thus, it becomes an important insight when analyzing final data.

The initial categories were chosen to analyze the motivation of reading in the fifth graders as a strategic model in a social context that is reflected in the public school located in Bello. Short stories were created based on the interests that the students chose during the interviews (questionnaire) that were given to each of them. They were supposed to write about their reading preferences, what they currently read in the English class, and the social issues they perceived around their school and community. Besides, a series of social problems were chosen based on the local news and official statement by the local police so that they could identify them in their neighborhood or school, such as drug addiction, gambling, gun control, violence, criminal gangs, and murders. For the creation of the short stories, an analysis was made selecting the four most mentioned genres along with the most repetitive social problems; the four short stories were created using science fiction, terror, drugs, and action plots. However, it must be highlighted that the social problems were addressed implicitly through the already mentioned genres.

On the other hand, observation through internal and external participation were applied, that is to say, expressions of like or dislike, and perceptions of understanding, possible predictions, among other aspects were observed when they were reading. In addition, there was a 2-hour exercise to clarify doubts as a moment of participatory interaction to guarantee that everyone understood in a formal way.

It is worth mentioning that social context is an important factor to be considered in language learning. Students acquire a foreign language to use in social interaction with learning peers. However, the context in which the social interaction takes place may be surrounded by certain social issues that affect language learning. This situation was specifically evident in the analyzed context of the present study; students live in a social critical setting, since data collection tools showed that several social issues were happening there, which directly affects their learning.

In order to make collected data of the present study valid and reliable, three types of triangulation methods have been carried out during the stated research process.

Given the definition of triangulation as the use of multiple methods or data sources with aims to comprehend and understand phenomena deeper (Patton, as cited in Cope, Bryant-Lukosius, Alba, Blythe, & Neville, 2014, p. 1), data, investigator, and

theory triangulations were applied as strategy to “test validity and reliability through the convergence of information from different sources” (Cope et al., 2014, p. 1).

Firstly, data triangulation refers to the collection of data using “multiple sources” so that the gathered information does not come from a unique data collection tool or source, increasing the validation and gaining multiple perspectives of data (Hastings, 2012, p. 3). In regards to the present research, it is claimed that data triangulation lays on this research since it was obtained from written semi-structured interviews, participant observations and journals.

Second, “investigator triangulation involves several evaluators to engage in observations or analyze participant responses. Using multiple investigators allows for the auditing of data consistency and reduces the potential bias” (Hastings, 2012, p. 3). In this sense, this type of triangulation might offer “both confirmation of findings and different perspectives, adding breadth to the phenomenon of interest”. Since this study was taken apart by four investigators who brought their ideas, conceptions, analysis, rigor, hearts and so many other facts to the research, it is definitely permeated by this type of triangulation.

Finally, theory triangulation regards implementing different theories to analyze and interpret data, as well as giving theoretical basis while conducting the research process (Hastings, 2012, p. 3). A variety of theoretical perspectives or already stated hypotheses might “assist the researchers in supporting or refuting findings” (Cope et al., 2014, p. 545). Taking in mind the multidisciplinary theoretical framework and literature review this study has implemented to give birth and basis to the already mentioned research path, theory triangulation is evident throughout this study.

Results

This research was intended to relate the breach that has been found between students’ social issues and their level of reading motivation in English, as it is not only intended to increase the levels of reading motivation in English by linking it to students’ social issues but also to raise awareness among the academic community and specially, among fifth grade students selected as the participants for this study, about being critical towards their context. Regarding the research question, it was actually evinced the relation between students’ social issues and their level of reading motivation, since the stories they were exposed to, demonstrated that their levels of motivation were indeed enhanced and their critical perception in regards to their context was also raised.

Some participants claimed that one of the stories they read “tenía partes charras” (S1⁸, Intervention, R4⁹), “las imágenes me gustaron” (S1, Intervention, R2), and “que habla sobre la casa de mi tía” (S2, Intervention, R1). Raising levels of awareness were also noticed in answers, such as “la comunicación es importante” (S1, Intervention, R3), and “que pelear nos da problemas” (S2, Intervention, R4).

Regarding the first category, reading motivation, it was found that a large number of students are motivated when they read genres such as action, terror, comedy, and adventure in everyday life as well as comics and tales. On the other hand, it was found within the initial category other relevant data that emerged during the interview and occurred in selecting the genre that they would like to read the most in the English class. That is why the following genres were found as evidence: terror, which was the first one mentioned the most, followed by action, comedy, and science fiction (S5, Interviews, R4), (S11, Interviews, R4). In this category “reading motivation”, by means of the intervention, students expressed their interest toward the stories, especially importance was evident respecting the images they had, since they helped to increase the level of motivation in reading. Participants said that they enjoyed the stories because of “dibujos y el tema” (S3, Intervention, R2) and “imágenes” (S1, Intervention, R4). Besides, the connection they developed in some sections of the stories was considered, because they found them “charras” (S1, Intervention, R1).

As one of the intentions of the study was to link reading motivation to social issues, which, in turn, are part of students’ social context, this one was determined as another initial category mentioned from the beginning of the research process. Essentially, several recurring social problems were identified by means of the data collection tools implementation. In the case of the semi-structured interviews, only one participant claimed that “vivo en un condominio, eso no me aplica” (S14, Journal, R1). The rest of the participants indeed recognized at least one of them. In an ascending order, the most common social problems were: first, criminal gangs, second, gun control, third, violence and fourth, murders (S22, Interview, R3). These social problems were implicitly included in the plots of the stories the participants read. Thus, it was evidenced that students were able to identify them during the intervention and their critical perception towards their social context was raised in terms of what they learned from the situations presented in the stories. Besides, they associated those situations with their real contexts in such a way that they expressed what they thought about the social issues they had previously identified while reading. Mainly, the participants

8 S stands for Student

9 R stands for Researcher

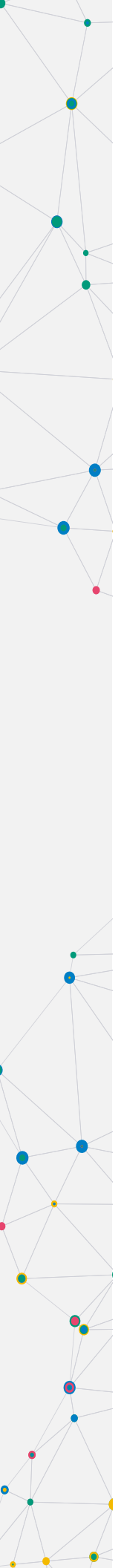
expressed their impressions regarding the negative consequences that can derive from the aforementioned social issues, such as: “Que pelear nos da problemas” (S2, Intervention, R3) and “que no me gusta la violencia, es malo pelear” (S3, Intervention, R1).

Finally, when it comes to literacy as the third initial category, it was possible to find certain reiterative aspects that evidenced a “visible development” and “lacking” of English literacy at the same time, during the English class. These visible development aspects were basically displayed on classes focused on the structural part of the language to develop literacy. In other words, students claimed their classes were mainly focused on learning to count numbers, to learn songs and grammatical aspects of the language; aspects that are supposed to develop English literacy. The information is supported on the second question of the interview questionnaire that asked about what they read during the English class, but instead of giving them a set of options to select from, this particular question was open. On the contrary, the lacking of literacy appropriation was also evident when students were exposed to the stories specifically designed for them, the stories had an implicit relation between students’ social issues and their respective likes found through the data collection tools, that is to say, students were having constraints when reading the stories, since their reading level was not adequate to the stories’. Such information might be perceivable after the stories’ intervention in comments such as: “No fue fácil de leer” (S1, Intervention, R4), “entendí más o menos, algunas palabras no las entendí” (S2, Intervention, R1) and “como no sé inglés, y mi mamá tampoco, fue un poco difícil” (S3, Intervention, R2).

These given results by means of the data collection tools and the intervention, as previously presented, were pertinent and helpful when trying to answer the research question set at the beginning of the project. This gave an important insight regarding the initial categories. Firstly, students’ personal likes and what they found interesting when reading a text were aspects identified within reading motivation. Afterwards, students thought of certain social issues that surround their immediate context, which later was identified in the stories they read. Last, but not least, students read about many subjects that intend to develop literacy and, on the contrary, they do not have the enough literacy skills they are supposed to have at that level.

Discussion

It is firstly deduced that there was a lack of connection between students’ social issues and the intended literacy skills the English teacher was trying to enhance. This was evident in the answers of the semi-structured interviews applied and the intervention



that was implemented in the fifth-grade students from the Bello public school, as they claimed they are supposed to read what is assigned by their English teacher during class. In this sense, the input students receive from their daily English classes (that intends to promote literacy) has no relation at all with their reading likes they expressed on the semi-structured interviews, which confirmed the initial deduction of the study before data collection tools were applied. Also, the already mentioned input students often received, seemed not to promote literacy appropriation in them, since they were not fully capable of reading the stories that they were exposed to because of lacking proficiency and literacy skills.

Regarding theory triangulation, there is a strong theoretical basis to support one the core points of the study, that is, motivation. It was previously mentioned how motivation happens when students' learning is attached to their contexts and, in this particular case, the participants could identify their contexts' social issues present in the stories to be read. Thus, if motivation when learning in a foreign language is present, it is possible to achieve success in it. This implies to recognize the importance of considering students' social context in learning and specifically, in language learning through reading.

The context in which social interaction prevails is destined towards intercultural communication in the classroom based on the sociocultural approach, that is, students see other horizons without forgetting their own reality (Kinginger, Thorne, 2012, as cited in Gholami et al., 2012, p. 73). For example, in the results section, it was confirmed that the students were able to identify social problems within their community and school. As well as the critical perception of their social context increased in terms of what they learned from the relevant drawbacks that were illustrated in the short stories. These facts occurred during the stories' intervention. Besides, some statements that confirmed these claims were: "La comunicación es importante" (S1, Intervention, R4) and "que no me gusta la violencia, es malo pelear" (S3, Intervention, R2).

Students tend to engage in classroom activities when they find them useful and easy to follow through (Parhiala et al, 2018, p. 196) the previous statement has taken place when implementing the stories intervention, students' English proficiency level was not in equilibrium with the series of stories designed for an English level they were supposed to be in. As consequence, perceptions of difficulty or complexity when reading the stories were assumed by students because they were not "easy to follow through", comments such: "No fue fácil de leer" (S1, Intervention, R1) and "algunas palabras no las entendí" (S2, Intervention, R2) demonstrated that. Attitudes towards reading surely will vary because of several factors such as: "the development of its

own culture and idiosyncratic features (e.g., orthography, discourse structure)”, certain socioeconomically-defined backgrounds, availability of resources for enhancing literacy and absence of parent’s literacy play a relevant role to be considered when implementing literacy procedures in the classroom as well as assuming students’ current proficiency level (Ridgway, Literacy and foreign language reading, 2003, p. 126). Statements such: “Como no sé inglés, y mi mamá tampoco, fue un poco difícil” (S3, Intervention, R3) supported these claims.

Even though the first data collection tools were applied in a face-to-face setting, the stories intervention was carried out in a virtual type due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that made schools close their physical facilities. Besides, it was difficult to maintain a stable communication channel with students due to their technological devices and internet absence which provoked setbacks when communicating with them. Another issue that caused conflict when implementing the present study, was the accessibility to the school facility, since it was a risky setting to approach due to the social issues that were/are happening around the Bello public school.

It was concluded that students were not fully capable of using proper literacy skills since they did not reach the literacy skills, they needed for understanding and comprehending the stories’ intervention even though they were specifically designed based on their proficiency level in the language. So, this implies that there is no relation amid what students are taught and what they are currently supposed to know. Else ways, motivation needs to be considered as an indispensable matter to increase the level of reading when this is included as part of the English class, but literacy needs to be developed before in a way that students feel relate and according to their level, that is to say, to contextualize contents and not to overlook them. In this sense, the more proficient students are and the more contextualized the contents are, the higher levels of motivation when reading. Going hand in hand with the previous point, during the intervention it was seen that reading went better by using images to interpret the textual part. In this sense, students feel more motivated to read when they come across texts that include images, as they can interpret and associate what they read with illustrations even if they are not proficient in a foreign language. This could be a good way to develop vocabulary and literacy instead of teaching isolated subjects as it was evinced during the semi-structured interviews. This explains why students had difficulties understanding the text of the stories, so they found support by means of the illustrations that were included along the stories.

Furthermore, there is a lack of connection between students’ interests and what is addressed in the English class. Literacy processes and learning in general could

be enhanced if a student-centered perspective is taken by the teacher, in order to make the reading and class experiences more authentic and relatable. The students' response to the intervention proposed is stating that English literacy can actually be approached taking in mind students' interests and likes, as well as putting implicitly content based on their realities to be critical about it. These strategies could be an alternative to the old fashion abstract methodology of teaching literacy in the English class. These results suggest English teachers that the current-old-fashion perspectives of teaching literacy are not quite working the way they are supposed to. In this sense, this requires that English classes should be shifting their already existing line of sight, because clearly, they are not working. This demands more from teachers, it requires that classes are planned and designed according to the students' context, interests and likes, and learning styles.

By considering the nature of this project, it can be said that its replication could be extended to schools located in neighborhoods with similar contexts to the one in which the research was carried in order to create social changes and impact. However, this implies the project is limited at a certain extent when it comes to schools that do not precisely have social issues surrounding it. In this case, the most suitable path to be stated is to implement reading in a foreign language by focusing on the same scope, that is, social issues to raise motivation even if students are not immersed in them. The final purpose in such a case would be similar, as students would be empowered to be critical in regard to their context. Given the scope of the research presented, the number of findings or results obtained from it might be limited per se, since the target to be analyzed was only one grade.

This study could bring basis to future upcoming research projects with possible relatable aims to this one, that is to say: literacy and motivation in a foreign language focused, as well as the one which are pretending to take in mind social features that are implicit not only in language learning, but in all teaching-learning processes in general. Besides, as it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, other grades could be considered to obtain possible new information and findings regarding motivation and reading processes at different ages.

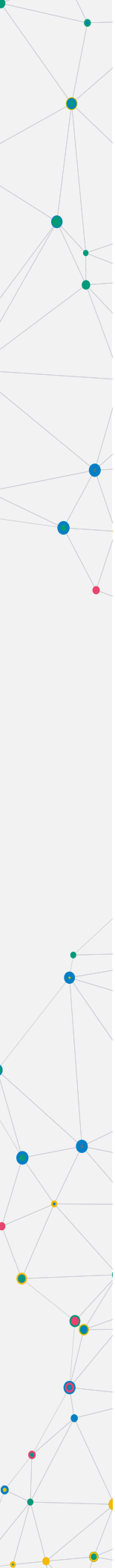

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Entendiendo el idioma inglés a través de un taller de escritura creativa: Adjetivos y Adverbios: partes esenciales del discurso para aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera

Understanding the English language through a creative writing workshop: Adjectives and Adverbs essentials for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners

Comprendre la langue anglaise à travers un atelier d'écriture créative : Adjectifs et Adverbes : parties essentielles du discours pour les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère

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Abstract

This report on a pedagogical experience aims to summarize the experience of a group freshmen from a private college enrolled in an elementary course of English as a foreign language -EFL and the development of the literacy competence through language understanding in the use of crucial grammatical categories as key parts in the construction of narrative tools and grammatical structures to approach the topic from a creative writing workshop. To address the pedagogical part a writing workshop was used with the principles of autonomy through the virtual classroom of the course, and at the level of the research record and follow-up, an adaptation of social cartography

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was developed to reflect on the process of creation of the narrative and its possible challenges when using the foreign language. Among the results obtained was a sample of 21 creative texts that were written in spaces of autonomous workshops.

Key words: Collective knowledge, lexical categories, literary competence, Creative writing.

Este reporte de resultados de una intervención pedagógica pretende resumir la experiencia de un grupo de estudiantes de primer año de pregrado inscritos en un curso básico de inglés como lengua extranjera EFL y la construcción de la competencia literaria en la comprensión del lenguaje en el uso de categorías gramaticales fundamentales en la construcción de textos narrativos y las estructuras gramaticales necesarias para abordar el tema de un taller de escritura creativa. Para seguir la ruta pedagógica se utilizó un taller de escritura con los principios de autonomía a través del aula virtual del curso, y a nivel del registro de investigación y seguimiento, se desarrolló una adaptación de la cartografía social para reflexionar sobre el proceso de creación de la narrativa y sus posibles desafíos al usar la lengua extranjera. Entre los resultados obtenidos se encuentra una muestra de 21 textos creativos escritos en espacios de talleres autónomos.

Palabras clave: Categorías lexicales, Conocimiento colectivo, Competencia literaria, Escritura creativa.

Introduction

This article reports the results of a pedagogical intervention workshop in a group of university students in a course of English learners as a foreign language at level A2, according to the guidelines of the MCER. Understanding the English language: Parts of the Speech essentials for EFL learners is a classroom initiative that seeks to identify comprehension skills and textual production, the level of competence associated with the use of lexical categories and the level of critical thinking in the production of texts in English as a foreign language. As a pedagogical strategy, the expansion of the narrative universe of Rafael Pombo's work has been incorporated and as a methodological strategy for the collection of information associated with the experience, have adapted exercises carried out in studies involving social mapping. Most of the qualitative results pointed out the majority of students who participated in this intervention acquired

more expertise using lexical and syntax categories as part of learners skills, as well as the proper adjectives and adverbs placement while writing skills training occurs.

The writing process cornerstones: from L1 to L2

To begin with, we considered in parallel the concepts and some theoretical concerns which bear the class experience while teaching students some basis on how to start writing a text as a means of using a foreign language to express their own ideas. Producing written texts might not be an easy task, much less if this production is carried out in a language that is not the native one. This is mainly because at the time of writing in a foreign language production is not only focused on the development of communicative skills and competence but is also extended to the field of linguistic interference¹² and the knowledge of the essential parts of the speech known also as the grammatical categories. Bell (1995) raises the existence of diverse beliefs, expressed by various authors, that emphasize the relevance of the literacy degree in mother tongue or L1 for the learning of the foreign language L2.

Thus, proposals for learning interventions that enhance the development of skills in a foreign language should not only promote meaningful learning yet the development of competence in a foreign language. Bernal (1996), quoting Hymes (1961), defines the development of communicative competence in a foreign language, as a linguistic process of continuous and lifelong learning and improvement. This improvement is reflected in the creative level of language. In addition, literary competence is based on the efficient performance of comprehension skills applied to production skills. In that sense, according to Mora (2018 quoting Quet, 2009) the literary competence can be defined as the acquisition of an ability that implies the competence of comprehensive reading and writing which combines varied linguistic knowledge and skills in spelling, vocabulary, syntax, and composition of texts, among others. In this way, the linguistic

12 Linguistic interferences are manifested at all levels and all levels of the languages in contact: in the domain of vocabulary they produce, in addition to extensions of meaning and use, the simple loan of a sign (cf. a film, a gag, a star, a western), borrowed translations (decals), that is, the union of two existing signs according to the foreign model (e. g. al. Wochenende, esp. weekend, fry fin de simazine, according to the week-end model. Abraham (1981: 225)

skills required for written composition demand knowledge of the grammatical categories that make up the discourse.

Linguistic interference in the field of second language acquisition

The learning process of a foreign language implies several cognitive adjustments especially when learners use a mother linguistic system or code which differs from the foreign one. According to Flor Ada (1985:76):

The mixing of the code made by the true bilingual speaker when communicating [in the same foreign language] with another bilingual speaker is a creative phenomenon that does not necessarily imply limitation in the use of each language, but the possibility of mixing them for affective, expressive or even critical reasons. It is something very different from resorting to borrowing for lack of knowledge of the word in the language spoken (...) (1985:76).

Therefore, the linguistic interference can be represented not only when using the target language orally but also when it becomes to express ideas in a written production task.

As presented by Meriö (1978:27): “Interference may be by the grammatical system of the primary language on that of the secondary language in violation of the latter’s normative grammar, as well as to the errors made by learners of the secondary language within its grammatical system attributable either to confusion within or incomplete mastery of it”. Following this further, the learners of a foreign language tend to replicate the grammatical system of the mother tongue into the foreign one, resulting in a lack of coherence or confusion when appropriating the rules of the target language. This lack of coherence has been identified as an error which we like to address as lack of knowledge and interiorization of the proper rules of the grammatical system of the foreign language and the interference produced by the dependence on the mother tongue. Writing in a foreign language represents a cognitive challenge and the development of several skills that learners must tackle in a progressive process guided by fully committed teachers, who are conscious not only of the importance of being able to communicate accurately both in oral and written texts.

Consequently, we consider it relevant to promote writing activities where the use of grammatical structures and lexicon according to the level could promote better proficiency and awareness of the foreign language structure. Once that a language user gains much more familiarization with these phenomena, the user can be more aware of all elements surrounding the structures of the foreign language for further usage, analysis and careful choice when writing.

Parts of the speech in English Grammar

With regard to the causes of the impact of the language interference when communicating in a foreign language and the need to improve the written skills among the learners of EFL, for the purpose of this study, we have included some lexical categories, which can be followed by a complement of notional meaning and be preceded by another grammatical element allowing to describe, analyze, specify or grammatically modify its meaning. As suggested by the generative grammar principles, this study advocates for the lexical categories at a first instance, but not the functional categories. (Chomsky, 1969)

According to Hartmann (1997) in studies of interlingual contrasts L1's linguistic interference in L2 learning is based on the identification and understanding of similarities and differences in the lexical component of the mother tongue and foreign language, which is the learning object. In such a manner, the five parallel lexical categories in Spanish and English that structure the discourse are known as verb, noun, adjective, preposition and adverb; for the purpose of the current research the two categories that mostly interested the project were the use of adjectives and adverbs, since those ones have proven to be challenging among the learners of L2 not only to fully understand its meaning within the context of the sentence as well as to properly use in academic production when communicating.

According to Greenbaum & Nelson, (2002) both adjectives and adverbs have various functions when forming sentences; these parts of the speech identify and modify the communicative intention, likewise attribute or denote qualities to nouns. For example, descriptive adjectives are used to attribute specific characteristics to nouns and pronouns. The following example was included in the workshop as a guideline to help the students to tackle the task of written production. In the sentence *Pearl has a*

strong personality descriptive adjective are used to describe nouns and pronouns, the highlighted words below are adjectives describing the noun personality.

Table No.1 Example of adjectives use

SAMPLE SENTENCE	Pearl	has	a	strong	unpredictable	personality
PART OF THE SPEECH	Subject	verb	article	adjective	adjective	Noun

Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, the Real Academia de la Lengua Española - RAE explains: “adjectives are a class of words whose elements modify a noun or are preched from it, and denote qualities, properties and relationships of diverse nature”. Some examples of adjectives are tall, small or huge, etc. As for adverbs, the RAE defines adverbs as the “class of words whose elements are invariable and tonics, and generally endowed with lexical meaning and modify the meaning of several categories, mainly a verb, an adjective, a sentence or a word of the same kind”. We shall remark that for a learner, the production of texts requires the acquisition, continuous expansion and improvement of the linguistic corpus that comprehends the language repertory of a learner.

As for the use of the adverbs, according to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary:

An adverb: is a word belonging to one of the major form classes in any of numerous languages, typically serving as a **modifier of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a preposition, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence**, expressing some relation of manner or quality, place, time, degree, number, cause, opposition, affirmation, or denial, and in English also serving to connect and to express comment on clause content. Merriam-Webster.com. 2011. <https://www.merriam-webster.com> (28 June 2020).

Consequently, in the workshop it has been remarked in a rather simplistic instruction that adverbs describe in what way someone does something of quantity or degree, of affirmation or doubt; and finally of negation. The following sentence exemplifies the instruction given in the workshop to classify each one of the words into an appropriate part of the speech considering those who were target language within the workshop instructions and practice.

Table No. 2. Workshop sample practice exercise

He	Was	strongly
These two men	Came	gradually
Subject	Verb	adverb

Source: Own elaboration

Literary competency

According to Quet (2009), literary competence can be defined as “the acquisition of a ‘knowing how to read’ or a ‘knowing how to write’ far exceeds the limits of a single subject and associates varied linguistic knowledge and skills in spelling, vocabulary, syntax, and text composition, among others”. Following this further, the development of the literary competence requires a reflexive attitude on the aims of the text and the message of the author, as well as of literary capacities for its interpretation. According to the aims and descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), the mastery of a foreign language encompasses not only the development of linguistic communication skills, in terms of lexis, grammar and phonology among other things, but also the development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills and the intercultural cultural component that the use of literature in the classroom offers, in other words the development of a the literary competency necessary to communicate in a L2. These skills and knowledge are reflected in the mastery of social skills and the ability to learn from and be enriched by environments. However, these skills are grouped into basic, intermediate and advanced levels, in which the language user must account for reading comprehension from the basic levels of vocabulary acquisition for production and interaction with simple and coherent sentences to the advanced level in which a thorough reading of all types of texts and forms of written language is done.

According to Mora (2018), in the case of the development of communication skills, the National Reading and Writing Plan of Colombia (PNLE) promotes the improvement of reading and writing levels, that is, the reading behavior, reading comprehension, and textual production of students in preschool, basic, and secondary education, through the strengthening of the school as a fundamental space for the formation of readers and writers and of the role of families in these processes. At this point, it is necessary

to think about how to teach the appreciation of literature, and therefore, how to use it in the classroom as part of the process of learning and teaching foreign languages.

Bearing this in mind, the pedagogical intervention *Understanding the English language: Parts of the Speech essentials for EFL learners* aimed at English students of general purposes as a foreign language of the micro curriculum of diverse programs seeks to identify their understanding skills and place them into textual production. In fact, it diagnoses their competence in the use of the two lexical categories proposed in the workshop and the critical thinking in the production of a writing in English, as an extension of the narrative discourse of Rafael Pombo's work. Likewise, it is necessary to remember that the students of A1 level (CEFR, 2001) communicate with a limited corpus in the foreign language according to the Reference Level Descriptors of each level, reflected in the syllabus of the subjects, therefore the analysis of the use of adjectives and adverbs in textual production addresses only the fulfillment of location of these in the sentence structure.

Furthermore, the development of comprehension skills and the production of texts written in L2 requires the foreign language learner in addition to the extension of the lexical corpus, understanding and internalizing the functions of lexical categories within the discourse and the relationships they have concerning the substantive they modify. Of such production of second-language texts reflects the development of several competences among them, communicative linguistic competence in the mother tongue, in language foreign and literary competency. To summarize, Cummins (1981, 2000) considers that the academic skills of the first language can be transferred to the foreign language, given that there is a "Common Underlying Proficiency". Implicit Common Sufficiency between native and foreign languages. From what Cummins proposes that the development of sufficiency in the mother language, especially in academic aspects, helps to build the second language.

Method

In this pedagogical experience, an intervention workshop activity was designed and carried out throughout one academic semester. The purpose of the intervention was to assess the writing skills based on reading comprehension of tales for children and the input about the use of adjectives and adverbs in the English language in the pursuit of any improvement of the English language comprehension and use by students.

Participants

A group of 21 undergraduate students from a Colombian University who belonged to a course of English as a Foreign Language EFL, between the ages of 17 and 20 years old participated in this project. All of them were native Spanish speakers, classified in the level A2 of English, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Although they were exposed to English as young learners while enrolled in high school, the average hours per week studying English EFL were only three, therefore few of them achieved the A2 level. The students were in second year majoring different academic programs, such as Social communication, Engineering and Graphic design.

Procedure within the classroom instruction:

From a total of 25 students, 21 stories were chosen as a sample of the written text accomplishing the criteria of linguistic assessment and development of autonomous tasks assigned during the school break. The criteria highlighted the originality using the language, in terms of placing the adjectives and adverbs according to the structure of the sentence in English and the authorship. Which emphasized that neither translators nor a third-party help was allowed and indeed disqualified the narrative texts brought to the sessions. Once these two concepts were confirmed, the texts were selected for assessment, and the students participated in a self and coevolution process according to the checklists previously designed. Reviewing the procedures and assessment of the papers took place during the regular English class emphasizing on communicative skills in which the teacher should devote much more time in their students' oral performance than usual.

However, prior to a spring break during a five-month academic term, the workshop was designed in order to initiate student's autonomous work on the topic for extra writing tips. 'Understanding the languages, Parts of speech' was the first workshop which consisted of a set of instructions and material to get students more familiarized with the grammar and syntax principles. The workshop had the primary objective of reviewing previous knowledge regarding the use of adjectives and adverbs as the most challenging parts of the speech to use among the EFL students. The deliverable was to fill out autonomously and provide a list of sample words using the competencies of classification, analysis, and exemplification. To create a parallel of the use of adjectives and adverbs the students could read the original versions in Spanish of the tales of Rafael Pombo's tales for children and to select the one they might adapt into a new version motivating their creativity. A week later a student was given instructions on how to use mother tongue reflected in children's popular fairy tales to change their

ending and to diversify the stories which might come up with an adaptation of the original story while keeping the original plot and characters.

Recruitment

The researchers invited 25 students from two different groups in the same level of English in class schedule. All of them accepted and signed the informed consent form to participate in the pedagogical experience, according to the University's policy established by the ethical committee, for assessing, analyzing and possibly publishing the final manuscripts of the students. Appealing to the honesty and comment of the students, once these two main requirements were confirmed, the texts were selected to assess several categories including concept and creativity, title, three paragraphs, conclusion, cohesion and coherence. Lastly the 25 students, including the 4 ones whose work was not accepted volunteered to evaluate themselves the drafts of the stories.

Pedagogical Intervention

The classroom activities had a sequence of alternate tasks done through a Language Management System LMS in which activities from the workshop were developed in order to support and enhance the writing process. As mentioned by Zapata, (2016), pedagogical scenarios which can coincide with the use of virtual tools or support by ICT use, provide support to training and a follow-up by students when feedback occurs. In this way, workshops focused on the presentation of materials as 'supplies' for students to gain more familiarization to the topics. As this familiarization existed, parts of the speech could also be an incentive to appear in their narrative elements to create their own texts.

Both workshops were provided in 2 weeks' time as assignments for an extra task activity. Materials were displayed in the virtual course where all students and the teacher had access to, using academic LMS. Later, those 21 students attended a plenary session to share their experience on writing skills and the plenary session included the cartography adaptation. After this time elapsed, all students accomplished the time and sequences on the LMS and evidence on their tasks and the final narrative texts were collected both digitally by deliverable tasks submissions and a physical manuscript gathered after break end.

Instrument

The students' manuscripts were assessed using assessment checklists considering two main categories in the writing skills developed during these workshops took place (Alderson, J. C., Clapham, C., Wall, D., 1995). The first category was the structure for the stories: Concept – Creativity, Title of the story, First paragraph, Second paragraph, Conclusion, Cohesion and Coherence. The second category was grouped with lexical aspects like Vocabulary and Language use, Punctuation, Capitalization, Grammar Structure (subject - verb agreement), Grammar structure in terms of tenses, Placement of adjectives, Placement of adverbs and Connecting words. Within the checklists, each element in the 21 manuscripts were assessed and given a check mark in a set two columns marked as “has” or “doesn't have” conferring to the compliance of the elements found in each manuscript. The instrument was administered, and the quantitative data were collected following two checklists categories of assessment.

Findings

Quantitative findings

After applying a checklist matrix in which we grouped two categories for creative writing, the first category was intended to detect a general written scheme using concept, creativity, cohesion, coherence and using paragraphs. The second category was intended to detect all lexical use and parts of the speech as such. According to the findings we concluded that those aspects regarding the first category complied quite well in structure of a narrative text, being most of the texts include paragraphing, (95.2% -85.7%) and creativity by using a personal proposal on aspects like the titles being used by the participants (85.7%).

Some aspects such as cohesion and conclusion, to follow up a story from the start till the end, quite found a really hard time by the participants. Additionally, when analyzing our second category in which we grouped all parts of the speech, we could see that the use of adjective and adverb structures is found to be the weakest element. By looking at table No. 2, we can evidence that just 23.8% from the text were using

a proper adjective structure, only 57.1% adverb structure, just 47.6% used a proper grammar tense; and 19% used basic connectors.

Table No.3 Macro Category 1: Narrative Structures

MACRO CATEGORY 1: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE				
	Does Exist *	Does not exist *	Total-Does exist	Total-Does not exist
Concept and creativity	18	3	85.7%	14.3%
Title	20	1	95.2%	4.8%
First paragraph	20	1	95.2%	4.8%
Second paragraph	18	3	85.7%	14.3%
Conclusion	16	5	76.2%	23.8%
Cohesion	12	9	57.1%	42.9%
Coherence	11	10	52.4%	47.6%
*Note: 21 participants in total				

Source: Own elaboration

Table No. 4: Macro Category 2: Lexical and Language Use

MACRO CATEGORY 2: LEXICAL AND LANGUAGE USE				
	Does Exist *	Does not exist *	Total- Does exist	Total-Does not exist
Vocabulary and use of language	20	1	95.2%	4.8%
Punctuation	14	7	66.7%	33.3%
Use of capitalization	15	6	71.4%	28.6%
Subject and verb	18	3	85.7%	14.3%
Proper grammar tense	10	11	47.6%	52.4%
Proper adverb placement	14	7	57.1%	42.9%
Proper adjective placement	5	16	23.8%	76.2%
Basic connectors	4	17	19.0%	81.0%
*Note: 21 participants in total				

Source: Own elaboration

Qualitative findings

Looking for a wider spectrum of the pedagogical experience, the findings indicate that most students clearly appropriate the two categories proposed in terms of identifying the use of paragraphs, spelling and general punctuation in the category 1. Besides, most texts accomplished having a subject and verb agreement mostly present in the category 2, yet incorrect grammar structures were present. There is a much richer presence of the general textual structure in most of the stories, and grammar elements such as the use of subject and verb agreement. Nevertheless, a proper grammar tense choice and adjective structures seem to be still a matter of struggle by most students who face writing as a practice to express themselves in a foreign language.

Now, considering what this actually meant for us at lights to a pedagogical experience, we basically wanted to account for using creative writing as part of a pedagogical instrument in which by providing opportunities to focus on form in a meaningful manner, and opportunities to investigate and use more difficult vocabulary and more impactful forms of expression, creative writing tasks can contribute to central challenges in language learning.

Social cartography exercise:

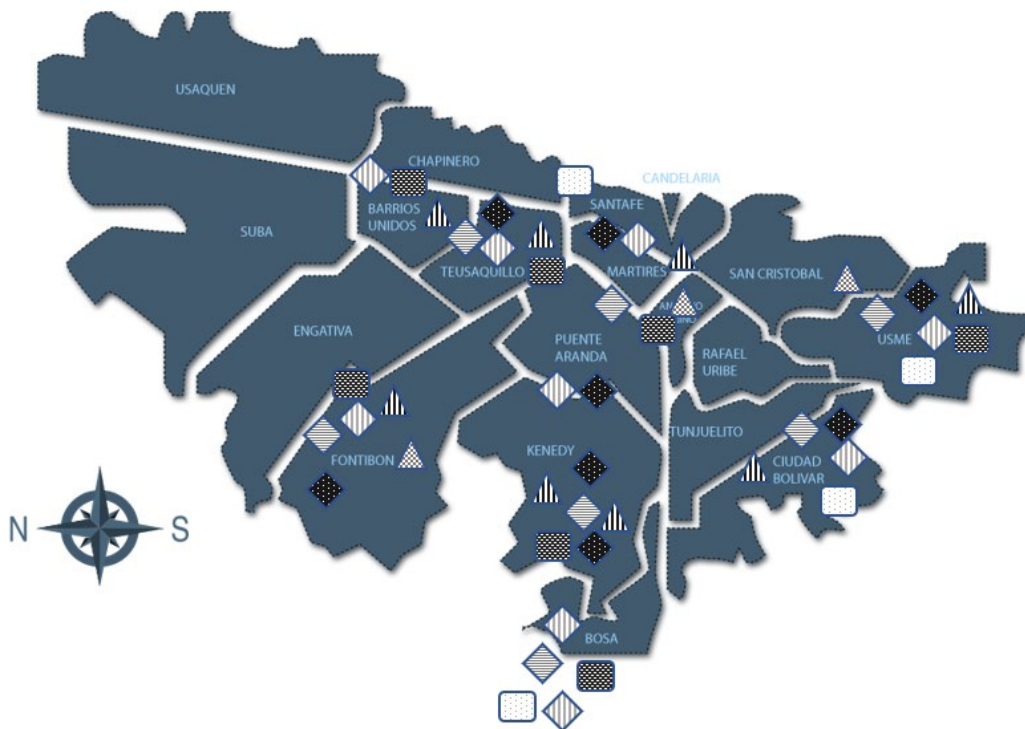
Social Cartography is used as a means of representations and territory belonging discourses as mentioned by Risler, J., & Ares, P. (2013), and it is named as a method of collective, participative and horizontal map build (Diez, J. & Escudero, B. 2012, p. 14). In this study related to linguistic and communicative competences, it has been adapted as a means of critical use from participants to provide a collective creation; and after a workshop reflective gathering in which much more participatory space for the students provided much more involvement in an individual task to provide more personal insights in which later they could become potential social and group knowledge.

In the sense it can provide the participant with a construction of text that is never isolated of his or her own doing. Keeping this in mind, once texts were collected and assessed, we gathered the class participants to provide us with some insights with two instruments related to a perspective on the writing process. Those were a map and a timeline. The purpose of applying an adapted session using social cartography was to get participants involved in a conscious and reflective exercise on how and when the

writing happened, and how long it took to draft ideas until achieving a complete or at least satisfactory story.

The plenary session took place one week after the texts were handed in. The session consisted of a two-hour session in the same class schedule in which we elicited the participants to recall some aspects from the text they created by looking at a map of the city, huge size, in which the participants could locate some icons related to the writing production process stages. (Figure No. 1). Then, we indicated the participants to pass in front of the map and locate small icons in the places in which certain stages of this writing production (planning- textualization - revision) took place during the time the task was assigned. This session permitted recognition of places in the city illustrated in the map. These places were associated with a scenario where participants spent the week off, or places where they worked, or just stayed home. Most of the participants used the city map however, some stages of the text production were mentioned outside the map such as Santander, Cali, Girardot, and Manizales, as being places outside Bogota where the participants did take some vacation days and mentioned during the stages of planning only.

Figure No. 1. Writing production process and stages.



Source: own elaboration, adapted from: Administración distrital. [map] <https://bogota.gov.co>









STAGES ON WRITTEN PRODUCTION	ICON
PLANNING	
Analyzing the situation	
Brainstorming	
Writing the text (draft)	
TEXTUALIZATION	
Referencing	
Transcribing	
Time lining	
REVISION	
Evaluating	
Correcting a final draft	

Figure No. 1- Legend - Writing production process and stages. Source: own elaboration.

As mentioned by Risler, J. & Ares, P., (2014), mapping, is a practice in which devices are used to create reflection as a social construction, we characterized this mapping session as a means of generating social debate among participants and this was the dynamic we obtained. While asking participants to mention the exact scenarios in which the brainstorming took place, participants referred to places such as the bakery, the living room, the shower, and their beds, being the most particular places, they mentioned from the task.

Timeline:

Another representation task done in the plenary session was a timeline. Once the session ended with the location of places on the map, participants were asked to look at a timeline on the board and locate each task during the whole week given to devote to the writing task. They were given a blank post-in paper to locate and were asked to write down in their own language (mother tongue) each task they had to complete in order to describe all tasks associated with the narrative construction. From these executed tasks identification, each participant posted on the timeline each paper using the exact day so they could provide a report from the workshop 2 was assigned, as being Thursday April 11, until deadline, which was Thursday May 2.

The table 5 summarizes all tasks done by each one of the participants. In the first column it reads a list of ten items which represents the following tasks done and provided by the students during the workshops taught. From Monday 15 until Monday 29 of April: 1) assignment of workshop 1, 2) assignment of workshop 2, 3) get to know the written task, 4) search of the story in English, 5) choose my story, 6) ideas for the

text, 7) evaluate the characters, 8) start drafting, 9) draft revision, and finally 10) final draft and platform submission (or in class hand-in).

The timeline completion was given in a special order: being S1-S3-S5 those participants whose texts mostly ranked all items in the previous checklist analysis successfully, and S2-S4-S6, being those texts, which did not accomplish a checklist analysis successfully.

Table No. 5: Timeline. Tasks sequence of the writing process

TIMELINE: DAY BY DAY															
TASKS	M 15	T 16	W 17	TH 18	F 19	SA 20	SU 21	M 22	T 23	W 24	TH 25	F 26	SA 27	SU 28	M 29
1		S4	S3 S9									S7			
2		S4	S3									S7			
3	S10	S3 S4	S3 S9	S1								S7			
4	S10		S5										S6		S2
5	S5 S10	S4		S1	S9	S3 S8							S7		
6	S10				S1 S4 S9		S8						S7	S6	S2
7			S5		S9									S6	
8	S10				S1 S4	S3 S5							S7	S6	S2
9						S1 S3 S9									S2 S6 S7
10	S10					S1 S9	S4								S2 S6 S7

Source:own elaboration

Analysis of the workshop sessions after using social cartography.

The purpose of setting a plenary session for using social cartography was mainly designed to be provided with elements in which written production can only show some mechanics of the language, rather than how the stages of a creative writing takes place as a knowledge construction. We can observe that in terms of the number of tasks that take participants to build up a piece of written text, all of them can show some written text stages spread during a certain time lapse. In the case of certain writing production stages, participants could account for most of their activities as being posted in the timeline once they had a short time to reflect upon all what they had done before task delivery. As mentioned by Paulston & Liebman (1994), this tool

for social mapping, served as a device to perceive some emerging elements in the way that “ social maps may help to present and decode immediate and practical answers to the perceived locations and relationships of persons, objects and perceptions in the social milieu.” (Paulston & Liebman, 1994, p. 215). Those emerging elements appeared as participants own language to organize and distribute the tasks needed to write a final text; most of the cases included ‘get to know the written task, choose my story, ideas for the text, start drafting, and draft revision’ (tasks enlisted in table No. 5); although some participants just provided a single day stage over some of these tasks, we can give account for those stages of the writing process as related in the literature.

Conclusions

The pedagogical experience Understanding the English language through a creative writing workshop: Adjectives and Adverbs essentials for EFL learners led the researchers to acknowledge the linguistic process and struggles of the EFL learners when writing a piece in the target language. In addition, it came to our attention that there is an urgent need to improve such as creative guided activities in the EFL class, to improve the skills required for written composition which demand knowledge of the grammatical categories that make up the discourse. The results of the experience might be analyzed from different perspectives which could give a broader insight of a few aspects; the learning of the essentials parts of the speech in English, the cognitive process of developing creative writing and a comparison of the writings both in English and Spanish and the mother tongue. As for the current experience, the researchers agreed to focus on analyzing the compliance when using the categories proposed in the instrument related specifically to the use of the textual elements structure and its accurate recognition within the composition.

According to our charts and tables summarized, we could perceive that most elements of textual structure in the writing creative process were containing a conscious use of paragraph division, subject and verb agreement, but little or poor use is frequent in the correct adverb, adjective placement and basic use of connectors. In terms of creativity, reflection and timeline to the task, we can evidence that 21 students do recognize most of the aspects of writing as a time distributed task done during many stages of revision and composition, while others do not take much time developing the task and go directly to final drafting without having a complete scheme to the writing process.

According to Cummins (2000), the transfer between the two languages is only given if the student has acquired proficiency in a foreign language because otherwise,

he may have a cognitive deficit and will not obtain the potential benefits of becoming bilingual, therefore proficiency in the mother tongue is not enough and not necessarily ensures development in the metacognitive processes in the second language acquisition and accurate proficiency.

It can be seen that the activities related to the construction of narrative texts that most prevail are those of the selection of information within the elaboration of the text itself; the generation of ideas to finally be reflected in the text in a more direct way, without the revision of the text.

Most of the pedagogical activities or tasks that prevail less in the exercise of narrative construction are those of evaluating the characters or transcribing or revising the draft to finally fulfill the final narrative elaboration.

Another significant insight we could perceive in this practice was to be involved in different means of data collection in which social cartography or mapping was used as a means and an instrument of providing an experience with one big step through knowledge management and collective knowledge exchange, Risler, J., & Ares, P. (2013) so that participants' voices were able to put across 'behind the scenes' elements to that personal and private aspect of learning a foreign language which is writing.

Limitations of the study and directions for future research

The limitations to the pedagogical experience include the use of more dynamic methodologies which permit a deeper comprehension of the composition journey carried out by the students. The inclusion of a small plenary adapting the use of social cartography to encourage and understand how familiar places and personal routines help the students to find more elements for enhancing such aspects as creativity and imagination to their texts.

As for future research, the findings have led us, as teachers, to rethink the possible methodologies for encouraging students to improve in their mother tongue reading and writing skills to ease the acquisition and comprehension of the foreign language structure. Although comparing the grammatical structure of L1 and L2 was not the primary goal of the experience, the students were able to recognize their own flows and were motivated to improve in both languages.

In addition, by using social cartography in a plenary session where students shared their own creative process in adapting the fables of Rafael Pombo, encouraged

them to freely communicate and improve the mutual reliance while assessing their own manuscripts and the ones of their peers. (Diez Tetamanti & Escudero, 2012)

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Appendix 1 Workshop

schoolology UPGRADE COURSES GROUPS RESOURCES Professor Mora

ENGLISH: FRIDAY 8-10 AM 2019-1: Section 1
Writing Project

Step 1 & 2- Understanding the reading

1. INTRODUCTION

The parts of speech are essential categories of languages such as Spanish and English. Although, in the English language there are nine different parts: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, interjections, conjunctions, and determiners; in this chapter we will focus especially on the adjectives and adverbs, being those categories the ones with more difficulty to comprehend among the EFL learners.

ADJECTIVE

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary an adjective "is a word belonging to one of the major form classes in any of numerous languages and typically serving as a **modifier of a noun** to denote a quality of the thing named, to indicate its quantity or extent, or to specify a thing as distinct from something else.

Descriptive adjectives are used to describe nouns and pronouns. The words in blue below are adjectives describing the noun 'personality'.

Example: Pearl has a strong personality.

Pearl	has	A	strong	unpredictable	personality
Subject	verb	Article	Adjective	adjective	Noun

ADVERB

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary an adverb is a word belonging to one of the major form classes in any of numerous languages, typically serving as a modifier of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a preposition, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence, expressing some relation of manner or quality, place, time, degree, number, cause, opposition, affirmation, or denial, and in English also serving to connect and to express comment on clause content.

Adverbs describe the in what way someone does something. The words in red below are expressing a quality emphasizing on the verb.

Example: [...] He was strongly moved to look into the character and qualities of the patient, these two men, so different in age, came gradually to spend much time together.

He	was	strongly
These two men	came	gradually
Subject	verb	adverb

Step 1 & 2- Reading and classification task:

Pearl

"We have as yet **hardly** spoken of the infant; that **little** creature, whose **innocent** life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a **guilty** passion. How strange it seemed to she watched the growth, and the beauty that became every day more brilliant, and the intelligence that threw its quivering sunshine over the tiny features of this child: Her Pearl!—For so had Hester called her; not as a name expressive of her aspect, which had nothing of the calm, white, unimpassioned luster that would be indicated by the comparison. But she named the infant "Pearl," as being of great price,—purchased with all she had—her mother's only treasure! How strange, indeed! Man had marked this woman's sin by a scarlet letter, which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her, save it were sinful like herself. God, as a direct consequence of the sin which man thus punished, had given her a lovely child, whose place was on that same dishonored bosom, to connect her parent forever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven! Yet these thoughts affected Hester Prynne less with hope than apprehension. She knew that her deed had been evil; she could have no faith, therefore, that its result would be good. Day after day, she looked fearfully into the child's expanding nature; ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being."

(Book: The Scarlet Letter. Author: Nathaniel Hawthorne, chapter VI, Pg. 83)

Task 1:

Scan the reading passage for the information to complete the chart below, some descriptive adjectives are marked in blue and adverbs in red:

hardly	little	innocent	guilty
---------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------

Appendix 2 Checklists

The screenshot shows a Schoology course page for 'ENGL/FRIDAY 8-10 AM 2019-1: Section 1' with a 'Writing Project' assignment. The page is titled 'Step 3- Exploring writing'. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Materials' including Updates, Gradebook, Grade Setup, Badges, Attendance, and Members. Below this is an 'Access Code' box with the code '9N9W5-JQ222'. The main content area is addressed to 'Dear students:' and contains instructions for a writing assignment. It includes 'Recommended steps' with five numbered points, a list of 'Resources' with URLs for vocabulary, spelling, and stories, and a 'Submissions' section on the right. The 'Submissions' section shows a list of students who have submitted work, including Cardenas Rodriguez, Luisa Fernanda; Gonzalez, Diego; Hernandez, Leonel; Morales, Luzam; Portillo López, Daniel Felipe; and Trujillo, Diego. A yellow callout box in the submissions area says: 'To return files to students, please attach them to comments by clicking on a student's name in the "Submissions" area above.'

ENGL/FRIDAY 8-10 AM 2019-1: Section 1
Writing Project

Step 3- Exploring writing

Dear students:

Using all your creativity, you are going to read the stories of Rafael Pombo: Simon el Bobito, La Polera viejecita, and El Renacuajo Paseador. Then you are going to create your own new story for them focusing on one of the characters. Describe the personality, physical appearance and the way they do their activities. Remember the TV SERIES "Once upon a time", it describes different versions of the stories.

Recommended steps:

- 1) Narrative universe: watch this film as a sample for creative ideas before writing: animated video of "The real little red riding hood"
- 2) Think of ideas over 2 or 3 different days to write and plan your text
- 3) Select one of Pombo's suggested stories. Write 3 to 4 paragraphs, use only your dictionary, and be creative!

Once Upon a time, there was.....

Second paragraph

Third paragraph

Conclusion:and they lived happily ever after or not!

- 4) Remember **not** to use **translators from Spanish into English**.
- 5) When you finish the story upload a photo of your **handwritten text**. **MAKE SURE YOU KEEP YOUR STORY IN YOUR PORTFOLIO TOO!**

Let's start writing!

Publication: the best stories may be published on the university website!!!

Resources:

Vocabulary: <https://www.wordreference.com/>

Spelling: http://www.reverso.net/text_translation.aspx?lang=EN

Rafael Pombo's stories: <https://elbalearinng.com/autor/rafael-pombo/>

Posted Mon Apr 15, 2019 at 8:01 pm

Submissions Received (6/12)

- Cardenas Rodriguez, Luisa Fernanda
- Gonzalez, Diego
- Hernandez, Leonel
- Morales, Luzam
- Portillo López, Daniel Felipe
- Trujillo, Diego

To return files to students, please attach them to comments by clicking on a student's name in the "Submissions" area above.

Currículo para la formación en investigación: Una apuesta de la Fundación Universitaria Juan de Castellanos

Curriculum for research training: A commitment of Fundación Universitaria Juan de Castellanos

Cursus de formation à la recherche : un pari de la Fondation Universitaire Juan de Castellanos

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Resumen

El presente documento hace parte del proyecto macro “Investigación con propósito”¹⁶ y atiende específicamente a un proyecto del Plan de Desarrollo institucional cuyo objetivo es Favorecer la apropiación de capacidades de investigación-innovación, mediante procesos formativos, de inmersión y práctica que permitan consolidar el perfil disciplinar y el pensamiento crítico-científico de los estudiantes de la Institución. La experiencia que se recoge en el documento presenta específicamente el resultado final de una decisión institucional frente a la necesidad de estructurar el área de investigación en los pregrados de la Institución, luego de analizar que, si bien todos los pregrados involucraban curricularmente asignaturas del área, estas eran inconexas, desestructuradas y que no permitían al estudiante formarse para la investigación

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16 Investigación con propósito es un proyecto macro liderado por la Dirección General de Investigación e Innovación y apoyado por la Fundación Universitaria Juan de Castellanos (2018-2029).

de manera competente. De allí que se haya realizado una revisión de antecedentes y tendencias que permitieron finalmente hacer una propuesta curricular articulada y precisa que, se espera contribuya a la formación de una comunidad ejercitada en procesos de investigación. Hasta el momento, la propuesta ha sido aprobada institucionalmente, el reto es llevarla a cabo, hacer el seguimiento y la evaluación a largo plazo de esta implementación. Si bien en el tema de la investigación formativa y la formación en investigación se ha dicho mucho, no se ha dicho todo, es un asunto de largo alcance sin pruebas ni resultados definitivos.

Palabras clave: investigación formativa, competencias, educación superior, competencias investigativas, investigación en pregrado.

Abstract

This document is part of the macro project “Research with a purpose” and specifically addresses a project of the Institutional Development Plan whose objective is to promote the appropriation of research-innovation capacities, through training, immersion and practical processes that allow consolidating students’ profile discipline and critical-scientific thinking. The experience gathered in the document specifically presents the final result of an institutional decision regarding the need to structure the research area in the Institution’s undergraduate degrees, after analyzing that, although all undergraduates involved curricular subjects in the area, these were disjointed, unstructured and did not allow the student to train for research in a competent manner. Hence, a review of antecedents and trends has been carried out that finally, made it possible to make an articulated and precise curricular proposal that is expected to contribute to the formation of a community exercised in research processes. So far, the proposal has been institutionally approved, the challenge is to carry it out, monitor and evaluate this implementation in the long term. While much has been said on the subject of formative research and research training, not all has been said, it is a far-reaching affair with no definitive evidence or results.

Key words: formative research, skills, higher education, research skills, undergraduate research

El deber ser de la investigación en la Educación Superior

La Unesco en la ‘Declaración mundial sobre la educación superior en el siglo XXI: Visión y Acción’, aclaraba que una de las misiones y valores fundamentales de la educación superior era la contribución en el desarrollo sostenible y el mejoramiento

del conjunto de la sociedad, lo cual se lograría promoviendo, generando y difundiendo conocimientos por medio de la investigación y, “como parte de los servicios que ha de prestar a la comunidad, proporcionando las competencias técnicas adecuadas para contribuir al desarrollo cultural, social y económico de las sociedades, fomentando y desarrollando la investigación científica y tecnológica a la par con la investigación en el campo de las ciencias sociales, las humanidades y las artes creativas” (1998, pág. 4). Igualmente, en dicha declaración establecía que uno de los deberes de la Educación Superior en el siglo XXI era enfocar sus capacidades hacia el fomento de las competencias para la creatividad y la innovación.

En Colombia, el Consejo Nacional de Acreditación CNA (2013) dentro de los factores de calidad de los Programas académicos exige demostrar “Criterios, estrategias y actividades del programa, orientados a promover la capacidad de indagación y búsqueda, y la formación de un espíritu investigativo, creativo e innovador en los estudiantes” (pág. 40), y en los Lineamientos para la acreditación institucional del 2015 especifica que, una Institución de alta calidad, “de acuerdo con su naturaleza, se reconoce por la efectividad en sus procesos de formación para la investigación, el espíritu crítico y la creación, y por sus aportes al conocimiento científico y al desarrollo cultural en todo su ámbito de influencia (pág. 41). Por su parte el Ministerio de Educación Nacional en Decreto 1075 (2015) menciona que los programas deben establecer las estrategias para la formación en investigación-creación que le permitan a profesores y estudiantes estar en contacto con los desarrollos disciplinarios e interdisciplinarios, la creación artística, los avances tecnológicos y el campo disciplinar más actualizado, de tal forma que se desarrolle el pensamiento crítico y/o creativo”. (Artículo 2.5.3.2.3.2.6), así como establecer de manera clara y concreta cómo dentro del programa se promueve la investigación formativa de los estudiantes; en este mismo sentido, el Decreto 1330 (2019) el Ministerio de Educación renueva estas exigencias y mantiene la necesidad de que la investigación formativa se desarrolle en los programas de pregrado así como se contemplen capacidades para la formación en investigación de los estudiantes.

Por su parte, el Consejo de Educación Superior (CESU) en el borrador del acuerdo por el cual se actualiza el Modelo de Acreditación en Alta Calidad menciona que las instituciones deberán “Demostrar la apropiación de una cultura de investigación”, así como que, una Institución de alta calidad demuestra la “efectividad en sus procesos de formación para la investigación, el espíritu crítico y la creación” y que por tanto cuenta con “mecanismos efectivos para desarrollar en los estudiantes, dependiendo de su nivel formativo, un pensamiento creativo, crítico y con capacidad de comprender los procesos

de investigación, innovación, creación artística y cultural y desarrollo tecnológico en diversos contextos”. (2020, pág. 31)

En cuanto a estos referentes mundiales y nacionales es claro que la tarea investigativa es una preocupación fundamental de las Instituciones de Educación Superior y que, por ello, la mayoría viene considerando necesario desarrollar habilidades y facultades prácticas que estimulen la capacidad para pensar cosas nuevas y para llevar a cabo esas ideas de formas novedosas y diferentes. Lo anterior solo es posible en la medida que a través del currículo se creen oportunidades para el pensamiento creativo y la innovación mediante la interdisciplinariedad, el trabajo en grupo, la comprensión del contexto, el conocimiento sobre los avances de la ciencia, la experimentación en espacios estimulantes (laboratorios, talleres, bibliotecas), y el acceso a la información. Las habilidades y facultades que se requieren de y para la investigación deben ser transversales y genéricas y por tanto la triada investigación-innovación-creación debe constituir un eje sólido en la formación de los estudiantes.

Formación para la investigación e investigación formativa

La relación entre estas dos necesidades formativas en el pregrado ha sido tratada ampliamente en la literatura a medida que se ha venido avanzando mundialmente en los requerimientos pedagógicos y didácticos frente a las competencias investigativas, parece entonces existir un consenso tácito en definir que cuando se habla de formación para la investigación se hace referencia a la inclusión formal de cursos, asignaturas y contenidos en el currículo, mientras que la investigación formativa comprende aquellas estrategias extracurriculares que se implementan en los programas de pregrado y que incluyen entre otras, los llamados semilleros de investigación, es decir la conformación de grupos de interés frente a temas específicos que voluntariamente reúnen estudiantes y tutores con el ánimo de desarrollar experiencias proto-investigativas. En los dos casos, se trata del fomento de capacidades para la investigación en los programas de pregrado.

Al respecto, Restrepo (2003), afirma que la investigación formativa ha tenido tres acepciones en el mundo de la Educación Superior, la primera y más lejana a nuestro contexto, es aquella que la relaciona con la investigación exploratoria y que en general busca dar forma a la investigación propiamente dicha en un proceso de planeación y estructuración más que a un proceso de formación del estudiante. La segunda tiene que ver con “formar en y para la investigación a través de actividades que no hacen parte necesariamente de un proyecto concreto de investigación. Su intención es familiarizar con la investigación, con su naturaleza como búsqueda, con sus fases y

funcionamiento” (pág. 198), aquí se hace una diferencia explícita entre el proyecto de investigación propiamente dicho y la serie de actividades que desde la formación se pueden emprender y por tanto el fin mismo de dichas actividades, es entonces que la investigación formativa desarrolla mecanismos para entender los contextos particulares desde las prácticas disciplinares y a su vez permite a los estudiantes comprender ciertos métodos y técnicas. La tercera se relaciona con la investigación-acción, es decir aquella que se hace para implementar acciones de mejora sobre los encuentros que emergen en el desarrollo de una actividad pedagógica. Vale la pena aclarar que el concepto que adoptó el CNA para Colombia es el segundo y en ese sentido algunas de las estrategias de implementación que Restrepo (2003) menciona son:

Tabla 1. Estrategias de implementación de la investigación formativa en la Educación Superior

Categoría	Estrategia	Descripción
Según la relación estudiante-docente	Semilleros Auxiliares de Investigación y/o jóvenes investigadores	En esta estrategia prima la relación que se establece entre el docente que investiga y el estudiante que se forma a través de la práctica investigativa propiamente dicha
Según el enfoque metodológico	Aprendizaje basado en problemas Preseminario Investigativo Proyección Social	La estrategia se fundamenta en la metodología para abordar la formación generalmente desde los cursos generales y específicos de investigación y desde las posibilidades de reconocer los problemas del contexto
Según el producto alcanzado	El ensayo teórico con esquema investigativo Trabajo de grado	En esta prima el fin como producto

Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de Restrepo (2003, pág. 199)

Dentro de las tendencias mundiales que afectan la Educación Superior, menciona Restrepo (2003) que está la necesidad de mejoramiento de la calidad a través de la preparación del talento idóneo para investigar, lo que está relacionado explícitamente con las líneas y proyectos de las facultades, pero también con el conocimiento, la experiencia y la tradición en el manejo de problemas e instrumentos propio de la

disciplina. Lo anterior puede entenderse como la necesaria articulación entre los componentes y actores de los sistemas de investigación en las IES.

Así como Restrepo, Patiño & Santos (2009) consideran que la investigación formativa es “aquella que se orienta en y para la investigación, es decir, aquella en la que la idea de formar constituye el centro de atención y, por lo tanto, no se requiere de proyectos concretos para incentivar o familiarizar con procesos, métodos, técnicas, resultados y productos de investigación” (pág. 25), esta idea hace ver la necesidad de encontrar bases formativas para la investigación antes de intentar que los estudiantes desarrollen proyectos de investigación dentro de las lógicas tradicionales puesto que, se hace necesario diferenciar entre las habilidades para el saber científico y el desarrollo del mismo, apunta también esta idea a que en principio se forman sujetos capaces de hacer investigación antes de sujetos que formulan y desarrollan proyectos.

La visión de la Asociación Colombiana de universidades ASCUN (2010) recoge una serie de actividades más del lado instrumental para fomentar las competencias básicas en la formación investigativa como la estructuración de preguntas y problemas de investigación, el planteamiento de estados del arte y marcos teóricos, la definición de enfoques metodológicos, el análisis e interpretación de datos, la argumentación de resultados y proposición de soluciones y la narrativa y divulgación de la ciencia. Se trata de operacionalizar en términos más concretos un saber hacer de carácter práctico.

Por su parte el Ministerio de Educación Nacional MEN (2011) menciona tres tipos de competencias indispensables aplicables al contexto colombiano y que están estrechamente relacionadas con la formación en investigación:

Tabla 2. Competencias en la Educación Superior

Tipo	Competencias abstractas de pensamiento	Conocimiento y competencias prácticas para el despliegue de las competencias abstractas	Dinamizadoras para el desarrollo de competencias genéricas
Dimensiones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Razonamiento crítico • Entendimiento interpersonal • Pensamiento creativo • Razonamiento analítico • Solución a problemas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conocimiento del entorno • Comunicación • Trabajo en Equipo • Alfabetización Cuantitativa • Manejo de Información • Comunicación en inglés • TICs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saber aprender • Recontextualizar
Relación con la formación en investigación	Argumentación y resolución de problemas	Entendimiento y relación con el entorno y comprensión y adecuación a las lógicas contemporáneas de la globalización	Autonomía e inserción activa el mundo laboral y adaptación a los cambios

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir del MEN (2011)

En coherencia con la apuesta del MEN sobre las competencias, Aldana (2012) expresa que la formación investigativa es un proceso que está en constante evolución y que cada uno de los actores del proceso lo enriquece, por lo tanto, el docente requiere de competencias para flexibilizar su labor y adaptar las nuevas circunstancias a la situación en el aula y agrupa en tres los tipos de habilidades que se deben fomentar en los procesos de formación investigativa así:

Tabla 3. Habilidades de la formación en investigación

Habilidades básicas	Habilidades de Abstracción	Habilidades específicas para la comprensión y producción de conocimiento
Lectura comprensiva y crítica	Pensamiento sistemático	Reconocimiento de la especificidad epistemológica
Escritura	Experimentación	Reconocimiento de la especificidad metodológica
Cálculo	Colaboración	Reconocimiento de la especificidad Instrumental
Computación		
Segunda Lengua		

Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de Aldana (2012, pág. 375)

Sobre las competencias y las habilidades y capacidades a fomentar en la formación investigativa Martínez y Márquez (2014) hacen un interesante conceptual sobre las habilidades implícitas en este proceso y logran establecer de acuerdo con diferentes autores unas coordenadas que permiten ver de manera integral que una serie de destrezas son requeridas y que se conjugan tanto procesos instrumentales y operativos como procesos de pensamiento elevado.

Tabla 4. Habilidades Investigativas

Autor(es) referente(s)	López (2001)	Chirino (2012)	Moreno (2005)	Machado y Montes (2009)
Habilidades	Habilidades básicas de investigación	Habilidades para problematizar	Habilidades de percepción	Habilidades investigativas de mayor integración para la enseñanza del pregrado
	Habilidades Propias de la Ciencia	Habilidades para teorizar	Habilidades de pensamiento,	Habilidades para solucionar problemas profesionales
	Habilidades Propias de la metodología de la investigación pedagógica	Habilidades para comprobar la realidad objetiva	Habilidades instrumentales	Habilidades para modelar, ejecutar, obtener, procesar y comunicar información
			Habilidades de construcción conceptual	Habilidades para controlar la información obtenida
			Habilidades de construcción metodológica	
			Habilidades de construcción social del conocimiento	
		Habilidades metacognitivas		
Variables que se relacionan	Relación entre la formación profesional y las destrezas investigativas.	Relación entre la lógica investigativa y la formación profesional.	Relación entre el perfil del estudiante y la construcción del conocimiento.	Relación entre las fases propias del proceso investigativo.
Enfoque	Pragmático	Materialista dialéctico	Constructivista	Metacognitivo

Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de Martínez y Márquez (2014, págs. 349-353)

Frente a las formas como se inserta la investigación formativa al currículo, Rojas, C. y Aguirre, S. (2015) mencionan que existen dos alternativas de vinculación, la primera es cuando está ligada estrictamente a los contenidos de los cursos de metodología de la investigación y que busca brindar las herramientas del trabajo científica desde un punto de vista operativo y disciplinar. La segunda es cuando la investigación formativa está incluida como un componente transversal en el currículo, lo que tiene dificultades propias de la desarticulación de los actores y cuya adopción es parte integral del modelo pedagógico que plantea cada institución. De acuerdo con los autores, estas dos formas tienen ventajas y desventajas de implementación, en el primer caso, las ventajas tienen que ver que se establecen cursos que progresivamente llevan al estudiante a profundizar en las destrezas requeridas para la investigación, la principal desventaja es que estos cursos pueden quedar desarticulados de la formación disciplinar. En el segundo caso. Las ventajas se relacionan con el ejercicio mismo de la praxis investigativa el *hacer haciendo*, la desventaja tiene que ver con la solidez y la flexibilidad del sistema de investigación para dotar a este *hacer* de condiciones para su implementación (tiempos, espacios, talento humano, recursos). En todo caso las dos formas se complementan y cada vez resulta más necesario que co-existan puesto que

una de las quejas generalizadas de la formación en pregrado es la escasa capacidad de los estudiantes que llegan de la educación media para enfrentar la resolución de problemas, la argumentación, el manejo de información, entre otras.

Sobre las habilidades y capacidades de la investigación formativa y de la formación en investigación puede mencionarse que implica entonces dos aspectos fundamentales:

- El desarrollo del pensamiento crítico, que comprende: la capacidad y sensibilidad hacia la investigación, el entrenamiento en la capacidad de problematización de sus prácticas disciplinares (o de las tradiciones disciplinares), la posición ante el contexto, la permanente búsqueda de nuevas soluciones a viejos problemas, la destinación de un mayor espacio para la ciencia y la solución científica tecnológica y la apertura hacia la innovación.
- El adiestramiento o entrenamiento en ciertos procedimientos y procesos que siguen las disciplinas científicas para abordar sus problemas, avalados por la práctica investigativa de las ciencias a lo largo de la historia.

Aproximaciones epistemológicas para un currículo hacia la formación en investigación

La ciencia es un tipo particular de conocimiento y de saber hacer que busca “organizar, sistematizar y jerarquizar el conocimiento alcanzado sobre el mundo material y simbólico. Su papel fundamental es el de explicar los hechos, de manera que éstos puedan ser interpretados y predecibles hasta cierto punto y en ciertas circunstancias” (De Zubiría & Ramírez, 2009, pág. 27). La ciencia y su correlato, la técnica, es una realidad compleja, problémica, interdisciplinar y dinámica, que se orienta al esclarecimiento y transformación del mundo y del hombre en sus diversos contextos. En términos de Morin (2001), la ciencia a diferencia de otras actividades cognitivas establece un diálogo crítico con la realidad.

La actividad fundamental de la ciencia es la investigación, la cual está enmarcada también en los contextos en los que se desarrolla. El conocimiento científico es una realidad en permanente construcción-destrucción, en constante evolución y transformación; en forma acertada Morin ilustra esta situación diciendo que, en materia de ciencia, “navegamos en un océano de incertidumbre a través de archipiélagos de

certezas” (1999, pág. 47). La investigación desde esta perspectiva se vuelve una actividad crucial.

Esta racionalidad específica se aplica también para la producción de conocimiento que se refiere a la creación, creación-investigación, investigación en artes, producción de objetos artísticos y formas de producción en las que predomina la función estética. Estos procesos tienen funcionamientos que en momentos son asimilables a los entendidos por la producción de conocimiento tradicional, pero contienen lógicas propias de concepción, formulación, reflexión, interrelación y producción, que enriquecen el contexto académico y socio-cultural.

El **método científico** no es una estructura genérica única que aborde los objetos o eventos de la misma manera. De acuerdo con De Zubiría & Ramírez, “El método científico corresponde al nivel epistemológico de cada ciencia y allí se establecen proposiciones, conceptos, sistemas de conceptos y supuestos acerca de la realidad que se estudia; por consiguiente, plantea su propia filosofía del conocimiento y debate problemas, tales como el grado de objetividad, el grado de universalidad, la validez de sus leyes o el tipo de teorías que debe construir. Es, pues, el nivel en donde la ciencia reflexiona sobre sí misma”. (2009, pág. 71)

El método científico históricamente se ha construido en torno a los siguientes elementos: La pregunta, el planteamiento del problema, la revisión de antecedentes, la elaboración de marcos referenciales, la formulación de hipótesis cuando se requieren, el levantamiento de información, el análisis e interpretación de datos, la comprobación de hipótesis y las conclusiones o resultados. Todo esto forma parte integral de lo que se conoce como diseño de la investigación, que, a pesar de tener aspectos puramente técnicos e instrumentales, y a pesar de las variaciones disciplinares, participan sin embargo del rigor del método científico. Ante esta exigencia de rigor y a pesar de la confianza positivista depositada en la validez del método, conviene advertir que los resultados no siempre son definitivos, como lo ha demostrado la historia de ciencia, puesto que es prácticamente imposible considerar todos los elementos que intervienen en la explicación de un problema.

La **metodología de la investigación científica** comprende las teorías de cada disciplina; trata sobre los métodos, técnicas e instrumentos pertinentes para estudiar un objeto específico dentro del mundo del conocimiento. La metodología de la

investigación científica evalúa aspectos epistemológicos, ontológicos, gnoseológicos, lógicos y básicos o propios de cada disciplina.

En cuanto a la **técnica de la investigación** puede decirse que comprende aquellos procedimientos específicos a través de los cuales el investigador, observa, analiza e interpreta la realidad. Dentro de las técnicas de investigación, cada una con sus propias características procedimentales, los autores, sin llegar a consensos, establecen distintas clases de investigaciones según el tratamiento de los datos y los fenómenos (teóricas, aplicadas, teórico-prácticas); según la temporalidad (retrospectivas, prospectivas, longitudinales, transversales, estáticas, dinámicas, sincrónicas y diacrónicas); según el diseño (experimental, no-experimental, cuasi-experimental); Según el alcance (exploratoria, descriptiva, correlacional), según el peso matemático de los datos (cuantitativas, cualitativas, mixtas); según el nivel de inmersión del investigador con su objeto (etnográficas, investigación IAP), etc.

Hacia una pedagogía de la investigación

La investigación dinamiza, profundiza y transforma los procesos de aprendizaje y docencia; cualifica por la práctica tanto a docentes como a estudiantes; los familiariza con el pensamiento científico. La investigación por su naturaleza conlleva a dinámicas de proyección y extensión social de sus resultados.

La investigación en las instituciones de educación superior se da en dos ámbitos: el primero, como una función pedagógica que es a lo que se denomina investigación formativa o formación investigativa y, el segundo, como parte esencial de la misión de la universidad que es generar conocimiento, es decir, la investigación propiamente dicha. La formación investigativa como asunto pedagógico se da desde dos perspectivas de enseñanza, la expositiva teórica y la que se hace a través del descubrimiento y la construcción. La primera se caracteriza por su organicidad, exhaustividad y secuencialidad, y la segunda, promueve el desarrollo de habilidades, la transferencia de aprendizajes, la flexibilidad y la interdisciplinaridad (Restrepo, 2004).

Cuando se habla de formación investigativa, el término 'formación' se entiende, al menos en dos grandes campos semánticos: el primero, se refiere a la educación, y, el segundo, a la instrucción o al entrenamiento. La UNESCO (1998), la entiende en estos dos sentidos, por una parte, como una puesta en marcha de habilidades ligadas a las

disciplinas profesionales, y por otra parte como un proceso a largo plazo en el que los individuos se involucran cabalmente y no solo de forma operativa.

En el sentido educativo de la formación que presenta la UNESCO puede entenderse lo que afirma Escotet (1999) a propósito de la universidad, pero que se podría atribuir principalmente a los propósitos de la formación en investigación, “la universidad debe ante todo enseñar a pensar, crear la actitud hacia el riesgo de pensar, ejercitar el sentido común y dar rienda suelta a la imaginación creadora. Más que a dar información, hay que estimular al sujeto que descubra el lugar donde se encuentra, a enseñarle cómo seleccionarla y utilizarla” (2002, pág. 34).

El desarrollo de habilidades y competencias para y en investigación está supeditada además del marco curricular y el modelo pedagógico a la relación triádica a enseñanza-aprendizaje y dialéctica de esa relación, puesto que el docente enseña a decodificar, es decir enseña la gramática particular de la disciplina científica y las fuentes de acceso a esa disciplina, así como los paradigmas que dominan esa ciencia y el estudiante ante esa codificación puede responder de dos formas, pasiva, cuando es receptivo dentro de una idea de pedagogía tradicional bancaria y activa, cuando reclama al docente que le permita construir su saber disciplinar en la interacción entre teoría y práctica, es decir aprender haciendo (Principio de Dewey). El tercer elemento es entonces, la dialéctica entre estos ámbitos que se da en las constantes transformaciones que experimentan los contextos en los cuales esa ciencia se crea y se usa en el mundo.

Consideraciones de orden metodológico

Para enseñar y aprender a investigar se requiere hacer investigación. Existe, sin embargo, una propedéutica sobre conceptos, modelos y prácticas que son necesarios para asegurar el rigor y para interactuar con la comunidad investigativa. Es por esta razón que el investigador debe conocer las características de las ciencias que soportan su investigación, las tradiciones epistémicas, los paradigmas, enfoques, tipos, alcances, instrumentos y las narrativas y gramáticas de las ciencias. Se requiere además distinguir los niveles de complejidad del método científico, de las metodologías y de las técnicas de la investigación.

En la formación investigativa del estudiante, es fundamental una praxis individual y grupal, donde la teoría y la práctica sean entidades que se reflejan mutuamente y se encuentran articuladas de manera dialéctica. En este marco, si se aspira a una formación integral, los logros y rendimientos necesariamente deberán ser teórico-prácticos (Cerdeña & León, 2006). La formación investigativa debe comprenderse, no como una

materia más del plan de estudio, sometida a la rutina de las clases magistrales sino como un espacio curricular donde se articula dialécticamente la teoría y la práctica. La estrategia didáctica que mejor permite esta formación en la acción es la que propone J. Dewey (1999), en su idea del aprendizaje activo o el *aprender haciendo*. Esta estrategia corresponde mejor a lo que en didáctica se denomina seminario-taller. El seminario es una estrategia para el aprendizaje activo, donde los participantes interactúan en un clima de recíproca colaboración. Los talleres, son prácticos y apelan a la experiencia; el protagonista es el alumno que, a través de dinámicas y prácticas, experimenta, compara y socializa los aprendizajes.

Si bien se propone que institucionalmente se conforme un área curricular para la formación en investigación, la formación investigativa debe dinamizar también toda la actividad académica y los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de todas las asignaturas de los planes de estudio. Como ya se mencionó, el desarrollo de habilidades y competencias para y en investigación se enmarca en la relación triádica enseñanza-aprendizaje-contexto y esto tiene que ver con que, el diálogo entre los sujetos del conocimiento y los problemas que estudian son más importantes que los temas, los temas pueden ser irrelevantes, ya que las disciplinas transforman las prácticas y las formas de relación, cuando se menciona que los temas pueden volverse irrelevantes se está hablando también de que una ciencia particular puede también dejar de existir, ya que en un campo de experiencias complejas, el contexto de relación o el contexto disciplinar es el que está en continua transformación. Por tanto, todos los actores deben estar conscientes de que las disciplinas se transforman, el asunto urgente, no es la transmisión del conocimiento disciplinar, es comprender los procesos de decodificación, problematización, el acceso a fuentes de información, la aplicación a problemas o ámbitos inexplorados y el pensamiento para la innovación, fomentar una tensión sostenida frente a la emergencia de determinados problemas y fomentar la realización de estudios exploratorios.

La propuesta de formación en investigación en la Juan de Castellanos¹⁷

Las experiencias de varias instituciones en torno a la investigación formativa evidencia que se requiere incluir formalmente en el plan de estudios de los programas de pregrado dos tipos de cursos, unos que pretenden desarrollar habilidades básicas o

17 Institución de Educación Superior ubicada en Tunja, Boyacá (Colombia) con experiencia en educación superior desde 1985. La Fundación Universitaria Juan de Castellanos cuenta hoy con cinco facultades, dieciséis programas de pregrado, diez especializaciones y una maestría. Además, tiene presencia en varias partes del país con los programas de especializaciones con metodología a distancia.

competencias prácticas para promover el despliegue de habilidades de pensamiento o abstractas, que comprenden contenidos como la comunicación oral y escrita, el contexto como marco para problematizar, la alfabetización cuantitativa, matemática o estadística y la narrativa de la ciencia (cómo escribir y exponer resultados académico-científicos); el otro tipo de cursos están destinados al desarrollo de habilidades específicas en términos metodológicos e instrumentales, que comprenden generalmente un curso de iniciación científica (epistemología o filosofía de la ciencia) y los cursos de metodología de investigación y proyecto de grado.

En la Juan de Castellanos se entiende por área de formación investigativa aquella que, en consonancia con su objetivo de forjar hábitos en los futuros profesionales sobre aspectos investigativos, permite el desarrollo de competencias prácticas para el despliegue tanto de habilidades abstractas de pensamiento como de habilidades específicas en términos metodológicos e instrumentales (Acuerdo del Consejo Académico 008 de 27 del febrero de 2018). El área la conforman una secuencia de Seminarios-talleres que abordarán temáticamente aspectos como: la comprensión del papel del sujeto en el mundo del conocimiento, el entendimiento del entorno para potenciar el saber disciplinar, la narración y la comunicación de la ciencia, la gestión de la información, la indagación rigurosa, la implementación de instrumentos y técnicas que permiten la interpretación holística de los saberes, la gestión de datos y la presentación de resultados ante la comunidad académico-científica a través de proyectos de investigación, de desarrollo tecnológico e innovación, de investigación aplicada, de investigación–creación y de creación artística.

Además de la secuencia de cursos, los programas de pregrado podrán incluir, si lo consideran necesario, otras asignaturas de investigación relacionadas con el objeto del programa, así como las asignaturas orientadas a la realización del trabajo de grado. La estructura del área aprobada mediante el Acuerdo 019 del Consejo Académico del 29 de junio de 2018 comprende los siguientes cursos:

- **Seminario-Taller: Introducción al pensamiento científico.** El Seminario-Taller tratará sobre aspectos fundamentales de la epistemología de la ciencia, entre ellos, el debate que se da entre las concepciones positivistas y no positivistas del conocimiento científico, sus métodos, la delimitación de los objetos, la validación de los conocimientos producidos y los criterios de objetividad. Hará también un rastreo histórico de los momentos y las condiciones de surgimiento

de las diferentes disciplinas científicas y las rupturas producidas con saberes anteriores.

- **Seminario-Taller: Comunicación y metodología del trabajo académico.** El Seminario-Taller comprenderá el manejo de metodologías de trabajo académico que permitan el desempeño y formación del estudiante. Tratará, además, sobre los conceptos fundamentales que se relacionan con el constructor de escritura académica. Se estudiarán además las distintas expresiones de la comunicación académica oral y escrita, los diferentes tipos de textos y los diversos niveles de elaboración y de complejidad de los mismos.
- **Seminario-Taller: Contexto, temas, objetos y problemas de investigación.** El Seminario-Taller ofrecerá la oportunidad de realizar una mirada analítica, crítica y propositiva del contexto social en relación con la cultura científica y los desafíos del desarrollo científico tecnológico para la región; realizará una mirada del horizonte problemático de las prácticas profesionales y del estado del arte disciplinar; permitirá, además la identificación de temas, objetos y problemas propios del saber disciplinar leídos en contexto. Ejercitará la destreza para buscar en fuentes primarias y secundarias los referentes teóricos que fundamentan los temas y objetos seleccionados y facilitará la realización de ejercicios de planteamiento-formulación de preguntas y/o hipótesis para posibles proyectos de investigación, se ejercitará también la capacidad para plantear y relacionar de forma coherente problemas, preguntas y/o hipótesis, justificación y objetivos de un proyecto de investigación.
- **Seminario-Taller: Gestión de información bibliográfica y narrativas de la ciencia.** El Seminario-Taller permitirá al estudiante ejercitarse sobre las distintas formas como se sustentan teóricamente los proyectos de investigación por medio marcos de referencia que se requieren dada la especificidad de un determinado proyecto. Se abordará la metodología de manejo riguroso de fuentes documentales impresas y digitales; ejercitará a los estudiantes en la gramática académica y en los sistemas de citación a través de reseñas, resúmenes, ensayos, disertaciones y comunicaciones académicas que permiten la incursión en las formas reconocidas de narración y divulgación de la ciencia.
- **Seminario-Taller: Diseños de investigación (disciplinares).** El Seminario-Taller abordará los diferentes diseños metodológicos y los tipos de investigación, de forma que el estudiante pueda comprender la diversidad de enfoques y a la vez determinar de acuerdo con sus intereses cómo abordar determinado problema de investigación. Tratará específicamente aspectos como: la estrategia

metodológica a seguir, la definición secuencial de las actividades que permiten alcanzar los objetivos, las técnicas y los instrumentos requeridos tanto en campo como en laboratorio, y los instrumentos pertinentes para el análisis de la información.

- **Seminario-Taller: Gestión de datos y de resultados de investigación.** El Seminario-Taller presentará las herramientas básicas necesarias para el análisis e interpretación de datos cuantitativos y cualitativos, abordará la naturaleza de los mismos e introducirá al estudiante en el empleo básico de software de manejo de datos, de manera que pueda analizar críticamente la información obtenida, sintetizarla y concluirla. Además, garantizará la realización de un informe final de investigación de acuerdo a los requerimientos específicos de los diferentes tipos de proyectos (investigación, investigación aplicada, desarrollo tecnológico e innovación, investigación–creación y creación artística) para expresar los resultados obtenidos en concordancia con la narrativa científica.

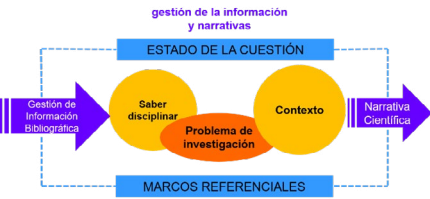


Competencias y resultados de aprendizaje

En el marco de la educación, el concepto de competencia ha sido ampliamente tratado y definido como el famoso *saber hacer en contexto*. Sin embargo y a pesar de que ya se lleva cerca de dos décadas en el trabajo de pasar de objetivos a competencias, aún la aplicabilidad de estas últimas está en tela de juicio. Últimamente en Colombia, pero no en el mundo, se ha incluido en los decretos recientes como el 1330 un nuevo concepto: “resultados de aprendizaje”, y muchos interrogantes han surgido con este nuevo término sin que haya un consenso definitivo. De acuerdo con Prudent (2020) los resultados de aprendizaje son aquellas capacidades de los estudiantes que eficaz y prácticamente hacen evidentes las competencias y por ello se habla de *resultado*. En tal sentido, los resultados de aprendizaje no son más que los descriptores de las competencias, tal como lo mencionan Tudela, Bajo, Maldonado, & Moreno, “el concepto de competencia pone el acento en los resultados del aprendizaje, en lo que el alumno es capaz de hacer al término del proceso educativo y en los procedimientos que le permitirán continuar aprendiendo de forma autónoma a lo largo de la vida” (2004, pág. 1), es decir lo que hemos venido llamado como indicadores de logro pero centrados en el estudiante (no en el curso, ni el docente) de manera que la apuesta curricular se presenta como una serie de cursos que en sí mismos implican, tal como se observa en los gráficos, una entrada y una salida (resultado) en un proceso que podría llamarse circular. Puede verse, además, en la siguiente tabla, que las competencias se construyeron pensando específicamente en la articulación del tema del curso y su papel dentro de la secuencia, y que los resultados de aprendizaje que se proponen llevan la competencia hacia el

desarrollo de habilidades en el mundo laboral y los requerimientos del mismo de una forma más general y aplicada. El llamado a los resultados de aprendizaje hace que se requiera pasar de un concepto lineal de competencia -centrado en el docente y el estudiante- a uno de competencia dinámica que está evidentemente centrado en el aprendizaje y que implica por tanto que el docente se especialice en el diseño de entornos abiertos de aprendizaje.

Tabla 5. Competencias y resultados de aprendizaje de la propuesta curricular

Seminario Taller	Competencia del curso	Resultados de Aprendizaje en los estudiantes	Esquema gráfico
INTRODUCCIÓN AL PENSAMIENTO CIENTÍFICO	Comprende la naturaleza del pensamiento científico.	Me asumo como sujeto cognoscente dentro del marco de posibilidades del universo epistémico. Comprendo mi papel dentro del contexto local y global y reflexiono como agente social.	<p>Este diagrama ilustra el proceso de aprendizaje en el primer taller. Un eje horizontal muestra 'Contexto' (izquierda) y 'Desarrollo Tecnológico' (derecha). En el centro, un círculo amarillo contiene 'Ciencia'. A su izquierda están 'Sujetos', 'Objetos' y 'Métodos'. A su derecha está 'Ética'. Encima del flujo principal está 'CULTURA' y debajo 'CONOCIMIENTO CIENTÍFICO'. Una línea superior indica 'comprensión del papel del sujeto en el mundo del conocimiento'.</p>
COMUNICACIÓN Y METODOLOGÍA DEL TRABAJO ACADÉMICO	Interpreta, analiza y sintetiza textos de diversa índole. Elabora textos académicos de calidad.	Argumento coherente y críticamente mi postura frente a las realidades del contexto. Asumo los códigos éticos de la producción académica y de mi disciplina.	<p>Este diagrama muestra el proceso de comunicación académica. Un eje horizontal va de 'METODOLOGÍA' (izquierda) a 'Narrativa Científica' (derecha). En el centro, un círculo amarillo contiene 'Escritura'. A su izquierda está 'Lectura' y a su derecha 'Textos y argumentos'. Encima del flujo principal está 'COMUNICACIÓN' y debajo 'TRABAJO ACADÉMICO'.</p>
CONTEXTO, TEMAS, OBJETOS Y PROBLEMAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN.	Reconoce la pertinencia social y disciplinar de su saber y su saber hacer en el contexto local y regional. Contextualiza, formula y analiza problemas de investigación.	Comprendo la realidad de manera integral, analizo e interpreto las variables del mundo contemporáneo frente al contexto particular. Sustento una situación problemática a través de diversos tipos de razones o argumentos.	<p>Este diagrama describe el ciclo de investigación. Un eje horizontal va de 'Problematización' (izquierda) a 'Profesión y relación con el contexto' (derecha). Encima del flujo principal está 'Formulación del interés investigativo'. Encima de esto, un texto indica 'entendimiento del entorno para potenciar el saber disciplinar'. Encima de 'Profesión y relación con el contexto' está 'Problematización'. Encima de 'Formulación del interés investigativo' está 'Problemas, pregunta y objetivos'. Encima de 'Problemas, pregunta y objetivos' está 'Campo científico, disciplina y profesión'. Encima de 'Problemas, pregunta y objetivos' está 'Revisión y soporte documental bibliográfico de la investigación'.</p>

<p>GESTIÓN DE INFORMACIÓN BIBLIOGRÁFICA Y NARRATIVAS DE LA CIENCIA.</p>	<p>Recupera, organiza y sistematiza la bibliografía recopilada en un proceso de indagación sistemática. Analiza y sintetiza información y expresa las conclusiones en textos de carácter científico.</p>	<p>Identifico a la luz de los conocimientos previos, las circunstancias problemáticas del contexto y el problema de investigación. Comprendo la condición ética propia de la búsqueda de soluciones a un problema específico.</p>	
<p>DISEÑOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN</p>	<p>Reconoce los principales diseños y técnicas de investigación utilizadas en la disciplina para el desarrollo metodológico de la investigación.</p>	<p>Tomo decisiones sobre la forma de solucionar un problema de manera planificada, organizada y sistemática.</p>	
<p>GESTIÓN DE DATOS Y DE RESULTADOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN</p>	<p>Interpreta la gramática de los datos y el lenguaje estadístico para dar sentido a la información. Expresa y presenta los resultados de la investigación dentro del marco general de la narrativa de la ciencia.</p>	<p>Comprendo la realidad estudiada a partir de los datos obtenidos y propongo alternativas de solución. Propongo estrategias de análisis e interpretación de información apropiadas a cada enfoque de acuerdo con el problema estudiado. Concluyo eficientemente los resultados de los análisis obtenidos a través de los datos.</p>	

Fuente. Elaboración propia

Plan de Desarrollo y batería de indicadores

En el marco de los sistemas integrados de gestión y del Plan de Desarrollo Institucional (2020-2029) se hace necesario proponer una batería de indicadores que

a mediano y largo plazo permitan evaluar el éxito o no de la implementación de la propuesta curricular que hace parte de la planeación estratégica del Macro Proceso Misional de Investigación dentro de la Institución, vale la pena aclarar que la propuesta curricular hace parte de una apuesta estratégica mayor y que por tanto los indicadores propuestos contemplan más aspectos que solo los relacionados con el desarrollo y evaluación de los cursos.

Tabla 6. Coherencia entre la propuesta curricular y el PDI

Objetivo estratégico	Conformar una comunidad ejercitada y ejercitante en procesos de investigación, innovación y creación interdisciplinar que consolida su carácter científico y aporta a la solución de los problemas del contexto
Programa estratégico	PE10. Nueva cultura institucional de investigación-innovación-creación interdisciplinar
Estrategia	Fomentando la investigación formativa y la formación en investigación
Proyecto	Fomento a la investigación formativa
Meta PDI 2020-2029	El 70 % de apropiación de capacidades de investigación-innovación.
Indicador Estratégico	Nivel de apropiación de capacidades de investigación-innovación por parte de los estudiantes
Formula del indicador estratégico	Número de estudiantes que apropian capacidades de investigación-innovación/Número de estudiantes de pregrado de la Institución *100
Indicador Táctico	Nivel de participación de los estudiantes en procesos de investigación, desarrollo tecnológico, innovación y creación artística
Indicadores Operativos	Porcentaje de aprobación de las asignaturas del área de formación en investigación
	Número de semilleros activos por programa académico
	Porcentaje de estudiantes activos en semilleros de investigación por programa académico
	Porcentaje de estudiantes que se gradúan con opción de grado en investigación por programa académico
	Número de estudiantes vinculados al año en Jóvenes investigadores JDC
	Número de egresados participantes en Jóvenes Investigadores Colciencias
	Número de eventos internos realizados para la divulgación de resultados de procesos de investigación desarrollados por semilleros de investigación
Porcentaje de semilleros participantes con trabajos en eventos internos y externos	

Fuente: Elaboración propia

A modo de cierre

La apuesta curricular aquí presentada debe comprenderse como parte de un ejercicio articulado en el marco general de la planeación estratégica institucional, su elaboración comprendió la relación de procesos misionales, del sistema integral

de gestión, de la planeación institucional y de las experticias del liderazgo de la investigación en la Juan de Castellanos, y puede además servir como insumo para desarrollar procesos similares en otras instituciones, en este sentido, se comprende que más allá de la formulación de cursos, lo que se pretende es establecer estrategias para el fin último de construir una cultura institucional de investigación.

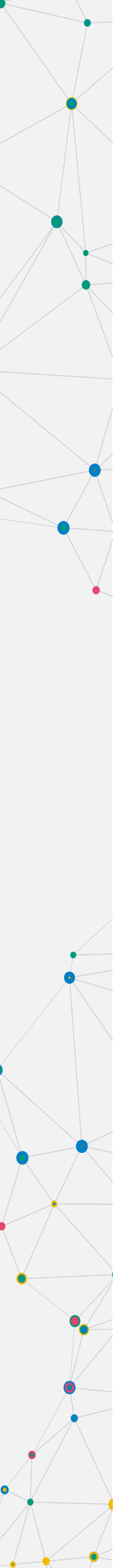
Tal como lo menciona el título del documento, es una apuesta que se hace en consonancia con los marcos flexibles de la educación contemporánea: transversalidad, resultados de aprendizaje, interdisciplinariedad, competencias, saberes aplicados, educación para la vida, entre otras, y como apuesta debe someterse a futuro a evaluación, con la claridad de que ya se tienen planteados algunos de los indicadores de medición, es también una apuesta a largo plazo que requiere apalancamiento institucional para salir adelante, es claro que, no solo basta diseñar un área curricular sino que también se requiere todo el soporte administrativo, académico y financiero para que se logren los objetivos micro como los del área y de los cursos particulares y los objetivos macro establecidos en el Plan de Desarrollo Institucional (2020-2029).

El hecho de enseñar investigación ha sido un ejercicio generalmente instrumental y operativo que finaliza en la formación de pregrado, y que deja sinsabores tanto para los estudiantes como para los docentes justamente por la falta de inclusión de estrategias que permitan abordar el contexto y por no ir más allá de una aplicación instrumental, en verdad, investigar en efecto es una de las herramientas más valiosas para el fomento del pensamiento crítico y si se trabaja bajo esta perspectiva es posible que estas ideas sobre el aprendizaje para la vida se vean reflejadas en una próxima generación.

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Fomentar la capacidad de expresión oral en los estudiantes universitarios mediante estrategias de comunicación

Fostering the speaking skill in university learners through communication strategies

Favoriser l'expression orale chez les apprenants universitaires grâce à des stratégies de communication

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Abstract

Speaking in a foreign language can be a vast challenge for most learners, and this is the case of a group of learners in a university setting located in Cartagena. Therefore, this article reports the findings of a pedagogical intervention, which implemented communication strategies to foster university learners' speaking skills. The strategies aimed to reduce learners' reliance on their L1, to strengthen their L2 oral fluency, and to lower their affective filter when performing oral tasks. Twenty-two learners participated in the intervention stage, which consisted of six workshop that were designed including several communication strategies and then implemented. Data collected, in the action stage, displayed that communication strategies had a positive effect on learners' L2 oral proficiency, and suggested that the implementation

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of these strategies and meaningful oral tasks were beneficial to broaden and to refine their lexicon, to improve their fluency, and to lower their affective filter.

Keywords: Affective Filter; Communication Strategies; Fluency; L2 Repertoire; Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Approach.

Resumen

Hablar en un idioma extranjero puede ser un gran desafío para la mayoría de los estudiantes, y este es el caso de un grupo de estudiantes en un entorno universitario ubicado en la ciudad de Cartagena. Por lo tanto, este artículo reporta los hallazgos de una intervención pedagógica, la cual implementó una serie de estrategias de comunicación para fomentar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes universitarios. Las estrategias tenían como objetivo reducir la dependencia de los alumnos en su primera lengua, fortalecer su fluidez oral en inglés y reducir su filtro afectivo al realizar actividades orales. Veintidós estudiantes participaron en la etapa de intervención, la cual consistió en la implementación de seis talleres que se diseñaron incluyendo varias estrategias de comunicación. Los datos recopilados, en la etapa de acción, mostraron que las estrategias de comunicación tuvieron un efecto positivo en la competencia oral de los estudiantes en el idioma extranjero y sugirieron que la implementación de estas estrategias en compañía de actividades orales significativas fue beneficiosa para ampliar y refinar el léxico de los estudiantes, mejorar su fluidez, y reducir su filtro afectivo.

Palabras Clave: Filtro Afectivo; Estrategias de Comunicación; Fluidez; repertorio en una segunda lengua; Enfoque de Enseñanza del lenguaje a través de tareas.

Introduction

For more than a century, language teaching was mostly devoted to developing linguistic competences – lexical items and forms – with the belief that by doing so, learners would acquire the ability to effectively communicate (Bailey, 2005). This approach of teaching progressively changed to one that emphasizes the notion of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), (Canale & Swain, 1980) in which interaction and meaning were regarded as a distinct feature of grammar knowledge (Savignon, 1991). Then, not only does speaking require a linguistic component but also social skills like adequacy, politeness, formality and the use of strategies to perform effectively despite learners' language weaknesses (Nunan, 2018). In this research project, the researchers considered the speaking skill an immediate need for the EFL learners enrolled in

the Music program of a private university in Cartagena, since it would give them the opportunity to advance in their professional life and to interact with colleagues in other parts of the world.

A qualitative methodology was used to develop the research proposal, and given the nature of the problem, the researchers opted for the implementation of action research for the pedagogical intervention as an attempt to foster the speaking skill. The proposal was developed in three stages: diagnosis, action, and evaluation. In the first stage, several instruments were applied in order to collect data and to identify the problem. In the action stage, the pedagogical intervention was developed through the implementation of six workshops, and in the evaluation stage, results from the instruments were analyzed in order to assess the scope of this intervention.

Results suggested that the use of oral communication strategies have a positive effect on learners' L2 oral proficiency. Learners found alternatives to deal with a communicative situation, improved their lexical repertoire, and learned how to be resourceful when it came to using it, bettered their fluency, and dealt successfully with emotional factors, which may have hindered their performance in their L2.

Rationale

This study attempted to make contributions in the EFL community as it evidenced the way learners' speaking performance improved. It considered some strategies and tasks that could be used by EFL teachers to foster the speaking performance. In this view, learners are recommended to take advantage of their current lexical knowledge and their partners' scaffolding development and assistance in order for them to better their speech accuracy, fluency, coherence, and lower their affective filter when performing an oral task. In this sense, it is important to highlight the fact that the learning of linguistic and lexical features does not guarantee the master of the speaking skill. However, these features contribute somehow to achieve learners personal, academic, or professional goals. Thus, effective oral communication implies interaction abilities, the skill for learners to know when to talk (turn-taking), and talking in real time – in most cases, with little to none preparation – (Thornbury, 2005).

This research project attempted not only to benefit learners, but also to help the researchers have insights on what the most effective communication strategies and oral task work for fostering the speaking skill. Thence, the results could enrich the researchers' own practice as language teachers.

In the national context, this project aims to provide EFL teachers with a source of ideas and strategies to be implemented in their L2 classes for improving university learners' speaking skills. In this sense, this project may help learners to develop effective

oral communicative skills as proposed by MEN (National Ministry of Education) with its “Colombia Bilingüe” project.

Moreover, the results of the study will let EFL teachers reflect about their current teaching practices and make the necessary changes to foster learners’ speaking skills. They can resort to a number of approaches, strategies, and tasks, which can be implemented in this regard. The proposal suggests EFL teachers and professors to focus on improving learners’ communicative competence, by designing tailored methodologies, strategies, and tasks, which best respond to their very particular needs in their settings.

Finally, by taking into account that this is a research endeavor, it will serve for other researchers to have a brief overview on current practices and inquiry aiming to foster EFL learners’ speaking skills. Research is no longer exclusive of specific researchers, book developers, material writers, or methodologists (Bygate, 1987). And now, teachers are much enthusiastic about the importance research has and the impact it causes on their daily teaching practices, and how beneficial it is for teachers, learners, and the community, in general (Castro & López, 2014). Implications of this research will help teachers to gain some knowledge about which tasks and strategies seem to prove beneficial for learners in the development of their speaking skills. Then, teachers can tackle learners’ prior knowledge, by adapting strategies and tasks, which best suit their particular needs.

Statement of the Problem

During the implementation of the diagnostic stage, some instruments were administered to know more in depth the strengths and weaknesses of the students related to the EFL process. Observations, learners’ surveys, and teacher’s interview showed that learners relied on their L1 when they failed to find the right word or structure to get their message across in the L2. They mixed their mother tongue with the target language as a way to compensate for their weakness in the L2. This weakness was also reflected on their difficulties to attain oral fluency like in the case of producing incomplete utterances.

Moreover, it was evident that learners relied on memorization and translation from the L1 to the L2 and vice versa as a means to accomplish language tasks. This information provided evidence of learners’ reliance on the L1 whenever they had difficulties, which could be an indicator of poor lexical knowledge that hinders their

oral skills. In addition, the language elicitation instrument used in the diagnostic stage indicated learners' weaknesses in production of complete speech, accuracy, and fluency.

On the other hand, the results of the data evidenced learners' concern and anxiety when performing oral tasks. They reported having felt dissatisfied with their oral performance.

Considering the results of the diagnostic stage, aspects, such as learners' reliance on their L1, oral fluency, and affective filter were key in the design of actions in order to improve their current learners' situation. The researchers used that data in order to reflect and to devise a pertinent pedagogical intervention, which affected learners' speaking performance positively.

Research Question and Objectives

Research Question

How can communication strategies under the TBLT approach affect college learners' speaking skills in a public university?

Objectives

General Objective

To examine the impact that communication strategies have on college learners' speaking skills.

Specific Objectives

- To describe the effect that communication strategies have on learners' affective filter.
- To determine if communication strategies diminish learners' reliance on their L1.
- To appraise the influence that communication strategies have on learners' L2 oral fluency.

Theoretical Framework

This section considers some theoretical concepts, which contribute to frame the situation for a better description, understanding and analysis. The concepts, which are relevant for this study are briefly described: speaking, speaking activities,

communication strategies, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), affective filter, oral fluency, and vocabulary

Speaking

Thornbury (2005) describes some of the key features of any speaking act: (a) its linear nature. It means, it is produced word by word, utterance by utterance. (b) Its contingent nature, which explains that speaking depends on the flow of the conversation. That is to say, people should adapt what they say, by taking into account their interlocutor's responses. And (c) its spontaneity, which implies little time to plan what people intend to say. In the EFL context, a speaking activity should then allow learners to develop their oral skills as long as it enhances the fulfillment of the aforementioned features, inherent to a real communication situation. In the learning process, teachers must provide learners with plenty of opportunities to use their linguistic and lexical knowledge in a more functional manner, by having them speak, as much as they can, in class.

In addition, Bygate (1987) acknowledges that language learning is not just a matter of knowing about the language, but how to use it properly, in a given situation. In this sense, there is a distinction between knowledge and skill in a foreign language. Similarly, Chastain (1998) differentiates several components in speaking: grammar knowledge, strategies for communication, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. When the teacher promotes the development of these components, learners can perform meaningful oral traits. By considering these conceptions, the researcher recognizes speaking as a complex skill, which requires that learners know how to react in a real conversational situation supported by their communicative strategies, linguistic knowledge, and awareness of the social interactions involved in the speaking act.

Speaking Activities

Prieto (2007) distinguishes four types of speaking activities, which are used in the classroom setting, namely, performance, controlled, guided, and freer activities. In performance activities, the focus of the activity is on the communicative act rather than the linguistic features of the target language with the premise that linguistic mistakes will disappear as language is practiced. The controlled activities involve repetition to achieve language accuracy. She provides examples of this type (find someone, who carries out tasks, answers questionnaires, and fills in information gap tasks). Guided activities usually involve a model, which learners follow and adapt to their communicative need. These tasks still focus on accuracy and practice on a specific linguistic form. and

the last type, freer activities, offers a space for creative practice, which aims to fluency development, with less emphasis on the drill of grammar structures.

In addition, Herazo (2010) suggests two activities: to help learners to develop their speaking skills and to make them resemble more like those used in authentic oral production. The former, *survey activities* are based on learners' oral tasks in which they ask questions to their partners in order for them to get some information. In these tasks, learners do not memorize lines or questions. They rather ask questions on the spot as they need some information, by listening up to their partners' answers as they interact. These tasks, as opposed to *script-based exchange* activities, provide a more authentic communication since learners do not know what their partners' answers will be like. Thus, they are actively involved in speaking and listening tasks, not just repeating a script previously learned by heart. The latter relates to *pedagogical conversations*, which are teacher-learner tasks, which enable a contingent and equal interaction. They are not planned conversations. They rather emerge naturally. In this case, either the teacher or learners may initiate the conversation, the role of the teacher is not much of an evaluator, but of a guide, who helps to direct the flow of the conversation, by trying to elicit learners' linguistic competence in the L2 in meaningful encounters. Therefore, in *pedagogical conversations*, L2 teachers focus on communication rather than grammar. As for the Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) approach, it is the L2 teacher, who always initiates a conversation, he waits for learners' response, and he provides them with the necessary feedback.

Communication Strategies

In a broad sense, Oxford (1990) defines strategies as actions, behaviors, steps, and techniques, which students use intentionally for L2 skills improvement. Bachman and Palmer (1996) provide a definition of what is called *strategic competence*: "(...) a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use as well as in other cognitive activities." (p. 70). Moreover, Nakatani's (2005) definition of this term is the capacity of communicating effectively in a process which implies a planning (pre-task), an interaction process (on-task), and a follow up (post-task) in the achievement of a communicative goal.

In this study, the term *strategies* are coined as the intentional use of an array of metacognitive and cognitive actions before, during, and after the oral task, and the application of the linguistic knowledge in a functional manner in order to accomplish an oral communicative goal. In terms of oral communication strategies, Dörnyei (1995)

divides them into compensatory, time-gaining, and avoidance or reduction strategies. For the purpose of this research, the researcher opted for only compensatory and time-gaining strategies.

Compensatory Strategies

This set of strategies are useful for learners when their linguistic repertoire is limited. In terms of speaking, it is a means of helping learners to keep the flow of a conversation, at the same time that they can learn new vocabulary and expressions as they interact with their interlocutor. (Oxford, 1990)

Appealing for assistance “involves asking someone for help in a conversation by hesitating or explicitly asking for the missing expression. (...) [in this strategy] the learner wants the other person to simply provide what learners does not know, not to explain or clarify” (Oxford, 1990: 95). Learners simply say the first part of the sentence and wait for their partner to complete the sentence, or they ask questions like *how do you say ...?*

In the use of **circumlocution or synonym**, the learner either describes or provides examples of the word he wants to convey. For instance, *the thing you use to cut the hair*; or use a word that is close in meaning to the lexical term that the learner does not remember or know. For instance, use *ship* to refer to *sailboat*. (Dörnyei, 1995; Oxford, 1990; Tarone, 1981).

Adjusting or approximating a message involves students altering their output, they omit some information, simplify ideas, or express something that has a similar meaning to what they pretend to say. They also use expressions that are less accurate, as a resource to replace ones they do not know or remember. (Oxford, 1990; Tarone, 1981).

When students **select the topic**, they have the chance to decide on topics that are of their interest and thence they feel more comfortable with; and advantage of this

strategies is that they can opt for topics that contains vocabulary that is familiar for them. (Oxford, 1990).

Word coining takes place when learners create a new word to convey a word that they do not know. They can also create a new L2 word by using a “supposed rule,” for example, use *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*). (Dörnyei, 1995; Oxford, 1990).

Time-gaining Strategies

These strategies are mainly aimed “to gain time and maintain and to keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty” (Dörnyei, 1995: 58). Within these strategies, the researcher used “**fillers/hesitation devices** - using filling words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., *well, now let me see*) -” (Dörnyei, 1995: 58).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The pedagogical intervention in this research was framed within the TBLT approach. This approach is characterized by fostering real communication, by involving meaningful tasks, which promote learning, and learner’s constant interaction in a naturalistic setting (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In TBLT, tasks are ‘goal oriented,’ which means that students need to interact, understand, and negotiate the meaning so that they can successfully achieve them. Besides, tasks also have an outcome, which implies that students do not complete tasks just for the sake of practicing linguistic forms but rather they use language functionally (Willis, 1996).

Considering these key features, TBLT suited the research proposal since this approach embraces activities, which feature situational conversations (giving directions to a stranger/friend, making a phone call to a hotel). Thus, being the perfect setting for introducing oral communicative tasks and strategies, which assist learners in the development of their oral skills.

Furthermore, Willis (1996) distinguishes two phases in TBLT, the pre-task, and the task-cycle. In the pre-task, the teacher introduces the topic and the task students will perform, teacher and students explore the topic and learn vocabulary and expressions that may be helpful to accomplish the task through activities like short word games. In this phase, the author recommends listening to recordings of conversations or reading

pieces of text, which are related to the task. On the other hand, the task cycle is divided into three subphases: task, planning, and report.

In the task, learners carry out the task in their corresponding groups while the teacher monitors and checks comments on learners' production. Later, in the planning, they prepare a report of what they had done, practice, and polish up what they are going to say. Then, the teacher goes around the class, by giving them some advice and by making suggestions for improvement.

And finally, in the report phase, learners give an oral report of what they did. The teacher gives other learners a purpose to listen, so the teacher can ask other learners to take notes, to make any comments, or to add information about their partners' presentations. The teacher's role is to relate and to summarize all learners' contributions. The teacher's feedback could be either about content or form.

Affective Filter

Krashen (1982) states in his affective filter hypothesis the relationship between affective variables and their effect on language acquisition, by suggesting that learners, who have a high or strong Affective Filter tend to have more difficulties to assimilate input. Thus, they will have a hard time to express their ideas fully, which interferes with an effective communication. This assertion has as main pedagogical implication: a call for teachers to foster a learning atmosphere that lowers learners' Affective Filter so that the learning process results successful.

Moreover, Krashen (1981) distinguishes some categories inherent to the Affective Filter (motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety,) and claims that these feelings have different repercussions in the quality of learners' L2 acquisition.

Finally, Xiaoyan (2009) argues that the concept of Affective Filter can be incorporated in the language teaching setting because it could have a positive impact on learners' learning process. He recommends EFL teachers to create an adequate classroom atmosphere, which helps learners to lower their levels of anxiety, to be tolerant with the mistakes they make since it is inherent to the learning process, as long as communication is not sacrificed. The main idea is to get the message across, where

both the speaker and the receiver feel satisfied about the message being conveyed in the communicative act.

Fluency

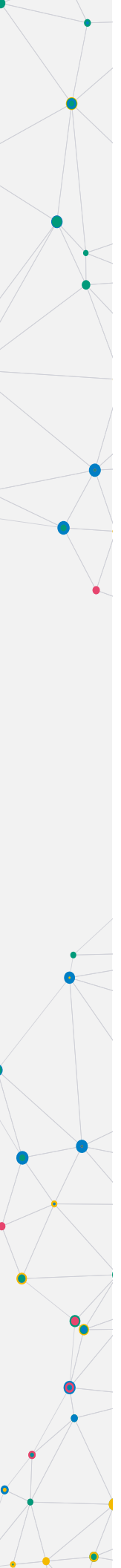
Hammerly (1991) considers that the term *fluency* should not only be narrowed down to speaking fast and well. Instead, he insists that in the L2, *fluency* should refer to a fast and smooth communication. However, it does not necessarily imply that learners should produce a completely free grammar errors speech. Regarding this assertion, González (2008) argues that there is a relation between *fluency* and *accuracy*, by exemplifying that an L2 user, who focuses on *fluency*, tends to be less accurate in his speech, and, the other way around, if the learner focuses on grammar accuracy, his fluency tends to hinder his performance. By considering these claims, we should conceive that oral communication involves creativity and spontaneity (Bailey, 2005). Thence, EFL teachers, who aim to foster fluency in their students should allow learners to speak freely, by avoiding emphasis on grammar correctness, as long as learners' grammar mistakes do not compromise meaning.

Moreover, Chambers (1997) distinguishes between *natural* and *unnatural pauses* in L2 learners' speech. On the one hand, it is important to highlight that pause are a natural component in any language, on the other hand, L2 learners make long pauses as an indicator of their limited repertoire. In this order of ideas, teachers should identify whether learners make pauses in their speech because a lack of the L2 vocabulary (unnatural pauses), or their pauses are intentional for their speech (natural pauses.)

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an essential component of any spoken language, and the researcher considered necessary to define and highlight its relevance in communication. Schmitt (2000), Neuman, and Dwyer (2009) agreed with the idea that learning vocabulary is paramount in oral communication, which, at the same time, involves a bidirectional process of oral productive and reception of the language. Consequently, vocabulary is the core component in language acquisition. Following that idea, the researcher asserts that these units of language provide learners with knowledge in order to convey meaning according to the context when expressing needs and emotions both orally and in writing.

Likewise, Wilkins (1972), states that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p.111). In light of this definition, learners



need to be constantly exposed to new lexical knowledge in both written and oral forms, to effectively communicate in conversations through speech. They should be able to understand and to utter most of the information they receive in order to ensure better oral performance.

Methodology

This section includes the process of the study which includes with the type of research, participants, methods, and instruments.

Type of Study

Considering the learning situation described in the statement of the problem and the objectives, the researchers used a qualitative approach of enquire, following an action research process. Moreover, as action research is a flexible design that allows the use of triangulation of different methods, the researchers decided on a Mixed Methods design (convergent design) as a means to collect data from different sources: learners, coordinators, and teachers, by having a broader picture of the current situation in the EFL context. Thus, having enough descriptive data gathered from (interviews and observations) that is complemented by qualitative data collection techniques, such as surveys.

Participants

The participants chosen for this study were twenty-two EFL learners, who are part of a Music program in a private university in Cartagena. The sample population was chosen because they were enrolled in a basic level of the English course (A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference) and they demonstrated a homogeneous level of English proficiency. The sample was made up of eight females and fourteen males, aged 18 to 22 years. They came from similar socioeconomic backgrounds (strata 1 and 2).

Instruments

The instruments and techniques used for data collection in the diagnostic stages were teacher's interview, coordinator's interview, learners' survey, and teacher's

observation along with diary entries. After gathering the data, the information was triangulated to obtain the most recurrent situations.

In the pedagogical intervention, the researchers devised a set of oral communication tasks and with speaking strategies aimed to enhance learners' speaking skills. Evidence of this process was gathered through direct observations, diary entries, learners' surveys, and assessment rubrics to have richer and deeper insights of learners' opinions and attitudes regarding the speaking skill, and the actions implemented in class.

In Table 1, instruments used in both diagnostic and evaluation stages are listed along with a brief description of their objectives.

Table 1. *Techniques Used in Diagnostic and Evaluation Stages*

Stage	Technique	Objective
Diagnostic	Teacher's Interview	To explore opinions, attitudes, and practices about teaching and perspectives towards learners' skills.
	Coordinator's Interview	To learn about his opinion about teaching, aspects related to the university context, and perspectives of music students.
	Learners' Survey	To become familiar with their FL background, attitudes, perceptions and preferences when learning English.
	Teacher's Observations	To record learners' moves, actions, and interactions in the EFL class.
Evaluation	Learners' Survey	To find out learners' self-perception of their oral performance, their perception towards communication strategies, and feelings towards the speaking tasks.
	Assessment Rubric	To assess learners' speaking performance.
	Teacher's Observations	To record learners' moves (attitudes, behaviors, individual and group work patterns, class participations, and comments) and teacher's moves (instructions, actions, and comments).

Action and Evaluation Stage

During the implementation stage, six workshops were administered with the sample population. For the process, the six communication strategies were alternated, including two strategies in most of them. These strategies were introduced by giving

an explanation on their use and some examples for their implementation. Table 2 summarizes the topics, objective and strategies applied in each workshop:

In the evaluation stage, the researchers gathered evidence from the six interventions, by using different instruments.

In the journal, some entries of the students' attitudes, behaviors, individual and group work patterns, class participations, and comments were recorded; as well as some of the teachers' actions (instructions, comments, interactions with students). In addition, some reflections and interpretations of these situations observed in the implementation of the workshops were also recorded.

The surveys' objectives were to find out learners' self-perception about their performance in the speaking tasks, their perception towards the implementation of the communication strategies in the workshop, and their feelings towards the speaking tasks.

The rubrics aimed to assess learners' speaking performance in a scale from 0 to 5, taking into account the following criteria: comprehensibility of speech, fluency (coherence and cohesion, continuity and flow of speech), accuracy and appropriateness of vocabulary, and effective use of communication strategies.

Table 2. *Content of Workshops*

No.	Topic	Objective	Strategies
Workshop 1	Healthy lifestyles	To discuss about healthy lifestyles and to provide suggestions on how to improve healthy habits	Approximation. Appealing for assistance
Workshop 2	Healthy lifestyles (part 2)	To share opinions and experiences related to physical activities or lifestyles	Circumlocution Fillers
Workshop 3	The environment	To discuss about environmental issues To talk about possible solutions for environmental problems To share different points of view about environmental issues around the world and in our country	Word coining Selecting the topic
Workshop 4	Being a wise consumer	To discuss about people's purchasing habits and how it affects our savings To give advice on how to save money To ask, to buy, and to pay for a product	Approximation Circumlocution

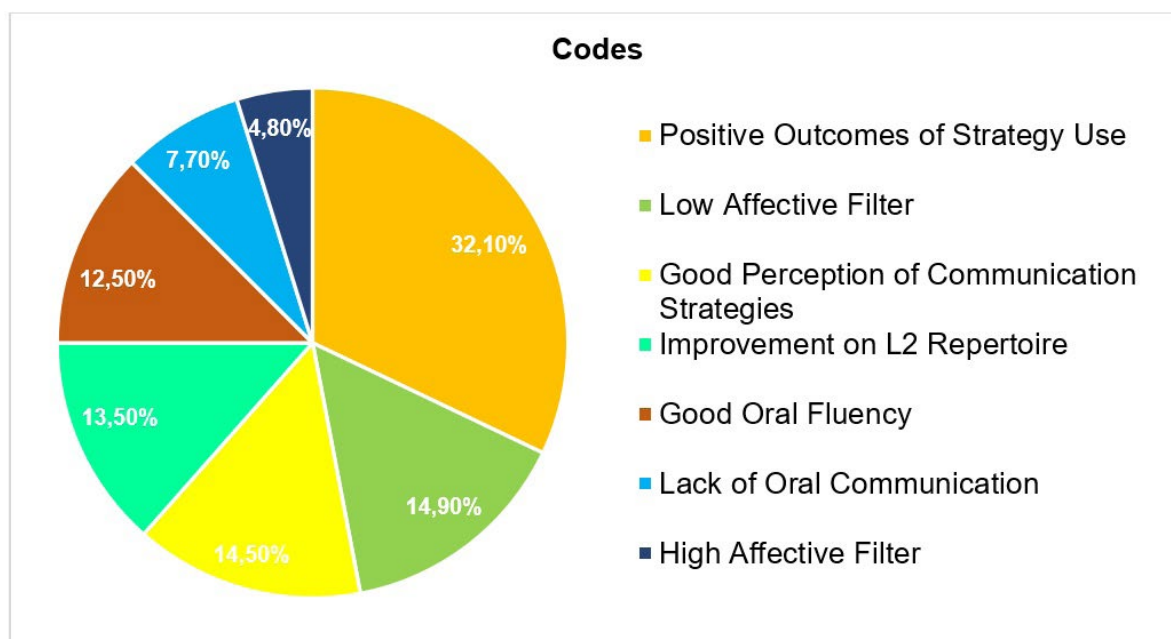
Workshop 5	Who's your favorite artist?	To discuss about the most influential artist in Colombia To talk about your favorite artist's life To share your preferences in music	Fillers Selecting the topic
Workshop 6	Are you into technology?	To talk about your habits when using technology To debate about different issues concerning the use of technology	Word coining

Findings

Figure 1. Displays the codes that were evinced after analyzing the results in all the workshops:

Figure 1

Emerging Codes in the Triangulation Process



Findings revealed that the learners expanded their vocabulary and tended to reduce their L1 use in the classroom. Their oral production in the L2 improved significantly in terms of fluency and coherence. In that way, they reduced their emotional issues that could affect their oral performance. Thus, the implementation of *communication strategies* was helpful to improve learners' oral performance.

This section presents the findings from the different variables taken into account in the implementation and evaluation stages:

The Impact of Communication Strategies on Learners' Speaking Performance

The introduction and implementation of *communication strategies* had a positive impact on the overall learners' speaking performance. They showed a significant improvement on their oral speech since they incorporated appropriate communication strategies in their set of language strategies. These helped learners to better their fluency and coherence, to broaden their lexicon, and to be resourceful when using their current vocabulary to tackle problems. These might affect their oral communication processes, as well as those affective factors, which might hinder their oral performance. In addition, learners applied these strategies throughout the workshops, in the speaking tasks, effectively. It was relevant to pinpoint that they recognized the importance of using communication strategies consciously to compensate for any linguistic gaps and to improve their oral production. Thus, they could select the most suitable communication strategies to overcome any drawback, which could interfere with their speech production.

Learners' Affective Domain

Students felt confident, and relaxed during the development of the oral tasks and activities to practice the communication strategies. For instance, the *selecting the topic* strategy allowed them to have control over the topics they wanted to share in the class presentations, thus, they felt confident and at ease when speaking since they had the opportunity to talk about topics that they were familiar with and organize the information accordingly. Besides, strategies like *approximation*, *fillers*, or *circumlocution* allowed them to repair their communication and maintain their speech, thence, these tools influenced their confidence, since they could deal with difficulties they had in their oral performance. Moreover, students ascribed the positive shift in their affective domain thanks to (a) the type of tasks which usually covered topics they were interested in or related to their professional context, (b) the type of classwork which permitted students learn and find support from their partners' scaffolding, and (c) the positive classroom environment fostered by teachers and students' traits.

Learners' L2 Lexicon.

Communication strategies helped students broaden, refine their L2 vocabulary, and use it resourcefully to coin words, use synonyms, or describe objects or actions when they did not know or remember a target word; thus, they could continue their speech despite disregarding some vocabulary they needed to complete their utterances. Through the workshops, they learned to use the *approximation*, *circumlocution*, and *word coining* strategies to compensate for their lack of L2 vocabulary and avoid using the mother tongue when they encountered drawbacks in their communication. It was noted that some students used L1 at the beginning of the intervention, however students progressively avoided it in the subsequent tasks; as a result, they were able to complete oral tasks dispensing with the use of the L1.

Learners' Fluency and Coherence.

Through the implementation of the *communication strategies* students made a significant progress regarding their oral fluency. Learners were able to produce coherent, and fluent speech, and express complete ideas. Students' progress was evident since they managed with issues that affected their oral performance -long pauses, constant hesitation, and word repetition-. They relied on the use of *fillers*, *approximation*, and *appealing for assistance* strategies to better and maintain the flow of their speech. Consequently, these strategies provided lexical alternatives, thinking time, and reliance on students' help as tools to avoid breaks in their communication and abrupt pauses in their speech.

Conclusions

In this section, conclusions and pedagogical implications are stated for EFL teachers, researchers, and those interested in implementing actions in order to improve learners' oral skills in the classroom setting.

Communication strategies prove to have positive effects on learners' overall speaking skills. An adequate combination of these strategies along with certain oral tasks allow L2 learners to use it in a more spontaneous manner, by requiring little or no previous preparation. This assertion is supported by the most recurrent codes in the evaluation stage, *Positive Outcomes of Strategy Use*, *Low Affective Filter*, and *Improvement on L2 Repertoire*. For instance, *picture descriptions*, *discussion cards*, and *surveys* are tasks, which

imply learners dealing with communication in real time, by using their immediate lexical knowledge and speaking skills in an impromptu speech.

The Impact of Communication strategies on Learners' Affective Domain

The use of *communication strategies* has benefits not only for learners' performance, but also for their feelings and attitudes towards the oral tasks that they perform. In so doing, EFL learners raise their confidence and lower their Affective Filter when performing speaking tasks due to the use of different communication strategies, such as *selecting the topic, fillers, approximation, and circumlocution*.

Furthermore, teachers should provide learners the opportunity to select a topic based on their personal or professional interests in developing speaking tasks. This contributes to the enjoyment of the task itself, and it gives learners a sense of confidence, which, at the same time, influences on their ability to provide more organized and richer oral speeches.

Moreover, the use of strategies like *approximation, fillers, or circumlocution* also have a positive influence in their confidence and levels of anxiety; the fact that learners acknowledge they have tools to maintain a conversation helps them to reduce their affective filters since they have the ability to hold a conversation and, in case students have any difficulties, they can deal with these drawbacks by using communication strategies as a means to compensate for some linguistic gaps.

Likewise, the strategy *appealing for assistance* is helpful to handle with issues such as anxiety and shyness. In this sense, this strategy allows students to be scaffolded by their partners whenever they have any problem with their oral performance and, at the same time, it promotes interaction among students, creating a positive and collaborative classroom climate.

All in all, the use of communication strategies is associated with a shift in learners' affective domain and their mindset towards the oral tasks in the L2. They become more confident because of their partners' support and the tools that the strategies provide them to retrieve vocabulary and repair their lacks in oral communication.

Improvement on L2 Lexicon

The strategies *approximation*, *circumlocution*, and *word coining* are helpful for learners to improve and broaden their L2 repertoire. Students who incorporate these strategies, have the advantage to use their lexicon resourcefully to convey words they still disregard and reduce the L1 use, thus, they avoid failures and hold their speech.

These strategies are an alternative to compensate for gaps in L2 vocabulary, to do so, students learn how to use their available vocabulary to convey meaning and complete their ideas successfully. However, it is recommended to introduce these strategies to learners who have a sufficient lexical knowledge (A2 level of English proficiency and up) since a good amount of vocabulary is necessary to successfully use these communication strategies to craft and convey the meaning of the target words.

In addition, by using the communication strategies, students progressively dispense the L1 use in oral tasks. When they have drawbacks, the use *approximation* was effective to use similar words when they disregard a target word, *circumlocution* helps them to convey the meaning of a word by describing its more remarkable features, and *word coining* allow learners to craft words. All these benefits from communication strategies reduce significantly their reliance on L1. Considering these effects, if teachers implement these strategies, students can reduce significantly their L1 use and communicate effectively as they are learning new vocabulary.

The effect of Communication Strategies on Oral Fluency and Coherence

In terms of fluency, students can benefit from the use of communication strategies to foster this ability. Strategies, such as *fillers*, *approximation* and *appealing for assistance* are effective to foster this aspect; their use facilitates students' production of a speech that is coherent, connected, and smooth.

Firstly, students use *fillers* as a way of avoiding abrupt breaks in their speech since they gain thinking time to organize their ideas and recall the target words that they need to complete their utterances. By doing these actions, learners can reduce long pauses in their speech and maintain the attention of the audience. Similarly, the use of *approximation* and *appealing for assistance* are beneficial for students to have more lexical alternatives and partners' support when trying to convey an idea with their interlocutors, thus, both strategies help them to produce a complete and coherent speech. In addition, these strategies help them avoid problems that may affect their

oral performance, namely, long pauses, hesitation, and word repetitions; therefore, implementation of these communication strategies is suggested for teachers who aim to tackle these issues as a means to produce a coherent and fluent discourse.

The Implementation of a TBLT Approach to Foster Oral Proficiency

The use of a TBLT approach is advisable to improve learners' speaking skill. Students feel less stressed when grammar accuracy is not the goal of communication. The dynamics of the tasks and the assessment criteria are emphasized in the communicative and functional aspects of the speaking, rather than the grammar aspects. These decisions are constructive for learners' affective filters since they feel calm, unconcerned, and confident when performing oral tasks without any pressure for producing a free grammar errors speech.

Moreover, TBLT results in an effective shift in their affective domain thanks to (a) the type of tasks which usually covered topics they were interested in or related to their professional context, and (b) the type of classwork which permits students learn and find support from their partners' scaffolding.

In addition, by seizing they key features of TBLT like real communication, meaningfulness, and goal-oriented tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Willis, 1996,) students have the opportunity to better their fluency and vocabulary since they focus on achieving successfully a task rather than producing an accurate speech, allowing them to practice freely and negotiate meaning to reach the goal of the task. All in all, TBLT is a suitable approach to introduce and to practice communication strategies leading to learners' improvement speaking skills.

Limitations of the Study and Call for Further Research

On the other hand, along the action stage, there were some limitations that are necessary to acknowledge for the purpose of informing teachers and researchers who intend to replicate or adapt this study. For instance, some oral tasks required teachers to prepare students beforehand in order for them to achieve the goals. Additionally, students tended to over rely on their notes when performing role plays and oral presentations tasks, causing a lack of spontaneity in their speech. In this case, the researchers suggest teachers and researchers, who are interested in working on the improvement of speaking skills to consider the importance of exploring varied type of oral strategies and tasks to improve specific components of the oral skill. That means,

trying oral strategies that intend to develop fluency, vocabulary use, and pronunciation, so that there is spontaneous and authentic communication.

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¿Son necesarios los cursos de inglés con propósitos específicos? Perspectivas de estudiantes y graduados de una Universidad del Norte de México

Are ESP Courses Necessary? The Perspectives of Students and Graduates from a Northern Mexican University

Les cours ESP sont-ils nécessaires? Les perspectives des étudiants et des diplômés d'une université du nord du Mexique

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Abstract

Nowadays, university students need to be proficient in English if they want to be competitive in the globalized world. Nevertheless, studies show that when finishing university, not all Mexican students achieve this proficiency as they are not always interested in English classes. English for specific purposes (ESP) courses could aid in the motivation of university students, as they are designed according to the learners' needs of a specific field. The present paper is derived from two bachelor thesis and explores the needs of including ESP courses in four high-demand majors in a Mexican university in the North of Mexico, Medicine, Chemical Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, and

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Business Administration, based on the perceptions of 77 students and graduates from these programs. Findings suggest that ESP courses are necessary at the university level as they can positively impact the professional development of students, provided that they are well-designed and that they complement the general English courses that students take, through the acquisition of jargon and the development of the students' communicative competence.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, university students, needs analysis, English learning

Resumen

Debido a la globalización, los estudiantes universitarios necesitan ser competentes en el idioma inglés para tener oportunidades competitivas. No obstante, estudios muestran que al terminar la Universidad, no todos los estudiantes mexicanos son competentes en el idioma ya que no les dan la importancia necesaria a las clases de inglés. Los cursos de inglés para propósitos específicos (ESP por sus siglas en inglés) podrían ayudar a la motivación de los estudiantes puesto que están diseñados de acuerdo con las necesidades de los estudiantes de un área específica. El presente artículo se deriva de dos tesis de licenciatura y explora la necesidad de la implementación de cursos ESP en cuatro programas académicos de alta demanda en una Universidad Mexicana en el norte de México: Medicina, Ingeniería Química, Ingeniería Aeroespacial, y Administración de Empresas. La información se basa en las percepciones de 77 estudiantes y egresados de estos cuatro programas. Se encontró que los cursos de inglés con fines específicos son necesarios a nivel Universitario ya que pueden impactar positivamente el desarrollo profesional de los estudiantes, siempre y cuando estén bien diseñados y complementen los cursos de inglés general que llevan los alumnos a través de la adquisición de vocabulario técnico y del desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Inglés para propósitos específicos, universitarios, análisis de necesidades, aprendizaje de inglés.

Are ESP Courses Necessary? The Perspectives of Students and Graduates from a Northern Mexican University.

Nowadays, due to globalization, university students and graduates need to be proficient in English in order to compete with their peers. According to Webber (2016), there are currently over 6500 languages in the world, being English the most

spoken one by speakers of other languages. Thus, being proficient in this language can provide more job and research opportunities to university students and graduates. Nevertheless, during the educational years of students, the learning of English tends to be focused on general communication but when they graduate from a program, they usually need more specific vocabulary; they need to use and understand the terminology related to their fields. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses could cover this need as they focus on teaching vocabulary related to a specific field or area of study. Nevertheless, even though this type of courses could impact the academic learning of English of university students, not all programs offer them.

The University in Northern Mexico where this study took place, is in this situation: although it offers English courses to its students, most of them are general English courses. All the students at this university must take four general English courses, from first to fourth semesters, being the B.A. in English the only program which is not required to take English courses as students of this major must be proficient in English since their first semester, that is, English is an admission requirement in this program. Similarly, the Aerospace Engineering program has an admission requirement of basic English proficiency, but they must also take the four mandatory English courses. The purpose of taking these compulsory courses is that students reach an A2 to B1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by the time they graduate. If students are proficient in English, they can exempt these courses by taking a proficiency test provided by the university. Thus, even though the university offers general English courses in order to achieve proficiency by the end of the academic programs, not all majors offer ESP courses for their students. Only a couple of programs include in their curricula technical English courses, which tend to be one-term courses or are electives. Consequently, only a few students acquire vocabulary of their field or jargon during their university studies.

This qualitative case study, hence, attempted to explore the viability of ESP courses in a Northern Mexican University through the analysis of the students' needs and graduates of four majors: Medicine, Chemical Engineering, Business Administration, and Aerospace Engineering. We attempted to do this by answering the following research questions:

- In what ways would an ESP course impact the professional development of the students of the above-mentioned programs in this university in the North of Mexico?

Are ESP programs necessary in this university?

To answer these questions, we gathered information between 2018 and 2020 from 77 participants: 17 from Medicine, 20 from Chemical Engineering, 20 from Business Administration, and 20 from Aerospace Engineering.

Brief Review of the Literature

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been an important area of English teaching and learning since the 1960s as it allows learners to focus on a specific field. So, what exactly is ESP? Anthony (2019) claims that it is a teaching approach where students of a specific area of knowledge learn English to improve their language skills by incorporating specific vocabulary that is used in their jobs. To complement this idea, Fiorito (2006) argues that the aim of ESP is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real-world or wishes but instead, it is combined with the field, the subject area that is important and of interest to the learners as this will increase their motivation in learning. In other words, ESP aims at blending English with the context of the learners to encourage their motivation and interest in the language and to improve their communicative competence in a way that is useful in their working environment.

ESP courses, thus, emerged as a need to teach work-related vocabulary to students. According to Hutchinson and Waters (2010), there are three main reasons for the emergence of ESP: the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and the focus on the learner. In the past decades, universities realized the importance of exploring the needs of English in their particular fields as they wanted their graduates to remain competitive in a globalized world. Professors and those in charge of curriculum design, have studied how language is used in real communication in the different professions, and this fact affected the stages of ESP development, which include an analysis of the sentences and of the discourse used in the field of study (García, 1999).

This becomes relevant in the university context as students are preparing themselves in a specific field, hence, they need to use specific technical vocabulary or jargon in their classes, research, and in the future, in the labor market. According to Kavaliauskienė (2002), when ESP courses are taught at the university, students not only acquire vocabulary but also develop their communicative skills by using it through the reading and understanding of professional texts such as articles, essays, etc., and through the use of this vocabulary when they engage in presentations or discussions. At university, this engagement usually occurs in the first language of the students or in that in which the courses are taught. In Mexico, university courses are taught in

Spanish hence the jargon of each field is taught in this language but, when students are immersed in the labor market, they often need it in English as that is the language that has more updated academic literature in most areas.

Thus, the students' needs are a crucial element for ESP courses. A way of finding out what students want and, most importantly, need, is by conducting a *needs analysis*. According to Soruc (2012), a needs analysis is “a procedure for establishing the specific needs of language learners” (p. 14). Similarly, Brown (2009) defines it as “the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation” (p. 269). Thus, in order to create a course adapted to the students' needs, that is relevant to their field, it is important to first explore which are those needs.

Xhaferi (2009) argues that following a needs analysis approach “can be highly motivating for students because [they] are able to apply what they learn in their English classes to their main field of study” (p. 236), emphasizing, therefore, the importance of linking the language to the context of the students. Hence, as each ESP course has elements that are specific to a field, conducting a needs analysis is important because it will provide the specific characteristics of the group to teach. Dudley-Evans and St. John (2009) claim that a “needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching nor within language training but it is often seen as being the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a very focused course” (p. 122). This means that although conducting needs analysis to improve a course is a common practice in language teaching in general, in ESP it becomes more important because these courses are, to a degree, more personalized, as they are designed for a specific set of students with similar job-related needs.

Moreover, needs analysis is crucial in ESP courses as the exploration of the needs of the students will not only determine the vocabulary they need to use, but also the context in which it is used. Brown (2009) claims that ESP courses are not only about memorizing terminology but about learning to use that specific vocabulary in their everyday field of work. That is, ESP courses do not aim at the memorization of lists of words but at the communicative use of that vocabulary in context. Therefore, an identification of the elements that students want to learn may give the designers of the course an overview of the lexicon, discourse, and topics they must focus on. Georgieva (2010) claims that the needs analysis can also help the teachers identify all the vocabulary and terminology related to the students' field that will allow them to

perform successfully in their jobs. Thus, there is indeed a prominent lexicon element in ESP courses, but also a communicative one.

Based on the students' needs, ESP courses can be of two types. Basturkmen (2003) claims that ESP courses are divided into wide-angled and narrow-angled designs. Wide-angled designs are directed to students who want to study abroad and people who need to use English at work. Narrow-angled designs, on the other hand, are for the same type of people but with a very specific target of workplace, professional, or academic environment. For example, a wide-angled design could involve an ESP course for medical students while a narrow-angle one, an ESP course for anesthesiologists.

Research, therefore, shows the importance of ESP courses as they aim at providing students with tools that will help them in their professional development. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the university where this study took place, does not include mandatory ESP courses as part of the curricula. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the needs of students and graduates of four high-demand majors: Medicine, Chemical Engineering, Business Administration, and Aerospace Engineering.

Methodology

As mentioned above, a qualitative case study (Creswell, 2014) was carried out with 77 participants from four different majors: 17 from Medicine, 20 from Chemical Engineering, 20 from Business Administration, and 20 from Aerospace Engineering. These majors were chosen as they have a big population of students and because they are locally known for needing English in the labor market either for research or work opportunities in the USA or other countries.

Data was gathered from open-ended interviews and questionnaires between 2018 and 2020. Originally, we attempted to conduct follow-up interviews as well, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to contact participants for face-to-face interviews, so we opted for follow-up questionnaires. The students who participated were between 18 to 25 years old, while the graduates between 23 and 30 years old. To gather data, first, we asked the university language center for permission and contact information of the English coordinators of these four academic programs. Then, we made appointments with the coordinators who told us how to contact the English teachers, students, and graduates.

Before the pandemic, we were able to apply the first questionnaires face-to-face, and we interviewed the coordinators and teachers as well. These interviews were to get

more information about the way the English program works, but our main data was gathered from students and graduates as our study focused on their perceptions. This is why we do not consider teachers and coordinators participants of the study per se, as the information we got from them was informative but not the focus of the study.

We got written consent from our participants. Moreover, they were told what the study was about, its purpose, and contact information. Participants were also told that their responses would be used to write our bachelor theses. Therefore, this paper reports on the main findings we got in our theses. The data we gathered was anonymized to protect the identity of the participants. They were assigned a code made from the letter S for student or G for graduate, then a letter M for Medicine, An Aerospace Engineering, C Chemical Engineering, and B for Business Administration, and then a number assigned to each participant of each major.

To analyze the data gathered, we digitalized the answers and then used axial coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, we observed a central phenomenon in each participant, the needs of students and graduates for an ESP course, and then, we compared and contrasted the information with the other participants of the same major, and then a final comparison with the four majors. We designed the following diagram to guide our analysis.

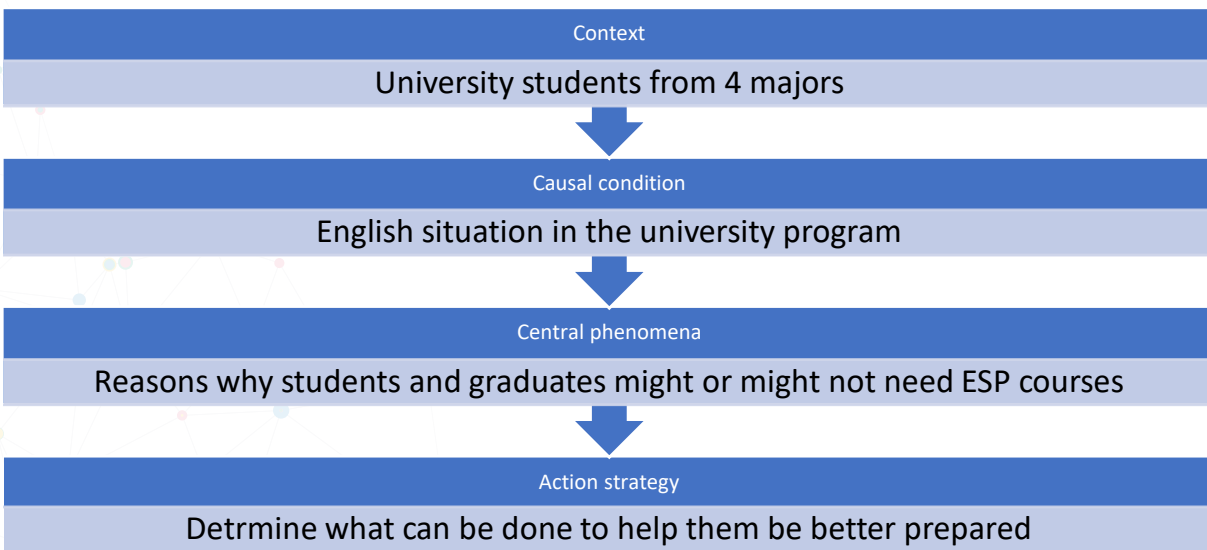


Diagram 1 Analysis guide

The context we studied was four majors at a Mexican university in northern Mexico, where we wanted to explore how English is taught to determine through interviews and

questionnaires if universities and graduates need these courses and why. The diagram was later adapted to present the findings as can be seen in the results section below.

The English Situation of the Medicine Students and Graduates.

The Medicine program at this university is one of the few which offers an ESP course, Medical English, besides the four mandatory general English courses required by the university. Nevertheless, this is only an elective which means that not all the students take it so not all of them finish their Medicine program knowing jargon in this field. Moreover, the general English classes and the elective are both face-to-face and virtual, but the students who take the virtual course do not interact with their professor as the platform only includes an explanation of the topic and exercises to practice.

The findings from the Medicine students and graduates are summarized in the following diagram, adapted from the one presented in the methodology section.

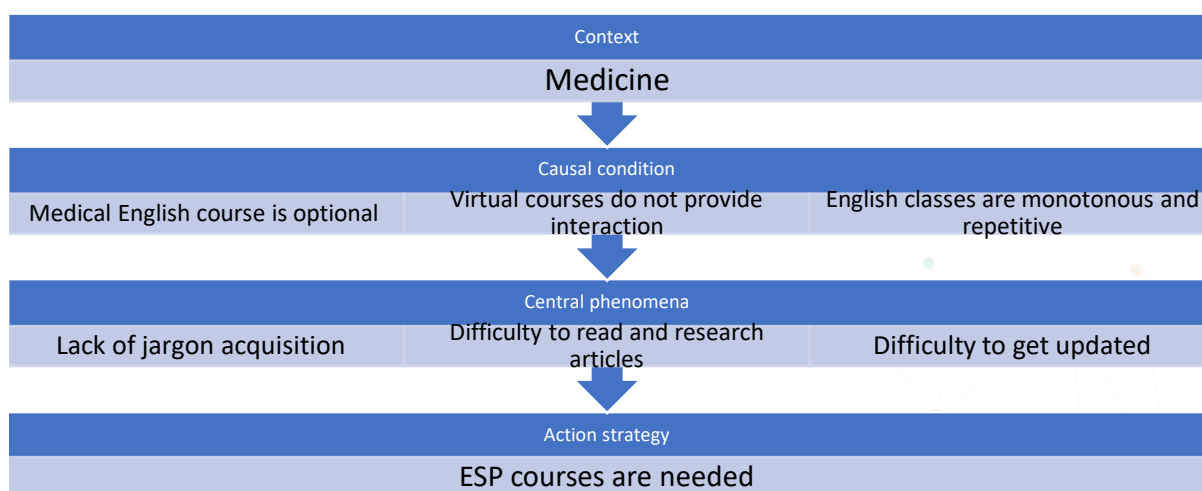


Diagram 2 Medicine Results Summary

The participants from the Medicine School believe that ESP courses are needed in the major. In this School students take general English classes face-to-face but also online, and most of the participants in this study are registered in the online courses, thus, their perspectives come from this context. The teaching of English online through a platform occurs because the Medicine School has a high number of students, so virtual courses offer flexibility to the learners to take the class at their own pace and having time to attend the laboratory and practice courses specific to the medical area.

Nevertheless, a disadvantage of virtual courses is that learners are unable to interact with peers, neither with their teachers nor classmates, and they believe that this is a

drawback as they cannot practice speaking. Students also argue that the English classes tend to be monotonous and repetitive and that many of the practice activities consist of simple grammar exercises, so they do not feel they make improvements in their English level. The general English lessons are, therefore, more grammar-based as learners do not have opportunities to develop their communicative skills and are unable to acquire the proficiency they want.

Therefore, the grammar-based courses offered by the program are incongruent with the communicative needs of students and graduates. Participants claimed that they are interested in learning English both for personal and professional reasons. They want to be able to communicate with foreigners but also to understand information relevant to their major as they consider that translations are sometimes wrong.

Participants also mentioned that they want to learn English to do research in their field and to get a better job and academic-related opportunities as professionals. Moreover, three participants, SM1, SM4, and GM5, claimed that they practice their English and try to be updated by reading articles, but argued that it is hard for them to understand the jargon used in them, so they constantly need a dictionary or online translator.

Thus, participants from the Medicine School believe that their general English courses do not provide them with the knowledge and proficiency they need once they finish their studies. They consider that ESP courses would help university students to acquire jargon while developing their communicative skills. Moreover, students think that ESP courses should be mandatory as not all of them have the opportunity to take the Medical English elective as it sometimes clashes with their other classes' schedule, but that they should be designed in such a way that they learn jargon but also practice the communicative skills they will need once they finish their major.

The English Situation of the Chemical Engineering Students and Graduates.

The Chemical Engineering program does not include in their curricula ESP courses, so students only take the mandatory general English classes. Students and graduates generally agree that these courses are very basic and do not allow them to use the language in a real context which is a problem as they need English in their field of work once they graduate. The findings of this group are summarized in the following diagram.

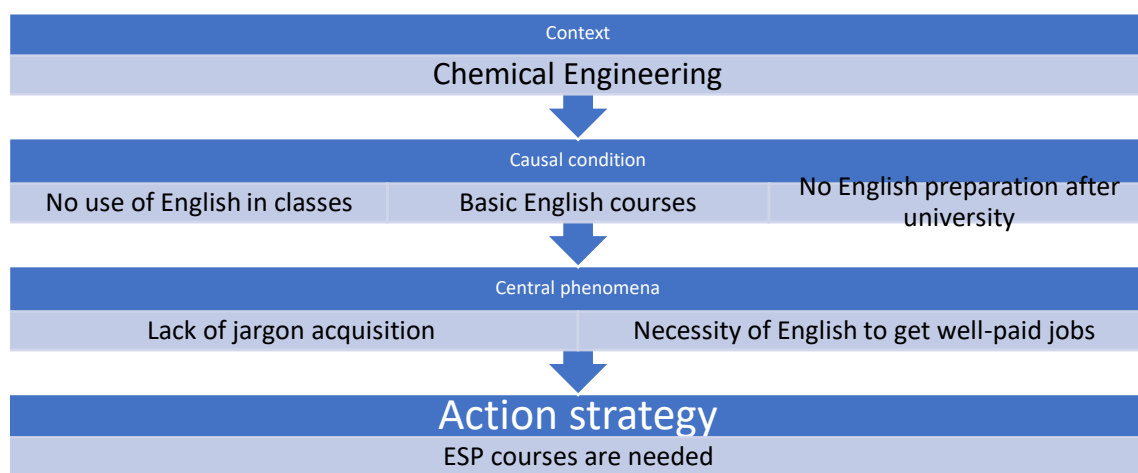


Diagram 3 Chemical Engineering Results Summary

The participants of the Chemical Engineering program believe that ESP courses are necessary as they do not acquire the proficiency and vocabulary they need during their university studies. They argue that the English lessons offered at school are too simple, so students tend to perceive them as boring. A reason for this is that, as participants claimed, English classes tend to focus on grammar practice rather than on using the language. This perception is similar to that of the Medicine School participants discussed above, as Chemical Engineering students also believe that they need more speaking practice.

Moreover, students and graduates of this major agree that English is fundamental once they graduate. All the participants from this program mentioned that English is necessary for the labor market as most publications are in this language, so if they want to be up to date to get better-paid jobs, they need to be fluent in the language. Participants also argued that besides fluency, they need to be acquainted with the terminology in their field, as the articles and general research they read uses very specialized jargon.

Participants claimed that ESP courses are necessary for the university as, once they graduate, it becomes harder for them to join an English course. This is because they tend to have work schedule issues and because, once they are in the labor market, they have several responsibilities that prevent them from finding time to study English.

Thus, graduates encourage the design of ESP courses so that students take advantage of them as part of their university courses.

The English Situation of the Aerospace Engineering Students and Graduates.

The Aerospace Engineering program in this university has as an admission requirement, a basic level of English. This program includes mandatory advanced English courses in its curricula, and one ESP course: technical English. Nevertheless, students and graduates consider that they require more ESP courses due to the nature of their major. The findings from this group of participants are summarized in the following diagram.

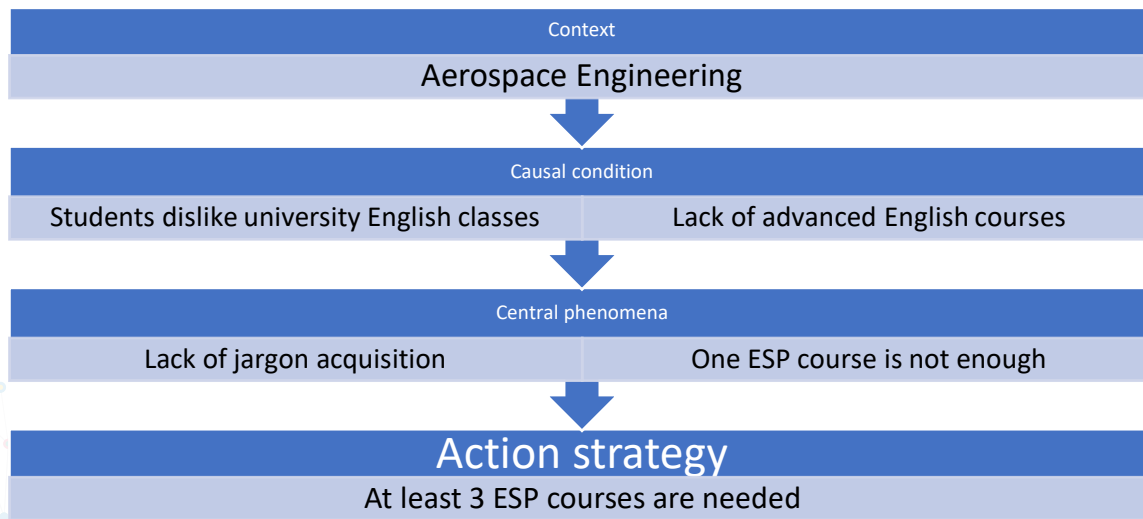


Diagram 4 Aerospace Engineering Results Summary

Participants claimed that their English courses at the university are too basic, even their Advanced English class. Students believe that the course syllabus needs to be modified to cover their needs as, just like with the previous two majors, they are grammar-based instead of communicative. As they are generally not satisfied with the university lessons, 70% of the students claimed that they take an extra English course outside the university.

Moreover, 80% of the Aerospace Engineering major students and 90% of the graduates claimed that English is necessary for their field, mainly if you want to work in a transnational company. However, the rest of the participants mentioned that when working in a Mexican company, English is not determinant to get a job, as “experience is

more important” (SA5). Hence, the need for English depends on the students’ personal aspirations: where they want to work.

Nevertheless, graduates believe that there are better job opportunities abroad, so they recommend that the university should add more ESP courses to the Aerospace Engineering major. They believe that having only one Technical English class does not provide them with enough lexicon to fully understand specialized articles and research, thus, they recommend that the program should have at least three ESP courses.

The English Situation of the Business Administration Students and Graduates.

Finally, the English situation of the Business Administration program in this university is similar to that of Aerospace Engineering. Students enrolled in this program must take the four mandatory general English courses, but they must also take an ESP course: technical English: Business Administration (Inglés técnico: LAE). Also, the general English classes offered in this program are face-to-face, virtual, and blended, so they use a platform provided by the editorial house of the books they use as a complement to the classes. The participants of this group also believe that one technical English course is not enough to acquire the jargon they need in the labor market. The findings of this group are summarized in the diagram below.

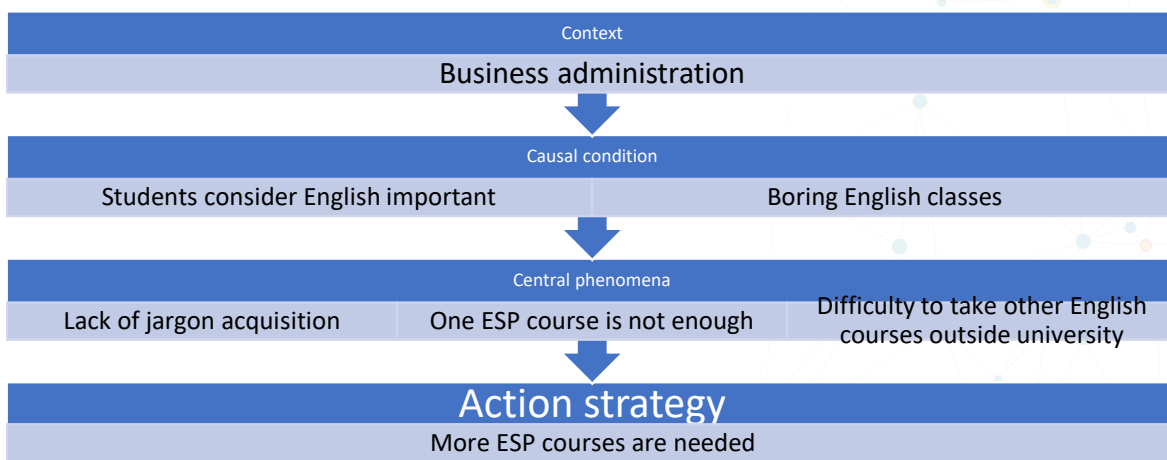


Diagram 5 Business Administration Results Summary

Business administration students and graduates do not think that the English classes offered by the university are good enough to develop their English skills as professionals. In fact, their perceptions of these classes tend to be negative. For instance,

80% of the participants claimed that the classes were bad, while the others mentioned that they were incomplete or regular. Only one participant mentioned that the classes were “good but not complete” (SB10) while another said that they were “ok” (SB 3). When questioned why they had this perception of the English lessons, participants complained about the lack of preparation of the classes from the teachers’ side and about how simple they think they were. Participant SB2 said that the English classes lack “commitment and useful information,” because, in his perception, some of the teachers do not prepare the classes and just make them answer the exercises on the platform. Other students claimed that classes are boring because they always covered the same topics and do not really pay attention in class. Nevertheless, students claimed that, although English classes at the university are generally bad, it is important that they learn the language as they may need it when trying to find a job.

Participants also claimed that the Technical English course could be better. Both students and graduates agree that it is important to learn the specific vocabulary of their field, but they believe that one ESP course is not enough. They also claimed that they would like to learn technical vocabulary in a way that they do not just need to memorize it, but put it into practice.

Regarding the importance of English in the labor market, students and graduates had different perceptions. 90% of the students claimed that English is important because they will need it in the future to get a good job, but the graduates stated that it is necessary “if you want an international job” (GB6) but not if you are working in Mexico. It seems, therefore, that similarly to the Aerospace Engineering major, people who study Business Administration may or may not need English depending on where they choose to work.

Discussion and conclusions

The general perceptions of students and graduates of these four high-demand majors are that ESP courses are needed, but also that their current general English courses should be re-designed to cover their language needs. Findings suggest that students and graduates perceive English in their labor market as necessary, which justifies the need for ESP courses at the university level. This is because, as Hosni (2014) said, if we want the learners to successfully become proficient in the language, the transfer of the contents seen in the classroom into the real world is essential. Thus, it is suggested that the university through the English coordinators and faculty, create

new strategies to improve the syllabus and teaching of the general English and ESP courses already offered so that students take full advantage of them.

Based on the perceptions of the participants of this study, university English programs must be designed in such a way that they cover the needs of the different programs so that students become fluent in the language and get successfully immersed in the labor market. The design of English courses must be carefully done to start tackling for once one of the main problems with English learning in Mexico: it seems that students take many years of English classes, but do not really learn and are not fluent even after graduating from the university.

Graduates have stated that they need better English classes to be real professionals, that is, classes where they learn something that will help them in their jobs. They have also claimed that at the moment of getting a job, they have needed to take extra English courses because the classes provided by the university were insufficient. They have felt insecure, and in the worst of situations, they have been rejected from very important jobs due to the lack of English knowledge.

This lack of English proficiency is mainly in the communicative aspect. Participants claimed that they need to improve their speaking, listening, reading, writing, and technical vocabulary elements as they are required by the companies where graduates work. This occurs because, as mentioned above, most English courses at this university are grammar-based instead of communicative.

Therefore, answering the first research question, in what ways would an ESP course impact the professional development of the students of the above-mentioned programs in this university in the north of Mexico? we can argue that well-designed ESP courses that complement the improved general English courses, would provide university students with tools and confidence to get better academic and job opportunities once they graduate. Thus, we can answer the second question, are ESP programs necessary in this university? with a definite yes.

Hence, it seems that the implementation of ESP courses in university majors is crucial so that students graduate better prepared to be updated in their field, with the ability to read and write academic papers, and with more job opportunities. This will help to improve the professional development and confidence of the students, as well as the prestige of the university by offering quality programs. Thus, we recommend that university programs conduct a needs analysis with students and graduates of their different majors, to first improve their general English courses and then to add to their curricula ESP courses. For ESP courses to succeed, the general English courses must be

re-designed to guarantee that students not only pass the classes but that they actually learn and are able to communicate with their peers and to ensure that learners receive quality courses and that graduates get successfully immersed in the labor market.

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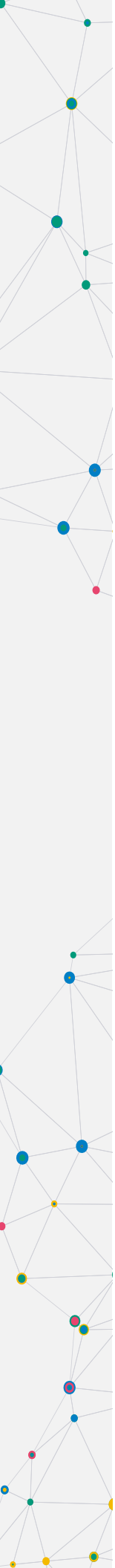
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Creación e implementación de cursos MOOC de francés, niveles A1 y A2 en el departamento de lenguas Fray Bernardo de Lugo, O.P de la Universidad Santo Tomás, sede Bogotá

Creation and Implementation of MOOC Courses in French, Levels A1 and A2 at the Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P Languages department, Santo Tomas University, Bogotá

Création et Mise en Œuvre de Cours MOOC en Français Niveaux A1 et A2 Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P, Université Santo Tomas, Siège Bogota

Angélica María Ruiz²³

Résumé

Cet article cherche à partager l'expérience de création des cours MOOC en français langue étrangère (FLE), niveaux A1 et A2, pour la communauté éducative de l'Université Santo Tomas. Ce processus a commencé en 2020, comme réponse aux difficultés rencontrées en formation en langues dues au contexte de pandémie du COVID-19, et a comme objectif de faciliter l'accès aux cours de langue offerts par l'Institut au niveau national. Cette réflexion inclut une description du processus de création et de mise en œuvre des cours, des résultats obtenus jusqu'à présent ainsi que des difficultés trouvées tout au long du développement des MOOC et des points à

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améliorer dans le modèle. On espère que ceci pourra être utile à d'autres enseignants qui voudraient l'explorer et, peut-être, le recréer dans leurs propres contextes.

Mots-clés: MOOC, FLE, apprentissage autonome, formation à distance, création de matériels.

Resumen

Este artículo busca compartir la experiencia de creación de cursos MOOC en francés, lengua extranjera (FLE) en niveles A1 y A2 para la comunidad educativa de la Universidad Santo Tomás. Dicho proceso comenzó en 2020, como respuesta a las dificultades en formación en lenguas producidas por el contexto de pandemia del COVID-19, y teniendo como objetivo el facilitar el acceso a los cursos de lenguas ofrecidos por el Instituto a nivel nacional. Esta reflexión incluye una descripción del proceso de creación y puesta en práctica de los cursos, de los resultados obtenidos hasta el momento, así como de las dificultades encontradas a lo largo del desarrollo de los MOOC y los puntos a mejorar en el modelo, esperando que esto pueda servir a otros docentes que quisieran explorarlo y, quizás, replicarlo en sus propios contextos.

Palabras clave: MOOC, FLE, aprendizaje autónomo, formación a distancia, creación de materiales.

Abstract

The main objective of this article is to share the experience of creation of A1 and A2 MOOC courses in French as a foreign language (FLE) for the community of the University Santo Tomas. This process started in 2020 as an answer to the teaching difficulties issued from the COVID-19 pandemic context, wanting to ease the access to the language courses offered by the Language Institute in a national level. This reflection includes a description of the creation and implementation process of the courses, of the results obtained so far, and of the difficulties faced along their development. It also includes the details to be improved in the model, hoping to provide an example for other teachers who would like to implement it and, maybe, replicate it in their own contexts.

Key words: MOOC, FLE, autonomous learning, distance learning, creation of learning materials.

Introduction

Au cours de ces dernières années, l'éducation en général - et plus spécifiquement en langues étrangères - a dû faire face à des changements importants par rapport aux didactiques et aux scénarios éducatifs dans lesquels des nouvelles interactions liées à la technologie ont eu lieu. En effet, nos étudiants sont de plus en plus connectés aux réseaux et la technologie est devenue une partie essentielle de leurs vies. Cette situation s'est accentuée avec les conditions de confinement imposées par la pandémie De la COVID-19, qui demandaient l'isolement social et la recherche de nouvelles manières d'interagir, de travailler et de se former à distance.

En Colombie, l'Institut Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P n'a pas été l'exception et a dû aussi chercher des stratégies afin d'assurer l'éducation de qualité qu'il a toujours offerte à ses étudiants à l'aide du modèle PMT ou présentiel au moyen de technologies. L'application du modèle a été un succès, en général. Cependant, il y avait encore une grande partie de la communauté universitaire qui ne pouvait pas accéder aux cours, principalement pour des raisons liées aux horaires et à la capacité de l'Institut qui était insuffisante face à la quantité de possibles étudiants. Comme réponse à cette situation, l'Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P, siège Bogota, a décidé de profiter des caractéristiques du modèle MOOC pour créer leurs propres cours virtuels autonomes et combler ainsi les besoins de la communauté éducative de l'Université Santo Tomas. La création des cours autonomes a commencé début 2020 et l'offre d'inscription a été ouverte tout au long du premier semestre 2021, comprenant des cours d'anglais, de français, d'italien, d'allemand et de chinois mandarin. Il s'agit d'un processus continu au cours duquel on améliore les cours déjà existants, on ouvre de nouveaux niveaux et on élargit l'offre d'autres langues telles que le portugais et les langues classiques (latin et grec).

Cet article se centre, donc, sur l'expérience de création et de mise en œuvre des cours en français pour les niveaux A1 et A2 sous le modèle MOOC au sein de l'Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo, siège Bogota.

Qu'est-ce qu'un MOOC ?

Les cours MOOC prennent leur nom de ses initiales en anglais *Massive Online Open Course*. Aussi connus en français comme des cours de Formation en Ligne Ouverte à

Tous (FLOT) ou des Cours en Ligne Ouverts et Massifs (CLOM), leur nom en anglais est si populaire qu'aujourd'hui ils sont simplement connus comme des « cours MOOC ».

Bien que les premières approches au modèle actuel aient vu le jour au début des années 1990 avec le surgissement du mouvement *Open Educational Resources* (OER) aux États-Unis, notamment à travers le projet *MIT OpenCourseWare* (MIT OCW) à travers lequel le Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) cherchait à publier les matériels d'enseignement produits dans leurs cours en ligne de manière complètement gratuite (Guttenplan, 2010), le terme MOOC surgit en 2008 lorsque Dave Cormier faisait référence à un cours appelé *Connectivism and Connective Knowledge* (CCK08) développé par les professeurs George Siemens de l'Université d'Athabasca et Stephen Downes du National Research Council. Ce cours a été conçu pour des étudiants de l'Université de Manitoba et son objectif était de rendre cette formation accessible non seulement aux étudiants de l'Université mais aussi au publique en général, gratuitement. Les étudiants pouvaient y participer en se servant de discussions sur Moodle, des blogs, et d'autres outils collaboratifs en ligne (Orientation Éducation, 2015). À partir de cette expérience, plusieurs types de MOOC ont vu le jour partout dans le monde, chacun avec des objectifs spécifiques et des publics de plus en plus ciblés.

Parmi les différents types de MOOC, il est possible d'en identifier principalement deux : les cMOOC et les xMOOC. Les premiers sont caractérisés par un intérêt plutôt pédagogique de partage et de réutilisation de matériels, ce qui renforce leur caractère collaboratif. Les deuxièmes, à leur tour, constituent une formation entièrement en ligne, disponible tout le temps et peuvent délivrer un certificat ou non, selon l'institution qui les propose. Actuellement, des pages de formation en ligne tels que Coursera ou EDX proposent une grande quantité de cours en ligne en accord avec plusieurs institutions du monde entier, dont des universités très renommées comme l'Université d'Oxford, l'Université de Cambridge, la Sorbonne, entre autres.

Les caractéristiques principales d'un cours MOOC résident dans:

1. Leur capacité à accueillir une quantité illimitée de participants/apprenants qui peuvent venir de tous les coins du globe, sans aucune restriction.
2. Une garantie d'accès illimitée au moment voulu, qui permet aux participants d'avancer à leurs propre rythme et capacités.
3. L'assurance de pouvoir faire leur formation entièrement en ligne à l'aide d'instruments pédagogiques conçus pour cela.

4. La possibilité de l'apprenant d'arrêter sa formation en tout moment, si celle-ci ne lui convient pas.

Tenant compte de ces caractéristiques principales, les MOOC constituent un modèle malléable grâce auquel l'enseignement peut être diffusé plus facilement sans perdre sa nature pédagogique car il ne s'agit pas simplement d'un recueil de ressources, mais d'une formation avec des objectifs d'apprentissage précis et faisables qui s'adaptent aux besoins des participants, notamment en termes de temps, d'espace et d'autonomie.

Bien que les caractéristiques du modèle puissent être considérées dans l'ensemble comme positives, il faut aussi signaler qu'il n'est pas parfait et qu'il ne convient pas forcément à tous les types d'apprenants car il demande un haut niveau d'autonomie et d'engagement de leur part, ce qui fait que le processus d'apprentissage ne soit pas toujours un succès (Adamopoulos, 2013). D'autres critiques au modèle sont associées aussi au manque de créativité des créateurs (Parr, 2013), au peu de rigueur par rapport à l'évaluation et aux résultats de formation et, finalement, à la validité des certificats obtenus à la fin des cours (Shea, 2015).

Processus de Création: MOOC français A1 et A2

Ayant pris en considération les points forts et les points faibles du modèle MOOC, l'Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P, siège Bogota, a commencé le processus de construction des MOOC début 2020 comme réponse au contexte de pandémie provoqué par la COVID-19. Dans un premier moment, le projet a commencé avec les professeurs de langue anglaise, française et italienne. Le développement des cours d'autres langues telles que l'allemand, le chinois mandarin et le portugais a commencé postérieurement. Ce processus a été divisé en plusieurs phases de design et production, basées sur des paramètres de création de matériels pédagogiques virtuels fournis par l'Université Santo Tomas. Les quatre phases générales proposées par l'Université se divisent ainsi :

1. Planification et design (auteurs et design formatif)
2. Pré-production (création des plans et des guides d'instruction)
3. Production (virtualisation des contenus et design des produits)
4. Post-production (révision des propositions, éditions et essais/tests)
(Universidad Santo Tomas, 2020).

En concordance avec ce modèle, la phase de planification et de design a commencé avec un travail par équipes selon les langues. La conformation d'équipes s'est faite

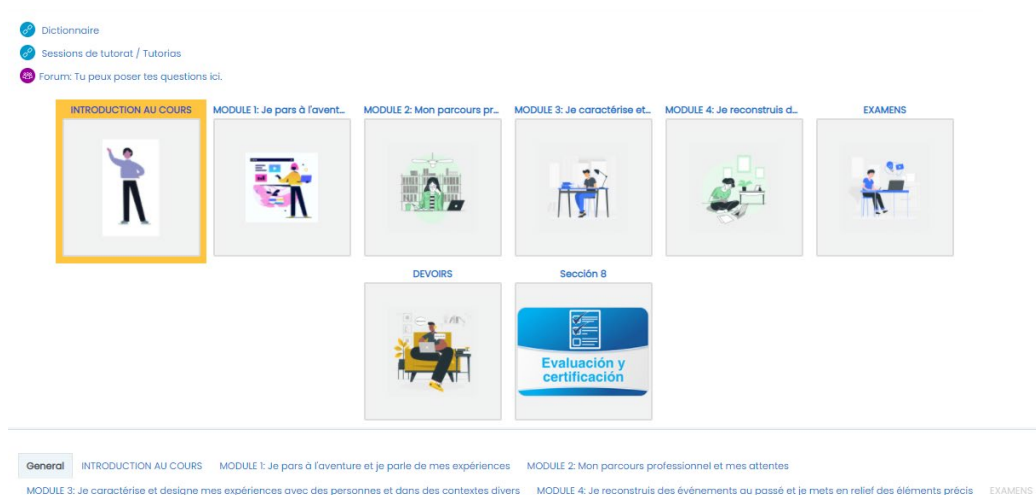
par rapport aux connaissances et aux capacités des professeurs de l'Institut en ce qui concerne les aspects langagiers, pédagogiques et technologiques nécessaires à la création de ce type de cours. De ce fait, chaque équipe a développé une recherche sur les cours MOOC et, comme résultat, a proposé un modèle adapté aux besoins de l'enseignement requis pour chaque langue en conformité au Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECR). Il est très important de tenir compte des particularités de chaque langue dans le contexte de l'Institut, ainsi que des niveaux considérés pour l'offre car, par exemple, la formation en anglais permet une avancée plus rapide dans les contenus que les autres langues dû au contact présumé des futurs participants avec celle-ci, tandis que les autres supposent un contact réduit ou nul. De leur côté, langues qui possèdent un système alphanumérique autre que celui des langues occidentales, comme le chinois mandarin, requièrent à leur tour des adaptations particulières dans le programme d'études qui ne sont pas applicables aux autres langues.

En français, le travail a été mené principalement par l'auteure de cette étude, l'équipe de professeurs étant trop réduite et/ou pas particulièrement familiarisée avec le numérique. La phase de recherche a non seulement inclus une exploration des cours MOOC en langue française, mais aussi un recueil d'expériences personnelles d'apprentissage à l'aide de cours MOOC dans le passé, ce qui offrait déjà une idée des stratégies optimales pour la création de nos propres MOOC. De cette façon, la proposition faite dans cette première étape incorporait du début la création de vidéos formatives divisées dans des modules de travail dans lesquels les étudiants auraient aussi des ressources supplémentaires et une série d'exercices pratiques par rapport aux contenus des vidéos. On proposait aussi deux évaluations : une évaluation des premières 30h de cours et une deuxième évaluation à la fin du cours, c'est-à-dire, ayant complété la totalité des heures de cours (60 heures en total). La proposition a été adoptée presque dans sa totalité par l'équipe créatrice des cours d'anglais, qui a agréé l'utilisation des vidéos comme matériel primaire d'instruction, ainsi que l'inclusion de ressources supplémentaires et d'exercices pratiques qui faisaient aussi déjà partie de leurs propositions. La structure générale des cours a été accordée entre les équipes de travail, ainsi que le nombre d'évaluations (1 par module) et elle est maintenant commune à tous les cours MOOC de l'Institut.

Bien qu'il y ait une structure commune, chaque équipe et chaque professeur a eu beaucoup d'autonomie en ce qui concerne la didactique des cours et la présentation des sujets. Pour cette raison, les cours de français sont divisés en modules (comme dans les autres langues), mais se développent par rapport à une thématique communicative spécifique qui n'est pas centrée sur la grammaire, mais sur des objectifs communicatifs (actes de parole) : se présenter, décrire un lieu, parler des faits passés,

etc. en concordance avec le CECR. Chaque module est intitulé de manière attirante pour que le participant sache ce qu'il/elle pourra faire une fois qu'il/elle aura fini toutes les activités proposées dans ce module : vidéos formatives, exercices et examen de suivi. L'image 1 montre un exemple des titres et de l'organisation des modules, pris du MOOC A2.

Image 1. Titres et organisation de modules MOOC A2



Note: Toutes les images des MOOC ont été directement prises des cours A2 actuellement offerts par l'Institut.

Les vidéos formatives commencent avec une présentation de ses objectifs spécifiques (voir image 2) et les thématiques sont organisées de manière que les points de grammaire et de vocabulaire s'enchaînent par rapport à ces objectifs, ayant comme cible la réussite de l'objectif général du module.

Image 2. Introduction aux vidéos formatives avec objectifs du module 1.1



Dans cette partie, il est important de souligner que la création, l'enregistrement et la production de la totalité des vidéos des MOOC A1 et A2 ont été entièrement faits par l'auteur de cet article ; la création des examens de suivi de chaque module a aussi été faite ou modifiée par ses soins et la plupart des exercices sont en train d'être modifiés ou adaptés au fur et à mesure par la même auteure, selon les observations et le retour des participants des cours. En ce qui concerne les ressources supplémentaires, il s'agit principalement de liens qui mènent vers des pages de formation en FLE qui renforcent les contenus des vidéos et des exercices de chaque module. L'image 3 offre une vue de la structure générale des cours avec ses éléments constitutifs.


Image 3. Éléments constitutifs des modules (MOOC A2 Module 1)

MODULE 1: Je pars à l'aventure et je parle de mes expériences


Leçon 1

CONTENU

Video 11



Video 12



PRATIQUE

- VOCABULAIRE LIÉ AUX ACTIVITÉS TOURISTIQUES.
- Compréhension orale: un programme de visite
- Compréhension écrite: HEBERGEMENTS INSOLITES EN FRANCE
- Les comparatifs
- Y ou EN?
- COD et COI
- Compréhension écrite: DES RÈGLES ET DES RECOMMANDATIONS
- LE PARTICIPE PASSÉ
- Conjuguez avec l'imparfait ou le passé composé
- Le subjonctif
- Compréhension orale: site d'immigration du Québec
- Compréhension écrite: OFFRES DU CATALOGUE DE VOYAGES EN LIGNE

Ressources

- Y et EN
- COD et COI
- Passé composé ou imparfait?
- Le subjonctif présent

Quiz

- Examen de suivie M1

Discussion

- Forum

Concernant la phase de post-production, le produit a été révisé par les instances du curriculum de l'Institut avant d'être mis à disposition des participants, et continue d'être évalué et enrichi constamment avec des modifications qui visent des cours toujours plus complets. Le contact avec les participants est fondamental car, malgré le haut degré d'autonomie dans leur formations, l'information qu'ils fournissent est essentielle pour l'amélioration des cours. Ce contact est possible grâce à des outils de communication (des forums, un courriel institutionnel, une page web pour les cours MOOC) qui ont été créés par l'Institut pour faciliter notre contact continu avec les participants.

Mise en Œuvre et Observations Partielles

La première phase d'offre des cours a commencé au mois d'octobre 2020. Les cours ont tout d'abord été ouverts uniquement aux professeurs et à la communauté administrative de l'Université Santo Tomas siège Bogota. Cette première expérience a permis aux professeurs chargés de la création des MOOC d'identifier certaines améliorations de premier niveau concernant principalement l'augmentation de moyens de communication entre les participants et l'Institut, suite à la réception de plusieurs demandes de la part des étudiants qui voulaient avoir beaucoup plus de soutien dans leurs formations. En effet, la plupart des messages montraient que les étudiants ne sont pas familiarisés avec le modèle car ils s'attendaient à avoir quelqu'un présent tout le temps pour les guider. Bien que le modèle MOOC s'appuie principalement sur l'autonomie de l'apprenant, l'Institut de Langues est conscient des contraintes qu'un étudiant qui a toujours suivi le modèle présentiel traditionnel peut avoir au moment de commencer un cours de ce type et, pour cette raison, a élargi les moyens de communication avec ses participants. Ceci a mené à la création du courriel institutionnel et du contact à travers le chat sur la page web des cours, ainsi que du système de tickets pour toute démarche ou question concernant leur formation. Ces changements ont été mis en place graduellement, la création de la fenêtre de tickets étant le dernier.

La première offre de cours MOOC comptait avec environ 480 participants dans toutes les langues offertes et, lors de sa période d'essai, la langue française a eu un total de 153 participants, tel que l'on peut l'apprécier dans le Tableau 1.

Tableau 1. *Participants des cours MOOC première offre siège Bogota*

Type de participant USTA	Langues offertes						
	Anglais A1	Anglais A2	Anglais B1	Anglais B1+	Français A1	Français A2	Italien A1
Administratif	94	89	46	51	54	22	93
Professeur	6	5	5	4	4	4	2
Total par niveau et langue	188	178	92	102	108	44	186
Total participants 479							

Source : Documents institutionnels Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P, mai 2021.

L'ouverture de cette première offre d'essai a permis d'identifier aussi certaines erreurs dans l'aire de français spécialement par rapport à deux aspects : les exercices pratiques et les examens. Ce problème était dû au fait que les exercices de pratique réalisés au début des cours ont été conçus par des professeurs collaborateurs du MOOC qui n'ont pas travaillé sur la conceptualisation des vidéos et qui n'avaient pas l'expérience nécessaire sur la plateforme Moodle. Dans un premier temps, cette décision avait été prise à cause du manque de temps et du nombre réduit de collaborateurs en français - comme mentionné auparavant dans cet article -. Ceci a malheureusement provoqué un retard dans la constitution des modules de prononciation et de conjugaison des cours existants, ainsi que dans la production d'autres niveaux de français qui sont déjà prévus par l'Institut. En effet, une révision profonde et des modifications importantes ont dû être effectuées avant la deuxième ouverture des cours pour la communauté universitaire au niveau national réalisée au mois de juillet de cette année. Parmi le travail réalisé, la plupart des exercices ont été modifiés ou définitivement remplacés car ils ne correspondaient pas aux thématiques ou aux objectifs des modules proposés dans les vidéos et les examens ont été aussi reformulés sur un point de vue plus centré sur la communication en contexte et moins sur la grammaire. Il y a un examen de suivi à la fin de chaque module (voir image 3).

Dans cette première ouverture des MOOC au niveau national, l'offre de langues s'est élargie comprenant un cours d'allemand et un cours de chinois mandarin niveaux A1. Plus de 660 membres de la communauté d'enseignants et d'administratifs USTA

Colombia s'y sont inscrits et, avec les étudiants, le total de participants a dépassé les 700 au mois de mai et continue d'augmenter.

Tableau 2. *Participants des cours MOOC première offre USTA COLOMBIA*

Langues	Anglais							Français		Italian	Allemand	Chinois -Mandarin
	A1		A2		B1		B1+	A1	A2	A1	A1	A1
Type de participant	F	E	F	E	F	E	F					
Nombre de participants inscrits	236	10	110	6	95	5	40	89	22	114	32	14

Source: Documents institutionnels Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo
O.P, mai 2021

Note : Les types de participants en langue anglaise se divisent en fonctionnaires (F) et étudiants (E)

Pour la prochaine évaluation de résultats des MOOC, l'institut prévoit l'inclusion des résultats obtenus à l'aide de l'implémentation de sondages aux participants qui auront fini leurs formations actuelles, afin d'obtenir une information plus détaillée en ce qui concerne la didactique des cours, l'obtention des objectifs linguistiques des participants, l'accès aux formations et la poursuite des études, entre autres.

Conclusions

Les MOOC constituent un outil d'apprentissage précieux pour les personnes n'ayant pas accès aux modèles d'éducation plus formels, tels que les cours présentiels ou les cours en ligne synchroniques. Nonobstant, ce type de formation requiert beaucoup d'autonomie et d'engagement de la part des participants qui ne comptent pas sur la présence constante d'un formateur et qui, pour la plupart, ont toujours suivi des cours traditionnels en présentiel. On a pu, donc, observer une première difficulté par rapport à cet aspect mais qui a poussé l'Institut à la création de moyens de communication efficaces avec les participants. Grâce à ces moyens de communication, les étudiants se

sentent plus soutenus et ils nous permettent en même temps d'améliorer les formations qu'on est en train de proposer au niveau institutionnel.

En ce qui concerne le processus de création et de mise en œuvre des cours MOOC, il est important de souligner qu'il s'agit d'une activité didactique extrêmement intéressante qui permet à ses créateurs d'explorer des nouveaux outils d'enseignement liés à la technologie et plus adaptés aux réalités d'aujourd'hui. Ceci constitue un défi pour l'enseignant-créateur de contenu et aussi une formation inestimable pour améliorer ses compétences professionnelles dans un contexte de travail compétitif comme de nos jours. Cependant, les contraintes principales concernent : 1. le manque de formation numérique préalable qui affecte le rythme de travail et la réalisation d'objectifs, notamment sur le court-terme, et 2. les délais de création et de mise en œuvre qui sont en général trop courts par rapport au travail à faire et qui affectent la qualité des produits, ainsi que la réalisation des objectifs proposés au niveau institutionnel. Tenant compte de cette expérience en construction, il est possible d'affirmer que le travail dans un MOOC est une tâche d'engagement de la part de tous ceux qui y participent du début à la fin, en commençant par ceux qui les conçoivent, les créent, les mettent en place et en finalisant par ceux qui les utilisent. Bien qu'il s'agisse de cours qui s'adaptent au rythme du participant, les offrants doivent assurer la formation la plus complète possible, de sorte que l'étudiant puisse mener son apprentissage à bien sans la surveillance permanente de son processus par un formateur.

Finalement, on doit souligner le grand effort que l'Institut de Langues Fray Bernardo de Lugo O.P siège Bogota a fait sur ce projet dans lequel la quasi-totalité de ses professeurs a participé de manière directe ou indirecte et qui constitue une partie importante de ses objectifs institutionnels. Pour cette raison, ceci est un projet en construction et en amélioration constante, afin d'assurer des cours de qualité pour ses participants. Notre objectif futur consiste à offrir des cours en langues non seulement à la communauté de l'Université Santo Tomas, mais aussi aux participants externes qui voudraient en faire partie.

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Mejorando la habilidad de comprensión auditiva en una clase de Inglés como lengua extranjera, mediante estrategias metacognitivas

Improving the listening comprehension skill in an EFL classroom through metacognitive strategies

Améliorer la compétence de compréhension orale dans une classe d'EFL grâce à des stratégies métacognitives

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language can be a challenge for many people and listening comprehension tends to be one of the most difficult skills for English learners. Therefore, this paper reports the findings of a qualitative action research study on the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening comprehension skill of nine learners at a private language institute. The purpose of this study was to determine how the use of metacognitive strategies might contribute to the development of the listening skill. Some workshops were designed for the intervention, and metacognitive strategies were presented to learners. Each lesson was recorded in a journal to keep track of the students' attitudes, progress and responses to the strategies. Moreover, learners were assessed in their performance in each workshop. They were also asked about their perceptions toward the use of strategies during the listening tasks. Additionally, a listening pre-test and post-test were implemented to compare learners' results, which

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were obtained before and after the intervention. Results showed that metacognitive strategies helped learners to become aware of their own learning process. They had a positive impact on their abilities in order to understand an audio, and improved learners' accuracy in terms of the listening tasks implemented.

Keywords: Context; Listening Comprehension Skill; Metacognitive Strategies; Pronunciation; and Vocabulary.

Resumen

Aprender un idioma extranjero puede ser un desafío para muchos y la habilidad de comprensión auditiva tiende a ser una de las habilidades más difíciles para los estudiantes de inglés. Por lo tanto, este artículo informa los hallazgos de un estudio de investigación-acción cualitativa sobre el impacto de las estrategias metacognitivas en la habilidad de comprensión auditiva de nueve estudiantes en un instituto de idiomas privado. El propósito de este estudio fue determinar cómo el uso de estrategias metacognitivas podría contribuir al desarrollo de la habilidad de escucha. Se diseñaron algunos talleres para la intervención y se presentaron estrategias metacognitivas a los alumnos. Cada lección se registró en un diario para realizar un seguimiento de sus actitudes, progreso y respuestas a las estrategias. Además, los estudiantes fueron evaluados en su desempeño en cada taller. También se les preguntó acerca de sus percepciones sobre el uso de estrategias durante las tareas de escucha. Adicionalmente, se implementó una prueba previa y una prueba posterior de comprensión auditiva para comparar los resultados de los alumnos, que se obtuvieron antes y después de la intervención. Los resultados mostraron que las estrategias metacognitivas ayudaron a los alumnos a tomar conciencia de su propio proceso de aprendizaje. Tuvieron un impacto positivo en sus habilidades para comprender un audio y mejoraron la precisión de los estudiantes en términos de las tareas de escucha implementadas.

Palabras clave: Contexto; Habilidad de comprensión auditiva; Estrategias metacognitivas; Pronunciación; Vocabulario.

Introduction

Much has been discussed about the importance of developing the skills of a language in order to become a proficient user, and the way different methods and strategies can help learners achieve this purpose. In this study the researchers intended to focus on the importance of implementing strategies in order to improve the listening comprehension skill. Listening is considered an active process, which is crucial for the

acquisition of a second language, as stated by Morley (2001). This is also true for EFL contexts. Furthermore, many English teachers see it as one of the most challenging skills for English learners, by considering that an effective communication depends not only on the speaking skill, but also on the development of the listening skill (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, this research project aimed at examining the impact of metacognitive strategies on the development of the listening skill of a group of EFL learners.

A qualitative method was used during the development of the study, through an action research approach. It was conducted in three stages: diagnosis, action, and evaluation and to assure validity, different instruments were used to collect and to analyze data.

During the implementation of the diagnostic stage, a teacher's journal, a learners' survey, a teacher's and a coordinator's interview, and a test, were administered. The analysis of the data gathered in this stage, revealed that learners experienced a high affective filter toward listening tasks, and they also had difficulties to understand the spoken English. By considering these results, learners were provided with some metacognitive strategies in order to help them to become better EFL listeners. Consequently, the following research question emerged:

To what extent can metacognitive strategies impact EFL learners' listening comprehension skill at a language institution in Montería?

During the action stage, six workshops were designed and administered to the sample population. Some metacognitive strategies were introduced and implemented in the listening section of the workshop. To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies, some instruments, such as a teacher's journal, a learners' survey, an assessment rubric, and two listening tests (pre and posttest) were used. They provided valuable data regarding learners' abilities, practices, and perceptions of the use of strategies.

The findings evidenced that the use of metacognitive strategies had a positive impact on learners' listening comprehension skills. Through the use of strategies, students improved their abilities to comprehend the context, vocabulary and pronunciation of a listening text. Additionally, the results evidenced an improvement in the accuracy of learners' answers in listening tasks. These results verified the benefits that metacognitive

strategies have for the listening comprehension of learners and their abilities to become more autonomous as English language learners.

Rationale

This research project recognized the importance of EFL students to become proficient in the listening skill, by considering that the development of listening comprehension can play a vital role in the development of the other language skills (Vandergrift, 2007). Traditionally, teachers have taught and assessed the listening skill, by presenting oral texts to learners and, by asking them to answer questions about them. This practice often results in frustration and has caused a great difficulty for English language learners. Therefore, the implementation of metacognitive strategies plays a vital role in the learning process since they allow students to monitor their own performance.

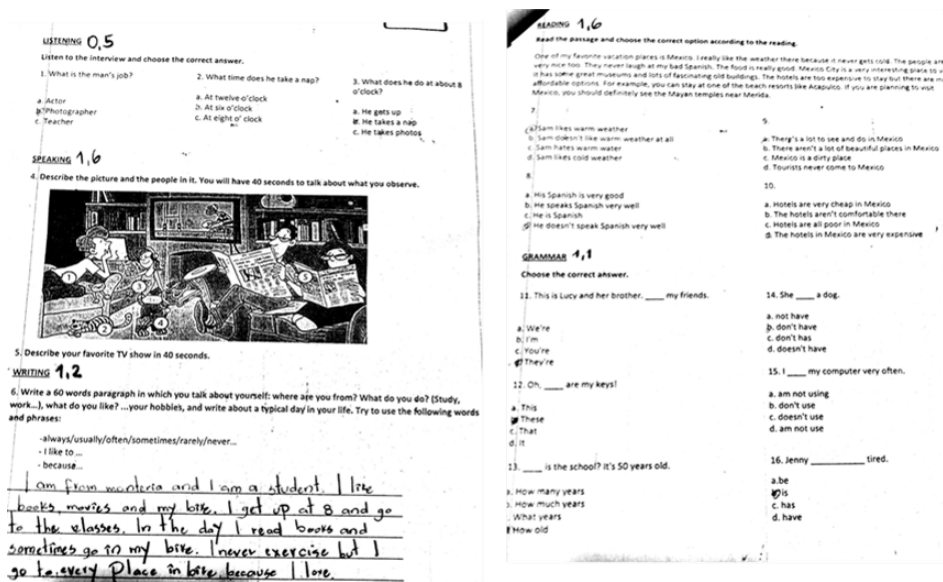
On the other hand, the use of strategies contributes to reduce the feelings of frustration that EFL learners often experience when dealing with the different skills of the language, but especially the listening skill. Consequently, it is expected that the results will encourage other teachers to include instructional strategies in their lessons in order to enhance learners' listening skill.

Moreover, this study adds to the pedagogical field as it fosters learners' autonomy. The use of metacognitive strategies motivates learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their own learning process. Thus, this project encourages learners to plan, to monitor, and to evaluate their listening skill and learning process. In brief, this study invites learners to become active participants of their own learning process.

Statement of the problem

During the Diagnostic Stage, preliminary data was gathered through direct observations, learners' surveys, and teacher's interviews in order to identify issues in the teaching and learning processes. The most notable situation was learners' feelings and concerns when performing listening tasks. They expressed feelings of frustration when dealing with listening tasks in the classroom, and dissatisfaction with their performance. Teachers' observations and learners' surveys revealed learners' difficulties in order to understand spoken English. They said that listening was one of the most difficult language skills and that the audios and videos were difficult to understand. On the other hand, the diagnostic exam clearly showed the difficulties that learners had in

the listening skill. This was the language skill, which had the lowest score. (Figure 1: sample of learner's results in the diagnostic test).



Source: done by one student who participated in the study.

As a response to this situation, the analysis of the results of the different instruments were considered to decide on the implementation of some strategies, which could tackle learners' deficiencies, specially, their listening comprehension. Thus, allowing them to become aware of their learning process and to help them to become better listeners in order to improve their overall performance in the foreign language.

Objectives

General Objective

To determine the impact of metacognitive strategies on learners' listening comprehension skill.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the effect of MS to develop learners' accuracy of answers.
- To explore the impact of MS to understand the context, pronunciation, and key vocabulary of a listening task.
- To verify the influence of MS on learners' English performance.

Theoretical framework

This section addresses some concepts, which contribute to a better understanding and analysis of the situation of study. The concepts considered for this study are briefly described: listening comprehension skill, contextualization, learning strategy, vocabulary, pronunciation, metacognition and metacognitive strategies.

Listening comprehension skill

Howatt & Dakin (1974), and Vandergrift (1999) coincided in the belief that listening is an active practice, which deals with the ability to understand and to process what people say as they interact with others. That is to say, their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and intention or meaning. Meanwhile, Rost (2002) defined listening comprehension as the combination of the information listened with the information already known by the listener. Thus, it is important to conceive listening as a complex activity, more than just hearing what others say. It implies recognizing not only sounds, but also the different linguistic and sociocultural components of the target language. Moreover, O'Malley and Chamot (1989) defined it as “an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement.” (p. 434). As stated by Goss (1982), listening comprehension is a mental process of constructing meaning with the information listened. This is why the listening skill is considered by many EFL teachers as one of the most challenging skills in the English language learning process, considering all the mental activity the listener must do simultaneously.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that for many years the listening skill was not given the importance that it has nowadays in the English classroom. For instance, Nunan (2002) called it “the Cinderella skill in second language learning” (p. 238) referring to the little dedication teachers devoted to the listening skill in class. Meanwhile, referring to the importance of the listening skill, Brown (1987) asserted that learning how to listen is important since it is helpful in the development of the other macro skills. According to Rost (2002), “there is no spoken language without listening” (p. 1). Thus, English teachers, must consider the importance of the listening skill in the development of the other skills and how listening strategies might help

learners to have the necessary tools to overcome their difficulties when dealing with these tasks.

Contextualization

When teaching listening, it is important to consider some factors and tools learners need in order to foster their listening comprehension skills. One of those factors is providing learners with context. Moltz (2010) defines contextualization as a form of “deep learning,” which occurs when linking ideas and concepts. Byrnes (1984) and Vandergrift (2002) coincided in that, by providing learners with the context of a listening text, the process will be easier for them as they can activate their prior knowledge and will have the necessary tools to recognize vocabulary and to understand the message. Brown and Yule (1993) consider that background knowledge (schemata) is one of the factors, which affects listening comprehension. For instance, they describe schemata as “organized background knowledge, which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse” (p. 248). This means that the listener’s previous knowledge leads him to construct meaning from what he listens to. Therefore, as the authors assert, it is essential to guide learners in the activation of their ideas and knowledge about the topic. Thus, in this way they can prepare for the listening task, by facilitating the understanding of the message, and even avoiding possible confusions because of words that sound similar in English.

Consequently, it is possible to say that once learners are aware of the topic, and relate it with their previous knowledge, they will have the conditions and tools to understand what speakers are talking about. Thus, it is probable that learners identify vocabulary, expressions, and structures they already know, if they are given the context of the listening text. In this way, it might result in a good listening comprehension which is the goal of a listening activity.

Learning strategies

Considering the importance of accomplishing a successful teaching and learning process, teachers have intended to find and introduce learning strategies in the English classroom. Learning strategies have been defined by Schmeck (1988) as “a sequence of procedures for accomplishing learning” (p.5). Moreover, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) defined learning strategies as “behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process” (p.315). According to O’Malley et al. (1985), language learning strategies are a sequence of

actions that learners follow to gather, process and apply information. These authors agree that the use of strategies facilitate the learning process.

Similarly, Griffiths (2013), defined learning strategies as “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their language learning” (p. 36). Besides, Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies make language learning: “easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). According to these definitions, it can be said that these strategies foster learners’ autonomy since they allow them to decide the most suitable actions to accomplish a certain language task and improve their overall proficiency. In addition, learners do not need to develop skills isolated as strategies use facilitate integration of language skills.

Applying strategies successfully can make the difference between a proficient learner and a less proficient learner, as Chamot et al. (1999) indicated, “differences between more effective learners and less effective learners were found in the number and range of strategies used, in how the strategies were applied to the task; and in whether they were appropriate for the task” (p. 166). Thus, study suggests that more proficient learners are able to apply more and varied strategies accurately according to the learning task they are engaged in, which implies an advantage over those who do not approach tasks strategically since the latter have less tools to overcome drawbacks in their learning process. Considering that, the implementation of strategies is pertinent to help learners with difficulties since “less successful language learners can be taught new strategies. Thus, helping them become better language learners” (Grenfell & Harris, 1999).

In addition, there is theory intended to explain the benefits of including strategy instruction in the English language lessons. Authors in favor of including strategy instruction in the classroom explained that integrating them into classes provide learners with chances to practice strategies in an authentic language learning environment and to use the strategies in other language tasks (Kendall & Khuon, 2006; Oxford, 2002; Zhang, 2008). According to Oxford (1990) there are two main types of strategies: direct and indirect strategies. And these are classified as follows: Direct strategies: Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies: Metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a key factor in language learning. The term is defined by Neuman and Dwyer (2009) as “ words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)” (p. 385). While Hiebert and Kamil (2005) defined it as “the knowledge of the meanings of words” (p. 3). From these claims, we can assure that vocabulary knowledge plays one of the most important roles in language learning, as it is necessary for the understanding and communication of ideas and therefore for the accomplishment of all language tasks.

Many researchers agree on the importance of vocabulary in language learning, for instance, Cameron (2001) stated that vocabulary plays a crucial role for learners in acquiring a language. Whereas, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” (p. 55). The acquisition of vocabulary helps supporting the teaching and learning of the listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills. (Chengqian, 2009). Thus, the knowledge of vocabulary has major benefits in the acquisition of all the language skills. According to Schmitt (2010) “one thing that all of the partners involved in learning process (learners, teachers, materials writers, and researchers) can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language” (p. 4).

On the other hand, in regards to the influence of vocabulary in the process of listening comprehension, research reports that vocabulary knowledge plays a notable role in this skill (Alderson, 2005). Research has also underlined benefits that listening and vocabulary provide to each other. (Stæhr, 2009; Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2012). Thus, if learners have a solid vocabulary knowledge, they will also have a better comprehension of spoken English since they will recognize a wider range of input in the listening task.

Pronunciation

The importance of pronunciation in language learning cannot be denied. Gilbert (1995) confirms the great role that pronunciation plays in communication. He stated that listening comprehension and pronunciation depend on each other. The purpose of pronunciation instruction is to give learners the tools to manage the sound system that they are learning (McNamara, 1996). That is, the teaching of pronunciation should be part of the lessons as this affects directly learners’ comprehension and production of

language, as assimilation of pronunciation makes learners able to discriminate between different sounds.

Moreover, learners' difficulties with pronunciation might interfere with their ability to construct meaning. One of the reasons why listening tends to be difficult for learners is related to some characteristics of spoken language such as the intonation, tone of voice, rhythm, etc. (e.g. Wei, 2004; Gilbert, 1995; Arvariti, 2009). Thus, a poor knowledge of the sound system might cause that learners misunderstand a message in a listening task or in a real conversation. Pourhosein (2011) indicated that teaching the pronunciation of English words must aim at comprehensible pronunciation, considering this a relevant factor in communicative competence. Considering the aforementioned, it is advisable that learners should be exposed to a varied types of aural input in which they can be trained to identify the different variation in pronunciation (intonation, tone of voice, accent, etc.)

Metacognition

Metacognitive knowledge has been defined as the “seventh sense” and one of the mental characteristics successful learners use (Birjandi, 2006). Flavell (1979) also defined metacognition as the knowledge you have of your own cognitive processes. According to these definitions, metacognition deals with a high level of knowledge and awareness of a person's own learning process, which implies to reflect on his thinking in order to accomplish an effective learning.

Hennessey (1999) defined the term metacognition as:

Awareness of one's own thinking, awareness of the content of one's conceptions, an active monitoring of one's cognitive processes, an attempt to regulate one's cognitive processes in relationship to further learning, and an application of a set of heuristics as an effective device for helping people organize their methods of attack on problems in general (p. 3).

Whereas, Kuhn & Dean (2004) defined it as “awareness and management of one's own thought” (p. 270). That is, metacognition help learners develop awareness of the different techniques they can use to tackle their difficulties. Thence, the researchers decided on the use of metacognitive strategies to help learners acquire abilities to ponder and analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as their practices when dealing with listening tasks to take the necessary actions in order to address their difficulties.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the difference between metacognition and cognition, and this difference is related to how the strategy is used (Chien,

2006; Schraw, 1998). Basically, cognitive strategies, are used to solve problems, while metacognitive strategies are employed to monitor, to evaluate, to control, and to understand these strategies (Chien, 2006). In regards to language learning, metacognition may be useful as it might help learners to identify and to select suitable strategies for accomplishing specific language tasks.

Metacognitive strategies

Brown *et al.* (1983) explained that metacognitive strategies are skills learners implement to manage, to direct, and to guide their own learning. Whereas, Oxford (2002) explained that these strategies include connecting new information to the old one, selecting strategies, planning, monitoring, and evaluating thinking processes. That is to say, the use of metacognitive strategies gives learners the opportunity to monitor their own learning through the selection of other strategies.

Moreover, Anderson (2002) stated, “the use of metacognitive strategies activates one’s thinking and leads to improved performance in learning in general” (p. 3). This means that, by implementing these strategies, learners also become aware of their role in learning. Therefore, they might reflect on their performance in specific language tasks and think of ways to achieve their learning goals.

On the other hand, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested a classification for metacognitive strategies into three categories: Planning, monitoring and evaluation. Planning includes five strategies: Advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self- management, and functional planning. Monitoring includes self-monitoring. Finally, evaluation includes self-evaluation. While Oxford (1990) stated that metacognitive strategies are divided into three major groups, and each group contains other strategies. Oxford (1990) explains what each set of strategies implies, as follows:

Centering your learning: The following three strategies help learners to focus on certain language tasks or activities:

Overviewing and linking with already known material: Associating a key concept or set of materials and relating it with previous knowledge.

Paying attention: Deciding to pay attention to a language task in general (directed attention) or to pay attention to specific aspects of the language task (selective attention).

Delaying speech production to focus on listening: To delay speech production until the listening skill is somehow developed.

Arranging and planning your learning: This set of strategies helps learners to organize and plan their learning:

Finding out about language learning: Understand how language learning works to improve one's language learning.

Organizing: Organizing one's conditions (time, space, etc.) to assure an optimal learning environment.

Setting goals and objectives: Setting short- or long-term goals related to language learning.

Identifying the purpose of a language task: Deciding in advance the purpose of doing a specific language task.

Planning for a language task: Planning the necessary language elements for a language task.

Seeking practice opportunities: Finding and creating opportunities to practice the language.

Evaluating your learning: These strategies allow the learner to monitor and evaluate their performance:

Self-monitoring: Identify errors and actions to eliminate those errors.

Self-evaluating: Evaluating one's own progress in the learning of the language.

It is important to mention that for the purposes of this research project, it was considered Oxford's classification of Metacognitive strategies.

Methodology

Type of study

By considering the results of the diagnostic stage, a qualitative method was used during the development of the project, following an action research approach. Through a qualitative research method, the researchers had the opportunity to explore the phenomena and to collect more descriptive information from the participants. Action research was chosen due to the fact that it gives the researcher the opportunity to intervene and to change a problematic situation.

Participants

The participants of this study were chosen through convenience sampling. This was a mixed-age group of nine learners, teenagers, and adults, 6 males and 3 females, aged between 17 and 50 years. Five of them were university students, while the rest were professionals. It was decided to include all of them in the project since they all had the same level of the language.

Instruments

During the development of the project, different instruments and techniques were implemented in order to gather sufficient data for analysis and decisions to conduct the research. The data was analyzed, compared and triangulated to make decisions on how to proceed based on these outcomes.

Table 1 displays the instruments used in each stage and their objectives.

Table 1. *Research stages, instruments and objectives*

Stage	Instrument	Objective
Diagnostic stage	Teacher's Journal	To observe and record learners' moves and attitudes during the class.
	Learners' survey	To know learners' opinions about their English learning process.
	Coordinator's interview	To learn about the coordinator's views on the teacher's practices and the learner's learning process.
	Teacher's Interview	To know another teacher's perceptions on learner's learning process.
	Diagnostic test	To analyze learners' performance in the language skills and components.

Action and Evaluation stage	Assessment Rubric	To assess learners' performance in the listening activity.
	Learners' survey	To know learners' perceptions regarding the activity and strategies.
	Teacher's Journal	To record learners' moves and attitudes during the implementation of the workshops.
	Listening pre and post test	To evaluate learners' listening comprehension and compare the results from both tests.

Action and evaluation stages

The intervention was aimed at designing a plan to help learners improve their listening comprehension skills. The intervention was based on the implementation of some workshops that considered metacognitive strategies to develop learners' listening comprehension skills and enhance aspects related to their autonomy, their abilities to understand the context, vocabulary and pronunciation; their accuracy of answers in a listening activity; and their abilities to use the information listened to perform other tasks. Therefore, the workshops were designed taking into account learners' needs and the topics were chosen regarding their interests and the content in the textbook. Six metacognitive strategies were selected: *Overviewing, finding a purpose, setting goals, selective attention, finding out about language learning, and planning a task.*

Regarding the structure of the workshops, all of them included the four language skills, and two metacognitive strategies that were introduced in the listening activity. Instructions on the use of strategies were presented and clearly stated in the pre-listening or while-listening stages.

Table 2 presents each workshop with its correspondent topic, communicative purpose, and metacognitive strategies.

Table 2. *Content of workshops*

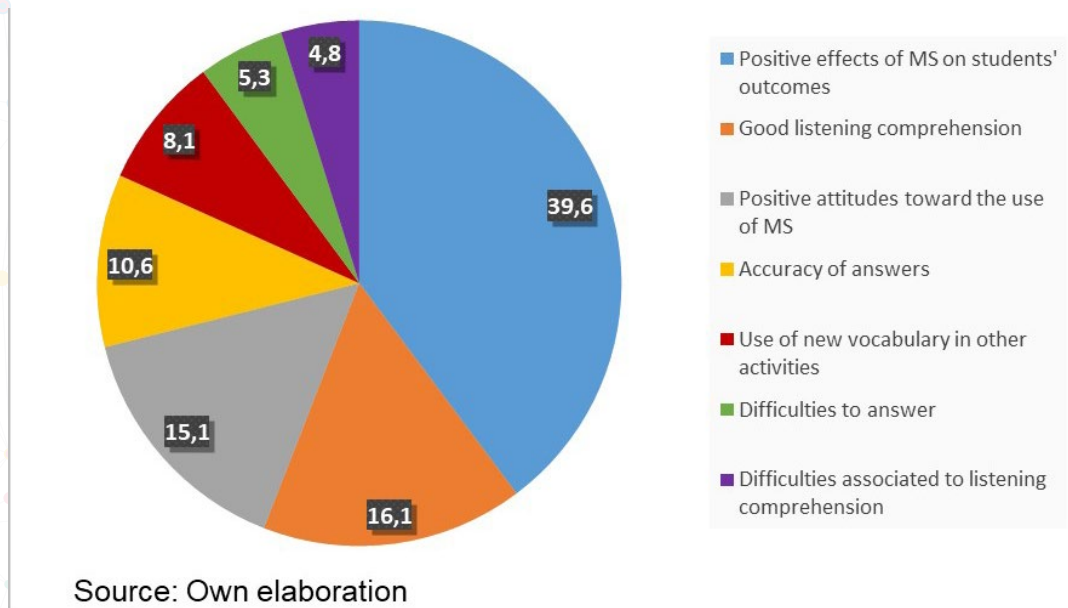
Workshop	Communicative purpose	Metacognitive strategies
1.The ideal vacation	To discuss about vacation and recommend other people places to visit in Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overviewing - Identifying a purpose
2.Healthy people	To talk about health and lifestyles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning a task. - Selective attention.

3.Let's save the planet	To talk about environmental problems and actions to take.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting goals. - Finding out about language learning.
4.Cultures around the world	To discuss about other cultures and countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting goals - Planning a task
5.Life in the future	To make predictions about the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying a purpose - Finding about language learning
6.My favorite anecdote	To talk about their own anecdotes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overviewing - Selective attention

In the evaluation stage, the researchers used different instruments in order to gather evidence from the interventions. Through the journal; attitudes, practices and comments from the learners were recorded, as well as the teacher's actions and instructions. Moreover, data regarding learners' perceptions and feelings about their performance in the listening tasks, and towards the implementation of the metacognitive strategies were obtained from the survey. There was a rubric that assessed learners' listening performance, taking into account: understanding of important information, accuracy of answers, use of information listened in other tasks, and use of metacognitive strategies.

Results

This section presents the findings after analyzing the data gathered in the implementation and evaluation stages. (Figure 2: shows the codes that emerged after analyzing the results in all workshops).



Positive Effects of Metacognitive Strategies on Learners' Outcomes

The implementation of metacognitive strategies to aid the listening comprehension of EFL learners was meaningful and relevant. The use of these strategies helped learners to become more autonomous and reflective on their learning process. They had the time to think about their listening goals, previous knowledge, difficulties to understand the aural input, and to take actions to overcome those issues. By considering that the main focus of this project was to determine the impact of metacognitive strategies on learners' listening comprehension skill, the findings showed that learners improved their abilities in listening. They were able to overcome some of their difficulties to understand the context, key vocabulary, and pronunciation of oral texts to answer accurately questions about it. Throughout the development of workshops, learners showed that they became familiar with metacognitive strategies and improved their listening processes.

From the beginning of the intervention, learners showed an improvement, as it was evidenced in the assessment rubric. Although in some cases, they felt unsure about the information that they processed, their confidence increased through the implementation of the workshops. Moreover, by considering that metacognitive strategies allowed learners to manage their own learning process, they had a positive attitude toward the use of these strategies since they could apply them successfully in their listening performance. The use of these specific strategies was beneficial for learners' learning processes because they could prepare for the listening task in different ways, by predicting the content, by reviewing target vocabulary, and by analyzing the questions, etc. They also could reflect on their weaknesses in order to tackle their difficulties, by finding appropriate solutions to complete the listening task. Evidence of this code is that after each intervention, learners expressed that the strategies given helped their understanding of the listening and the accomplishment of the task. They even chose the strategies that helped them understand and answer the questions.

Table 3. Sample table of strategies that helped students in the listening task.

Strategy	Students
Read the questions before	5
Review vocabulary	6
Predict the topic	4
Compare ideas with a partner	0
Identify the purpose of the activity	3

Source: own elaboration.

Moreover, learners expressed their ideas about the effects of the strategies. The following excerpts evidence the positive impact of the strategies used:

“Entendí todo. Bueno, casi todo. Y las estrategias chéveres. Me gustaron.” (I understood everything. Well, almost. And the strategies are good. I liked them)

“Another student said: sí teacher, las estrategias buenas y útiles.” (Yes, teacher. The strategies are good and useful)

“Las estrategias facilitan un poco el listening, que es tan difícil” (The strategies facilitate the listening, that is so difficult)

Good Listening Comprehension

Even though learners said that it was difficult for them to understand some words in oral texts, and to answer some questions about them, they also stated that they had learned to relate words and to connect ideas since they were familiar with the context. In this sense, metacognitive strategies helped them to prepare with the context and the vocabulary necessary for the listening tasks. Regarding pronunciation, at the beginning, this was a challenging process since learners expressed their concerns about not being able to understand speakers' pronunciation from audios. However, learners progressed significantly in this aspect as they were exposed to the practice of pronunciation of key words before and after the listening tasks. As a result, their problems to understand speakers' pronunciation gradually decreased.

This progress was evidenced in the following excerpts taken from the teacher's journal:

“After listening for the second time some of them seemed to be a little more confident and they were writing information in the handout”

“The first time they listened they started to write information. They seemed to understand many things. After listening I gave them more time to write.”

“One student said he had finished, and that it was easy this time”.

Table 4. Sample table of students' level of understanding.

Level	Students
1	0 students
2	0 students
3	3 students
4	3 students
5	3 student

Source: Own elaboration.

Positive Attitudes toward the Use of Metacognitive Strategies

Learners showed commitment and a positive attitude since the beginning of the intervention. Besides, they could notice their improvement through the implementation of the strategies, resulting in motivation to continue learning the new strategies. They followed the instructions and were open to the new method and activities. Their feelings of frustration were highly reduced and they were constant in their desire to participate of the tasks and work on their difficulties to obtain good results.

The table below describes some of the comments given by the students regarding the activities and strategies:

Table 5. Comments from learners about the use of the strategies.

1.	“Good teaching methodology.”
2.	“Talking before listening facilitates the comprehension.”
3.	“I liked to learn strategies”
4.	“It is important to continue practicing”
5.	“I would like to continue practicing strategies to improve my abilities”

Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, some excerpts taken from the teacher’s journal related to learners’ perceptions were:

“They were really interested in doing each exercise in the pre-listening exercises”

“they were very active and attentive.”

“I liked the topic a lot. The strategies were very interesting, they make the exercise easier”

“Excellent topic and activities. Both strategies were very useful.”

The Accuracy of Answers

During the implementation of the workshops, learners internalized and familiarized with the strategies. They also learned to focus on the listening task. It was noticeable that they took notes of any word or information they understood, and thought of how that information could help them answer the questions. They started to feel more confident with their responses. Despite this, they still reported having problems answering questions about the listening text by the end of the intervention, their difficulties were diminished progressively. Learners expressed that in many cases, even though they could not understand every word, they were able to answer the questions with the information they understood. It is important to mention that their answers were accurate most of the time. The following table shows some of the comments given by the students regarding their opinion about the level of difficulty:

Table 6. Learners’ level of difficulty to answer the questions.

	Students	Some reasons
Many difficulties	0 students	
Some difficulties	3 students	I still have to accustom the ear to the listening.
No difficulty	6 students	I did not understand some words, but I did get the message. The questions and answers were clear. The audio was clear.

Besides, some comments made by learners taken from the instruments were:

“No tuve dificultad para entender ni para responder” (I had no difficulties to understand or answer)

“Analizamos las preguntas al comienzo. Era claro lo que íbamos a responder” (We analyzed the questions at the beginning. It was clear what we would answer)

Use of new vocabulary in other activities

Considering the results from the evaluation stage, learners demonstrated abilities to use the vocabulary and expressions from the listening to perform other tasks. It was noticeable in the post listening tasks and other sections of the workshop (speaking and writing tasks), that the participants learned new vocabulary and were able to transfer that knowledge to the other language skills and tasks. Thus, learners evidenced not only an improvement of their listening skills, but also took advantage of that to use it in the other language skills.

This category emerged along the intervention as a result of the learners' responses to questions and also oral activities they performed after the listening activity. The increase of vocabulary from the listening activity was evident. Some excerpts taken from the teacher's journal confirmed this information:

“They used similar information from the audio to present their predictions. Some of them adapted the ideas from the audio and made new predictions”

“Some of them tried to include expressions, grammar structures, and words they had listened.”

“They mentioned several words and information mentioned in the listening.”

Difficulties to Answer

Through the implementation of the workshops, learners expressed to have difficulties to answer the questions in the listening tasks. Even by the end of the intervention, some of them still manifested to have some doubts and problems. At the beginning, their problems were related to the pronunciation of the speakers, and their

reasons changed progressively. By the end of the intervention, learners explained that their problems to answer the questions were related to the speed of the audios.

Some students reported to have difficulties to answer some of the questions. In most cases, these problems were related to the length of the audio and the way to organize their ideas at the moment of writing the answers. Thus, in the survey some of them expressed not to feel totally sure about their responses. Similarly, the following comment was taken from the teacher's journal:

“One student said that he understood but that it was difficult to write the answers fast.”

Difficulties Associated to Listening Comprehension

Similarly, although learners evidenced an improvement in their listening skills and the positive impact of the strategies on their performance, they still presented some problems to understand some important information from the audios. Throughout the intervention, learners stated to have some difficulties to understand the listening tasks. At first, these difficulties were related to the pronunciation, and during the development of the workshops, they expressed that their problems were related to the complexity of the topic or the length of the audio.

Most of the time, their reasons were related to their lack of concentration and vocabulary. Thus, although most of them expressed to be able to understand important points, they also expressed to have many difficulties to comprehend the message completely, thus, in some cases, they were not confident enough about what they listened to. The previous findings were evidenced by some excerpts taken from the journal, such as:

“One student said that it was fast.”

“Another student said that it was fast and the pronunciation difficult”

“Some of them said that it was difficult to understand, they were not sure about the words they had listened”

“One student said that she felt he had difficulties to understand the words”

“One student said that she could understand many things but felt unsure.”

Conclusions

Listening is an essential language skill, and it is necessary to strengthen it in the English classroom. Learners need to develop their listening comprehension skills in order to develop an effective communication. Therefore, this language skill should no longer be neglected in the English classroom. The following conclusions and pedagogical implications are drawn so that English teachers, researchers, learners, and the academic community, in general, can consider them if they intend to foster listening comprehension skills through the implementation of these strategies.

Positive Effect of Metacognitive Strategies on Learners' Outcomes

The implementation of metacognitive strategies in the English foreign language classroom significantly affects positively the development of EFL learners' listening comprehension skills. Strategies, such as *overviewing*, *planning a task*, and *selective attention* are helpful strategies for learners to activate their prior knowledge, to contextualize, and to prepare for the listening tasks. In addition, strategies, such as *identifying a purpose*, *setting goals*, and *finding out about language learning* are effective for learners to plan and to monitor their own listening process. The effective use of these strategies has a positive result on the improvement of learners' listening comprehension skill, in terms of the identification of context, words, and relevant information, which simultaneously help learners to answer questions based on what they listen to.

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that metacognitive strategies also have effects on learners' affective domain since they show a positive attitude toward their use and express feelings of confidence and motivation when they observe that the strategies are effective. However, it is important to remark that the effectiveness of these metacognitive strategies also depends on variables, such as teacher's appropriate instruction, and learners' commitment to learning and improvement of their listening skills.

The Use of Metacognitive Strategies Promotes Learners' Autonomy and Awareness.

The implementation of metacognitive strategies is recommended in language teaching since it enhances learners' autonomy and awareness. The fact that learners think of their previous knowledge about a topic, identify the purpose of an activity, reflect on their needs and problems to understand, and prepare themselves for the activity. It provides them with learning skills from which they can benefit and transfer

it to other kind of tasks. Results from this research study evidence that metacognitive strategies can have advantages in both learners' listening comprehension skills and their abilities to become autonomous English language learners.

Impact of Metacognitive Strategies on Learners' Listening Comprehension and the Accuracy of Their Answers

The use of metacognitive strategies proves to have several benefits for EFL learners. For instance, they provide learners with tools to comprehend the information of an oral text, and to answer questions about it accordingly. The use of these strategies allows learners opportunities to take responsibility of their own learning while they prepare with the context and the vocabulary to deal with the listening tasks. Actions, such as identifying their problems to understand and selecting key actions in advance, which contribute to their understanding, and self-directed learning. Besides, learners can discuss some ideas about the topic, by reviewing vocabulary and sharing some thoughts with their partners, are actions, which make L2 listening comprehension easy. Therefore, their responses in a listening task are likely to be more precise.

The findings of this study have major implications on English language teachers' methodologies and teaching processes. That is why it is suggested that they implement metacognitive strategies in their lesson planning. On the other hand, learners become more aware of the roles that they play in their learning processes.

Additionally, by considering that this research study was conducted at an English language institute, other studies can be conducted in other contexts to investigate the effect of metacognitive strategies on learners' listening comprehension. Thus, replication of this study is advisable in order to confirm the outcomes of this inquiry and to adapt it to other contexts in order to have massive benefits, which can be applied to a larger population. (Public and private schools, universities, language institute, and so on).

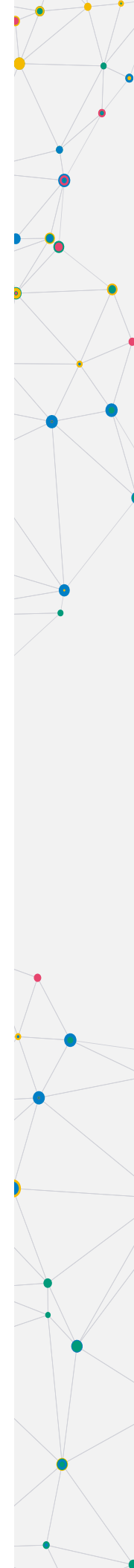
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El lenguaje, una mirada a la construcción del conocimiento y legitimación de discursos

The language, in sight of building knowledge and discourse legitimization

Langage, regard sur la construction des savoirs et la légitimation des discours

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Resumen

El lenguaje es el medio y el fin más directo para nombrar las cosas que nos rodean, expresar nuestros pensamientos y experiencias, organizar e interpretar el mundo. En él se encuentra un intrincado tramado que nos lleva a construir conocimientos, jerarquizarlos, darles significado y crear infinitas posibilidades de discursos. Todo a partir de una legitimación dada por la norma impuesta por el grupo social al que pertenece. Ahora en cuanto al lenguaje inclusivo, además de contar con estas características, tiene la variante de relacionarse con aspectos como el sexismo, las desigualdades, la discriminación, la exclusión de ciertos grupos, el control, la lucha por

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derechos políticos, entre otros. No obstante, cabe preguntarse ¿cómo es que el lenguaje construye el conocimiento? y ¿cómo el lenguaje construye al ser?

Palabras clave: lenguaje, legitimación, construcción de conocimiento

Abstract

Language is the most direct means which is being used to name the things that are surrounding us, in order to express our thoughts and our experiences, so we can organize and make sense of the world. It contains a complex weaving that leads us to construct the knowledge, to hierarchize it, to give it meaning and to create an infinite possibility of discourses. All of this is based on a legitimization given by the norm which is imposed by the social group to which it belongs. Regarding inclusive language, in addition to having these characteristics, it is related to other aspects such as sexism, inequalities, discrimination, exclusion of certain groups, control, the fight for the political rights, among others. Nevertheless, the questions are how does language construct the knowledge? and how language constructs the human being.

Keyword: language, legitimation, construction of knowledge

Introducción

En el ámbito educativo la influencia de las corrientes de pensamiento, de la cultura propia y de la ajena, así como la influencia de sociedad y sus rituales, han impactado de tal manera que se han hecho aportaciones valiosas a todas las disciplinas, sean de ciencias naturales y exactas o de ciencias sociales y humanidades. De ahí su complejidad para ser analizadas como un todo. Esta influencia, ayuda a comprender y explicar las características del aspecto social y educativo que forman a los individuos y permiten las interacciones, comprensiones e interpretaciones de sí mismos con respecto de los otros y viceversa.

En estas reflexiones, la influencia está centrada en el lenguaje, particularmente el inclusivo, como parte de la construcción misma del conocimiento y como un medio para representar una de tantas realidades. Antes de abordar el tema cabría preguntarse ¿Qué se entiende por lenguaje? Y más aún ¿qué se entiende por lenguaje inclusivo?, ¿Cómo es que el lenguaje construye el conocimiento? Y ¿cómo el lenguaje construye al ser?

Aproximaciones a la noción de lenguaje

Muchos autores han tratado de conceptualizar al lenguaje. Cada uno de ellos desde su visión aporta una noción diferente. No obstante, todos ellos coinciden que es un acto que sucede al interior de cada individuo. En las concepciones más aceptadas y tradicionales se observa la de Chomsky (1975) quien expone al lenguaje como una facultad propia de la especie humana con un tipo de organización intelectual única que no puede ser ligada a la inteligencia en general. Esta facultad le confiere al individuo una manera de nombrar al mundo y de conocerlo, mediante jerarquías, categorías y normas que legitiman su uso.

Desde la dimensión lingüística, el lenguaje se estructura mediante la morfología, la sintaxis, el léxico, la fonética, la pragmática y la semántica (Chomsky, 2005). Esta estructura se encuentra al interior del individuo y se realiza en una serie de procesos cognitivos que permiten nombrar las cosas y darles un significado (Chomsky, 2007). En este sentido, es posible seleccionar las palabras más adecuadas para hacerlo a través de una organización y jerarquización impuestas por una norma, con una pronunciación determinada y que es expresada en un grupo social específico.

A partir de la lingüística generativa, al lenguaje se le considera como un mecanismo formal para nombrar las cosas, un mecanismo que funciona en dualidades que otorgan un significado y un significantes, que diferencia entre lo individual y lo colectivo, entre la lengua y el habla, en el tiempo entre la sincronía y diacronía y entre la voluntad individual y la pasividad social como en algún momento lo expresó Saussure; y también es darle ese *performance*, esa habilidad de crear infinitas posibilidades de discursos con un número finito de palabras, tal como lo estableció Chomsky (Bourdieu, 2008; Rastier, 2016).

Morin (2006), explica que el lenguaje es un constructo mental o de abstracción. Una noción bastante similar a la anterior, aunque en su simpleza se esconde una gran complejidad. La mente es compleja, por lo tanto, el lenguaje también lo es. En él son múltiples los factores que intervienen, tanto del exterior como del interior del sujeto. De ahí que sea un acto inter e intra subjetivo.

Por su parte Areiza et al. (2012) nos dicen que en él se integran los “procesos de apropiación, representación y simbolización de una realidad compleja” (p. 8). En este sentido, la mente y las abstracciones complejizan determinadas realidades. Hernández (2008) coincide con estos autores cuando dice que “la realidad es creada por el lenguaje y este deja de ser una mera re-presentación para constituirse en una auténtica

construcción por consenso o convención intersubjetiva”. Es así que, el lenguaje es propio del humano, independiente de sus condiciones étnicas y socioculturales, como una forma de manifestar su pensamiento.

En este tenor, Wittgenstein (2013) aborda la problemática del lenguaje desde la parte lógica y social del lenguaje. Esta última a partir de la relación semántica-pragmática. Así pues, reconoce que el conocimiento no solo surge en lo individual con el sujeto cognoscente, sino en la comunicación con otros. Además, menciona que existen varios tipos de proposiciones, de hablas, de sistemas lingüísticos; y esa pluralidad la asemeja a un juego con sus reglas denominándolo juegos de lenguaje.

A partir de esto aparece la teoría del significado como uso, en la cual cada palabra tendrá cierto significado según el papel que juegue dentro de un segmento determinado del lenguaje. Ahora bien, las reglas del lenguaje serán consensuadas entre la comunidad de hablantes y se convertirán en hábitos, de esta manera el lenguaje pasa de las palabras a una forma de vida (Rábade, 2010).

Esto es lo que está sucediendo actualmente con el lenguaje inclusivo. Ahora bien, a partir de estas nociones el término de lenguaje inclusivo, el cual se relaciona con sexismo, desigualdades, discriminación, exclusión de ciertos grupos, el control, la lucha por derechos políticos, entre otros; no tiene cabida, ya que por sí solo el lenguaje no excluye o incluye, sino lo hace la gente que lo usa. En definitiva, el hablante es quien determina que juego del lenguaje quiere jugar con su interlocutor en función de sus necesidades, de la experiencia de vida o del pensamiento que requiera expresar en el momento.

Así mismo lo afirma Searle (1969) al decir que no son las oraciones (dadas por el lenguaje) las que expresan proposiciones con carga semántica y sentido propio, sino que es el hablante al expresarlas. A este respecto, entonces cabría ampliar la noción de lenguaje desde una dimensión sociolingüística que considere a la lengua y al habla como los aspectos sociales y al lenguaje inclusivo como una cuestión de decisión del hablante o de los grupos que los emplean más que del lenguaje en sí mismo.

Es así que la lengua y el habla pasan a ser la manifestación misma del lenguaje. Son un sistema abstracto, que organiza la producción oral a partir de reglas y normas que marcan las relaciones entre sus distintos elementos, descritos como parte de la competencia comunicativa (Consejo de Europa, 2018). En algunos campos se le conoce

como código y es mediante su ejecución que se materializa el pensamiento (Morin, 2006).

Respecto de la lengua, Bourdieu (2016) destaca que ni la lengua, ni los dialectos conocen límites naturales, no existen las fronteras, la geografía, solo está, porque su existencia es debida a un estado práctico, por lo que mientras se practique, existirá y prevalecerá.

La construcción del conocimiento mediante el lenguaje

Al hablar del conocimiento y su construcción es necesario tomar en cuenta su dimensión social e individual. Los humanos cuentan con una individualidad subjetiva y consciente que reacciona, acepta y rechaza pautas, las modifica o proponen nuevas; también piensa y conoce de manera social. Esto implica necesariamente que la sociedad en la que está integrado el individuo funciona para cada miembro que lo condiciona para posibilitar, configurar, orientar y desarrollar el conocimiento (Freire, 2004). En otras palabras, el conocimiento humano está dado por una lógica individual y por condicionamientos del contexto social.

Para lograr esta formación social se requiere práctica y teoría. La práctica considera la explicación del mundo a través de las experiencias. La teoría es la apropiación de este mundo a través de las ideas y el lenguaje. Este lenguaje sirve para nombrar y estructura dicho mundo exterior. La cual es una idea que coincide con los planteamientos de los autores antes mencionados, quienes asignan un rol principal a este proceso, ya que solo se conoce aquello que se puede nombrar.

Esto tiene una implicación en la manera de construir el mundo y de interpretarlo. Para ello, se parte de una construcción interna y una externa, donde surgen las estructuras que determinan y conciben al mundo. Es así que el rol de la cultura y la sociedad se vuelve sumamente importante para esta tarea. En este entendido, el conocimiento es parte fundamental para representar una realidad objetiva del sujeto (Rábade, 2010).

Aquí se inserta el debate entre los lingüistas conservadores y la opinión pública sobre el uso de lenguaje inclusivo; partiendo de las representaciones de aspectos económicos, políticos, históricos, cognitivos, afectivos y su relación con el lenguaje y las ideologías que representa, de tal manera que se pueden identificar recursos lingüísticos, discursivos y retóricos. Dichos recursos conforman la conciencia de la existencia de

lenguaje propuesta por Gadamer (Luna, 2014). Entre sus determinantes están el auto-olvido, la ausencia del yo y la universalidad.

La primera, el auto-olvido, tiene que ver con la estructura lingüística que es olvidada en el lenguaje vivo y cotidiano. Este lenguaje no es pensado, es decir, se habla de manera instintiva y automática sin pensar en la gramática, en la norma e incluso en la estructura de la oración.

En este punto el lenguaje inclusivo tiene cabida únicamente en los grupos sociales que lo emplean de manera constante en sus discursos. Sin embargo, cuando estos grupos las emplean por primera vez, se puede considerar que no es tan preciso el auto-olvido, pues se emplean las palabras inclusivas con una finalidad determinada, por lo tanto, son pensadas.

La segunda forma es la ausencia del yo. Esto implica que, aunque lenguaje es personal, su existencia sólo está presente y vive cuando se habla, cuando hay una razón, un fin y un medio, es decir cuando se hace para y por los demás.

En el lenguaje inclusivo se adopta una propuesta de cambio social que va más allá de aceptar usos como “todos, todas y todes” y sus variantes con @ y X en lugar de la A o de la O que determinan el género (Tod@s, todxs) se asoma una reforma de carácter político que poco a poco se extiende en distintas áreas de la sociedad.

Finalmente, la tercera forma de la existencia es el aspecto de la universalidad con ello se quiere decir que lenguaje implica todo aquello que se puede y no decir de las cosas. Aquí nuevamente se contraponen quienes estudian el lenguaje científicamente y quienes proponen el uso del lenguaje inclusivo como una manera de solucionar problemas de discriminación y desigualdad.

Con todo esto, el conocimiento suele ser calificado como un universo simbólico constituido por códigos lingüísticos, asignando estructura y nombre a cada cosa. Es así que, en la cultura se incluyen los conocimientos, las creencias, el arte, la moral, las costumbres y los hábitos adquiridos por el hombre como miembro de una sociedad.

En lo que concierne al lenguaje inclusivo, este propone una postura más democrática y de igualdad en derechos. No obstante, los más conservadores podrían argumentar

que el lenguaje está prescrito por normas socialmente aceptadas y que el lenguaje inclusivo favorece únicamente a un grupo determinado de personas.

Ahora bien, ambas perspectivas tienen razón de ser, pues el lenguaje inclusivo se podría concebir desde la liberación de las expresiones lingüísticas a la luz del lenguaje ordinario y las necesidades socio-político-culturales. Esto justificándose a partir de la comprensión del sujeto expresada en la filosofía del lenguaje. Mientras que el lenguaje concebido desde los conservadores apela a la preservación de la gramática en relación con la trascendencia del conocimiento y a la amplia investigación que se ha realizado en torno al tema a través de siglos.

La legitimación del lenguaje

Un lenguaje vivo legítimo es aquel que es aceptado por un grupo social como el medio para comunicar el pensamiento y las ideas. Al respecto cabría preguntarse ¿Quién legitima al lenguaje?, ¿bajo qué preceptos lo hace?, ¿cuál es la finalidad?.

Bourdieu (2016) señala que la lengua deberá contar con un código legislativo y comunicativo, es decir, una norma dada por un dominio presente en las escuelas, la familia y todos los recursos a los que se nombren u objetiven. A su vez, los hablantes serán usuarios que pertenecen a una misma comunidad que cuenta con el mismo sistema de signos lingüísticos y, por ende, comprenden la norma. Finalmente, en la práctica, los hablantes hacen uso de estos códigos con sus normas por medio del habla, estableciendo equivalencias entre sonidos y sentidos de las mismas normas que las regulan.

Para Bourdieu, en la sociolingüística está inmersa la gramática que permitirá definir parcialmente el sentido de algo, pero el significado completo del discurso estará dado en las relaciones sociales que permitirán o no la legitimación de la lengua, es decir, la “lengua no está dada” (Bustamante, 2007, p. 2). Su lugar se tiene que ganar mediante un proceso que incluye los códigos, los hablantes y los usos.

En este sentido, todas las lenguas que son legítimas deben tener estas características. En la vida cotidiana todos los individuos se rigen por esta legitimación y gracias a ella es posible la comprensión, pues *todos* comparten y están de acuerdo con los signos y sus normas. Es así como la relación lengua-sociedad o lenguaje-sociedad es bilateral. En este entendido el sujeto legitima el lenguaje y este a su vez lo socializa. Así pues, dependerá

de la forma en que haga suyo el lenguaje y lo use como vehículo de comunicación, su integración a determinada sociedad (Rábade, (1999).

Lo mismo ocurre cuando se toca el tema del lenguaje inclusivo, las palabras modificadas, transformadas o los neologismos se comparten para ser usadas en comunidades o grupos que hablen el mismo *idioma* en contextos determinados o similares en los que fueron sugeridas y compartidas. Esto es lo que Bourdieu denomina relaciones de dominación lingüística (2008).

En cuanto a esta legitimación, también existe un mercado y un capital lingüístico. Estos son quienes van a determinar

el lugar que el sistema de enseñanza otorga a las diferentes lenguas, dado que la institución que detenta el monopolio de la producción masiva de productores-consumidores y, por consiguiente, reproduce el mercado del que depende el valor social de la competencia lingüística y su capacidad de funcionar como capital lingüístico (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 38).

Como resultado, se observa que entre mayor sea el intercambio de la lengua, mayor será su valor en el mercado o comunidades lingüísticas. Al respecto, el relativismo lingüístico, propuesto por los autores Edward Sapir y Benjamin Worf, alude a la interacción existente entre el mundo y la sociedad, es decir al modo en que “percibimos la realidad y la organizamos en conceptos y otorgamos a estos significados según un acuerdo implícito de nuestra comunidad de lengua que lo ha codificado de ese modo (Cervantes, Centro virtual, 2008, párr. 2). Es así que, solo aquellos elementos que sean visibles y se consideren necesarios para una sociedad tendrán cabida y existirán en el lenguaje, es decir, formarán parte de ese mercado lingüístico.

Esto viene a justificar la importancia del lenguaje inclusivo, puesto que surge de la reciente necesidad de expresar las desigualdades sociales entre hombres y mujeres, cuya relevancia está impuesta por el mercado lingüístico y que, si se quiere pertenecer a él, se tendrán que acatar las normas de dicho mercado. Empero, para que este lenguaje realmente llegue a permear a todos los individuos, y no solo a determinados grupos, tendrá que ser avalado por quienes tienen el poder y control, es decir, las culturas dominantes mediante el arbitrario cultural (Bourdieu y Passeron, 2008).

Según Bourdieu (2008), el valor no solo está dado por la dominación de la lingüística, ya que cualquier persona que practique la lengua puede decir lo que sea y eso no implica necesariamente que todo mundo lo reproduzca. En el caso del español, una manera de corroborarlo es mediante las palabras propuestas a la Real Academia

de Lengua y que forman parte del Observatorio de Palabras, donde se pretende determinar que tanto una palabra pasa o no, a ser un concepto que representa una realidad, con sus propias estructuras y significados. Palabras como *feminazi*, *ciberataque*, *mutear* y *guglear*, han logrado permear en el lenguaje y actualmente se encuentran en este Observatorio de Palabras (Página 12, 2020).

En consecuencia, es posible entonces que el lenguaje inclusivo se encuentre en este proceso. Como ejemplo, recientemente la palabra *elle / elles* se proponía como parte de este grupo, sin embargo, el director de la RAE Santiago Muñoz Machado ha eliminado de esta lista todas aquellas palabras donde esté presente el uso de la “e” como *todes*, aludiendo que “la lengua es hermosa y precisa y no se justifica estropearla con el lenguaje inclusivo” (Página 12, 2020, párr. 5).

Luego interviene la sociolingüística, donde se establece que cualquiera no puede afirmar cualquier cosa o lo hace bajo su entera responsabilidad. Esto quiere decir que el discurso que se expresa se hace conforme al grupo social “resultante de una transacción entre un interés expresivo y la censura que impone el locutor dotado de una competencia social” (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 65).

Nuevamente parto del ejemplo de lenguaje inclusivo. La palabra *todes*, se acepte o no, es empleada por un sector de la población que busca un ideal democrático y dentro de ese grupo cumple con las dualidades del lenguaje. Es decir, tiene un significado y un significante, representa la voz de un individuo y de un colectivo, se expresa en el habla individual, pero pertenece a la lengua y se puede analizar su uso diacrónica y sincrónicamente. Todo esto, más allá de solo representar a un sector. Con su uso se pretende dar voz a quienes no la tienen e integrarlos, no excluirlas.

A tal efecto, es importante considerar lo que puede o no decirse mediante una autorregulación, tomando en cuanto a la oficialidad del contexto, la distancia social, la sensibilidad del locutor y del emisor, el sentido social práctico, las expresiones simbólicas, y los propios individuos (sexo, edad, grado escolar, entre otros).

Reflexiones finales

En el contexto de las aulas donde se enseña a ser un ciudadano global partiendo de la comunidad más pequeña, la familia, hacia una comunidad más extendida, la calle, la colonia, la ciudad, el estado, la región, el país, el planeta (Morin et al., 2002) ¿qué

lenguaje se aprende? La respuesta es sencilla, pero en ella se encierra una complejidad mayor.

Por un lado, se deben de tomar en cuenta los aspectos de la norma lingüística, el código, la estandarización, que implican una pronunciación y estilo articulatorio apropiado y correcto, un proceso de censura y exigencia de la lengua empleada según el contexto, un uso y dominio práctico de las situaciones, mantener las formas establecidas por la lengua legítima y finalmente decidir qué tan inclusiva o no será la lengua.

Por otro lado, el lenguaje no puede dissociarse de los actos sociales. Es mediante el lenguaje que se establecen relaciones con el mundo interno, el de la psique, el de la cognición, con el mundo externo, el social. De aquí se puede decir entonces que, el lenguaje es un ejercicio de intelección que ocurre en la mente humana para designar e interpretar su entorno, por lo que en su ejecución se vuelve un instrumento de acción.

El lenguaje es tan poderoso que es capaz de cambiar la visión del mundo social y por lo tanto de transformarlo. De ahí que sus efectos se vean enmarcados por la capacidad de hablar (conocimientos lingüísticos) de una manera determinada (registros de lengua de acuerdo a las situaciones y grupos sociales) con un idioma determinado (impuesto por la demanda social). Esto es lo que Bourdieu denomina *habitus* lingüístico (2008).

Ahora bien, Fromm (1991) destaca que el carácter social es el comportamiento común a los miembros de un grupo sociocultural, es decir, el resultado de experiencias y modos de vida comunes del grupo permitiendo así estructuras sociales específicas. La vinculación puede darse por sentado de dos maneras; una es mediante la asimilación y otra por la socialización.

Mientras que la asimilación se da de manera individual, primero a través del entendimiento de las formas y comportamientos y luego por su adquisición haciéndolas propias; la socialización se presenta en las relaciones inter-subjetivas, con el fin de reconocer una identidad propia, e intra-subjetivas, para reconocer a los demás y a sí mismo como parte de un grupo determinado, es decir, reconocer una identidad común.

De esta manera es como se pueden reconocer las “formas de ser” de los individuos que pertenecen a grupos sociales determinados. En el campo del lenguaje, estas “formas de ser” se observan, comparan y hasta cierto punto se comprenden cuando se llevan a cabo situaciones comunicativas, de producción y comprensión, que impliquen

un contexto determinado con individuos determinados. Desde este punto de vista, el lenguaje común y el lenguaje inclusivo determinan formas de ser de estos grupos. Los primeros dominantes y, los otros resistentes, quienes rechazan la representación oficial de la realidad (Giroux, 1992).

Otra idea que cobra sentido en el lenguaje hablado, la lengua, es la adaptación. Fromm (1991) habla de dos motivos que obligan al individuo a adaptarse. Uno es cubrir necesidades biológicas y fisiológicas, a este se le llama primario. Otro es la necesidad de pertenencia a un grupo, este motivo es secundario. Ambas están presentes de manera evidente en la formación del carácter social. Referente a esto, el lenguaje permite cubrir ambas necesidades, mientras que el lenguaje inclusivo adopta más una postura secundaria, pues busca la igualdad de derechos, eliminar construcciones sociales sexistas y la identificación con un grupo social determinado, al menos es el razonamiento más común en estas prácticas.

Si bien, estos motivos parecen alejados de la idea de la lengua en sus actos ilocutorios, cabe señalar que en un grupo social donde se habla una lengua inclusiva, es necesario adaptarse para comunicar, expresar ideas, opiniones, y de esta manera lograr acuerdos con los demás a partir de la comprensión y la posibilidad de vislumbrar más una exclusión social que un lenguaje inclusivo.

Al respecto Bolívar (2019), establece ambas apreciaciones problematizándolas. En este ejercicio el lenguaje inclusivo responde a un problema lingüístico, al menos en apariencia, donde se presupone que cambiando las prácticas lingüísticas es que se puede contrarrestar el sexismo y la discriminación. En contraposición, la exclusión social responde a un problema que va más allá de lo lingüístico, por lo que se presupone que cambiando los gobiernos para mejorar las democracias es que se logrará la inclusión. Ciertamente, cambiar o adaptar un código lingüístico no va a generar un cambio en la mentalidad de la sociedad, por lo menos no en el corto plazo, será a través del tiempo que estas nuevas formas de comunicación se arraiguen en el colectivo social y ello determine el cambio de pensamiento y de percepción de la realidad.

En cualquiera de las dos posturas la resistencia tiene cabida. Por un lado, los científicos de la lingüística se resisten a aceptar el lenguaje inclusivo abogando que la lengua ya está dada y legitimada y que se trata más de una postura política y de Estado, que una convención lingüística. Por otro lado, las personas alineadas con el cambio perciben que la lengua evidencia el sexismo, la discriminación, la desigualdad y la dominación, por lo tanto, es trabajo de la Academia modificarlo. Este es un debate,

que seguramente continuará existiendo en los próximos años, pues mientras exista la dominación, existirá la resistencia.

En conclusión, sin duda en la formación del individuo se encuentran rasgos sociales que de alguna manera moldean el pensamiento, modos de actuar y reaccionar ante situaciones determinadas, y el papel de la educación, como institución sea la familia o la escuela, es determinante. Ella debe buscar formar actores sociales y sujetos personales mediante el compromiso entre la diversidad de culturas, personalidades y grupos. A primera vista pareciera que la lengua solo está destinada a lograr aprendizajes lingüísticos, sin embargo, por medio de ella se puede acceder a otras formas de ser y comprenderlas mejor. Por ende, el lenguaje también forma al individuo, al sujeto.

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