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ESTE NUEVO NÚMERO DE LA revista *Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras* propone cinco artículos, de los cuales cuatro abordan problemáticas en didáctica y uno se centra en el análisis de un problema de transposición gramatical en una traducción literaria entre el español y el inglés. Ya que no dispongo de competencias en traductología, me permito abstenerme de entrar en este campo especializado.

Sin embargo, sí que me interesa de manera particular la cuestión de la evaluación en la formación universitaria de los traductores teniendo en cuenta la orientación inicial de mis investigaciones (Chardenet, 1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2013a, 2013b) que me llevaron a analizar la noción de evaluación desde el punto de vista de sus componentes cognitivos (¿qué se puede evaluar y qué realmente se evalúa?), discursivos (¿cómo se manifiesta la evaluación mediante el enunciado axiológico?) y sociales (¿desde cuándo y por qué evaluamos?). Esto me llevó a distinguir el funcionamiento de la actividad evaluativa (al generar sentido a través de operaciones lingüísticas como la categorización, por el cual los seres humanos evalúan los objetos del mundo), del acto de evaluación (al formalizar una necesidad social de clasificación determinada por un modo de producción que origina la excelencia y la

exclusión a través de procedimientos y procesos técnicos, los sistemas educativos y de formación se ven llamados a demostrar lo indemostrable: la objetividad de las prácticas de evaluación). Cualesquiera que sean las técnicas, la enunciación sigue siendo el lugar de construcción, ya sea antagonica o colaborativa, de los actos de evaluación. La propuesta de evaluación formativa para los estudiantes de traducción de Brasil resalta un carácter participativo con miras a un diálogo evaluativo capaz de compensar las debilidades de la evaluación sumativa, siendo esta última la más extendida. Por otra parte, el debate sobre las nociones de competencia traductora y sobre los errores de traducción aporta aquí un punto de vista interesante a un campo todavía poco estudiado.

El artículo sobre la percepción de la pronunciación de consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín por parte de los estudiantes hispanohablantes y las soluciones propuestas según un modelo interactivo intenta ir más allá del enfoque metodológico descendente (arriba-abajo) de la fonética articulatoria y de su método tradicional de corrección fonética. La comprensión científica de la actividad de percepción y la transición a la actividad de producción constituyen un proceso complejo que recurre a diferentes disciplinas; asimismo, la construcción de transposiciones didácticas para la enseñanza-aprendizaje debe poder apoyarse en investigaciones-acción de ese tipo. Precisamente este mismo tema se aborda, ya en otro ámbito, en el artículo sobre el efecto de las estrategias metacognitivas en el proceso de escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera. En las dos investigaciones empíricas en las cuales se basan estos artículos destacan dos elementos fundamentales en cuanto al plan de aprendizaje: uno didáctico, la toma de consciencia de los actos lingüísticos (*faits langagiers*); y el otro pedagógico, la

confianza dentro de la dimensión constructiva de la enseñanza (el plan de enseñanza).

Existe una unión entre estos artículos, que destaca de manera apropiada el estudio sobre el aprendizaje colaborativo internacional en línea, la cooperación como factor pedagógico esencial. En el triángulo educativo, la interacción óptima aprendiente-docente-saberes se mantiene activa en todas las direcciones (aprendiente-docente y docente-aprendiente; aprendiente-saberes y docente-saberes) para generar las competencias previstas, o bien, se activa solo de manera parcial; esta activación parcial favorece los déficits cuyas causas deberán investigarse en el ámbito del aprendizaje y/o de la enseñanza. Lo que se añade aquí, en el contexto de aprendizaje internacional en línea, es la problemática transcultural, a menudo evidenciada en los trabajos sobre comunidades y tandems de aprendientes en línea. Aunque la visibilidad de la heterogeneidad cultural se ve reforzada por la distancia, no hay que olvidar que esta también constituye la realidad tangible de numerosas situaciones de aprendizaje presencial que la unidad grupo-clase tiende en ocasiones a borrar.

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A light blue background featuring a collection of various characters, including letters, symbols, and punctuation marks, scattered across the surface. The characters are in different colors (white, dark blue, light blue) and sizes, creating a dynamic and abstract composition. Some characters are clearly legible, while others are partially obscured or faded. The overall effect is a sense of digital noise or a random assortment of typographic elements.

Assessing Translation Students in a Brazilian University*

*Evaluación de estudiantes de traducción
en una universidad brasileña*

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ABSTRACT

From a Translation Studies perspective, translation assessment is gradually becoming more popular thanks to increasing academic interest in translator education. In fact, we believe that evaluation should be more deeply explored in order to systematise and consolidate how it is carried out, especially in a particular Brazilian context. As we still witness an unwelcome focus on *summative* assessment of students with little room for constructive feedback from educators, the purpose of this article is to discuss ways to assess translation students that move beyond traditional approaches. The focus here is on *formative* assessment, whose emphasis on feedback better suits the dynamic nature we believe translator education should have. Furthermore, we shall review the concepts of *translation competence* and *translation error* as important elements within translation evaluation, as well as *peer* and *self-assessment*, which promote a more student-centered and participatory environment.

Keywords: *formative assessment, translation assessment, translation competence, translator education.*

RESUMEN

Desde una perspectiva traductológica, la evaluación de la traducción se está haciendo más popular gracias al aumento del interés académico por la formación de traductores. Creemos que esta evaluación debe explorarse con detalle para sistematizar y consolidar la forma en que se realiza, especialmente en un contexto brasileño en particular. Dado que todavía hay un enfoque excesivo en la evaluación *sumativa*, esto deja poco espacio para el feedback constructivo de los educadores, por esto el objetivo de este artículo es, por lo tanto, discutir formas de evaluar a los estudiantes de traducción que van más allá de los enfoques tradicionales. El enfoque aquí presentado es la evaluación *formativa*, cuyo énfasis en el feedback se ajusta mejor a la naturaleza dinámica que creemos que debería tener la formación del traductor. Además, se discutirán conceptos como la *competencia traductora* y los *errores de traducción*, así como la *evaluación por pares* y la *autoevaluación*, que promueven un ambiente más participativo y centrado en el alumno.

Palabras clave: *competencia traductora, evaluación de la traducción, evaluación formativa, formación de traductores.*

MOTIVATED BY INCREASING ACADEMIC INTEREST in translator education¹ (see Echeverri, 2015; Fernandes, 2007; Giaber, 2018; Huertas Barros & Vine, 2017; Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005, 2007; Kiraly, 2012; Loguercio & Silva, 2020; Schäffner, 2000), herein using the operational definition proposed by Echeverri (2015):

Translator education is normally used to refer to the kind of instruction that students receive in the larger social contexts of universities. This kind of instruction is integral and offers students the possibility to see translation as an activity linked to societal and humanistic issues. In contrast, the concept of translator training refers to the kind of translation instruction that tries to conform to the specific demands of the profession. (p. 323)

In this article we look at translation assessment, one of the topics discussed in this specific area of knowledge. Martínez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001) point out that there are at least three relevant elements when assessing translation; (I) published translation, which refers to translation of literary and sensitive texts; (II) professional translation, which refers to translator competence; and (III) translation teaching, which refers to students' translator competence, study plan and programs. This article focuses on the latter, more specifically on teachers' approaches to the assessment of translations produced by students as we are interested in finding out how this assessment can become more effective in helping students to develop into more competent translators.

¹ For a comprehensive list of works on the topic of translation assessment see Franco Aixelá (2001-2020).

We are not oblivious to the fact that the industry requires translators who can deliver translations that fit their expectations, and that translators are constantly assessed for their performance. Gouadec (2007), for example, presents a translation contract that makes this unambiguous: «an overall quality grade will be awarded to each job of work you do for us [...]. We give priority to those who are awarded the highest assessment grades» (p. 322). However, educators cannot assess students' translations with the sole objective of giving them grades. Instead, *formative assessment*, which stands mainly on feedback, should be more widely used, being *peer* and *self-assessment* important elements in the evaluative process as, together, they can provide a more comprehensive approach to translator assessment. Such model of assessment does not ignore the demands of the real world and it can indeed contribute towards translators getting used to different means of evaluation, thus making assessment less stressful and better preparing them to justify their choices. By understanding what needs to be improved in the translations they do, as well as in their overall performance as translators, they will be better prepared to achieve the results the industry demands.

According to Kelly (2005), current approaches to assessment tend to focus more on the product rather than on the process of translation. For her, the lack of clear criteria for assessing translation students' work leads teachers to evaluate their work very negatively, which obscures its positive aspects. The most important aspect of student assessment, continues the author, is the fact that it should be linked to the objectives or intended outcomes;

if we set out to help students attain certain outcomes, then assessment is the instrument we use to check whether they (and we) have succeeded or not, and indeed to generate

proposals for solving problems where our programme has not succeeded. (Kelly, 2005, p. 133)

Although Hurtado Albir (2015b) acknowledges that assessment includes both process and product, the evaluation model she presents focuses on the former, thus looking at assessment not just as a qualification system, but primarily as a learning tool. In addition to the use of a variety of assessment tools and activities to gather information about challenges that were identified and how to solve them, she provides insightful comments on teacher assessment and student self-assessment, to which we shall return later in this article.

Drawing mainly on scholars who write from a curriculum design stance (Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005), we shall discuss how translation students can be more comprehensively evaluated by looking at concepts such as *diagnostic*, *summative* and *formative assessment*, *feedback*, and *peer* and *self-assessment*. Based on our experience as educators in an institution that offers a postgraduate degree in Translation Studies (TS), we then bring the Brazilian context of assessment into discussion and draw some conclusions that, although specific to that context, can be extended to different cultural settings. However, before addressing these concepts we will take a brief look at *translation competence* (TC), a concept which we understand to be key to students achieving intended outcomes, followed by the notion of *translation error*, whose relevance seems to shift depending on the type of assessment to which one is committed.

TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The concept of translation competence — also known as translation ability, translation skills, translational competence, translator's competence and translation expertise (Hurtado

Albir & Alves, 2008, p. 63) — has been widely discussed and criticised by scholars in the disciplinary field of TS (see Eskelinen & Pakkala-Weckström, 2016; Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005; Pym, 2003; Schäffner, 2000). According to Kelly (2005), for instance, TC can be viewed as «the term used in TS to describe the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes which a translator possesses in order to undertake professional activity in the field» (p.162). For the Pacte research group², TC is defined as «the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate» (Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002, p. 376). The two Barcelona-based authors note that such definition is completed by four main premises:

(I) translation competence is actualised in different ways in different situations, (II) it consists basically of operative [procedural] knowledge, (III) strategies play a basic role in translation competence and (IV) as in any kind of expert knowledge, most translation competence processes are automatic. (Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002, p. 376)

Schäffner (2000), in turn, describes TC as

a complex notion which involves an awareness of and conscious reflection on all the relevant factors for the production of a target text (TT) that appropriately fulfils its specified function for its target addressees. Such a competence requires more than a sound knowledge of the linguistic system of L1 and L2. (p. 146)

2. Currently, the Pacte (Procés d'Adquisició de la Competència Traductora i Avaluació) project is directed by Hurtado Albir at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Its focus is on the process of *translation competence* acquisition and evaluation.

By comparing these definitions, important and complex issues related to the notion of competence in translation can be observed. One interesting point of convergence in the definitions is that TC goes beyond linguistic knowledge, as professional translators need a wide array of different types of knowledge, skills and attitudes to maintain themselves in a competitive position in the job market. Orozco and Hurtado Albir (2002) and Schäffner's (2000) definitions, however, differ from each other at least in one aspect, namely automatic vs. conscious awareness. Schmidt (1990), who discusses the role of consciousness in second language learning, draws from a series of theories, one of which is Baars' theory of consciousness. For Schmidt (1990), the vital element in Baars' theory is «his emphasis on the point that conscious experience is always informative, and that conscious events trigger adaptive processing in the nervous system» (p. 138). This theory emphasizes that

learning begins with the realization that something is to be learned, progresses through a series of stages that establish a context for understanding new material, and concludes with the new material fading out of consciousness as it becomes itself a part of the unconscious context that shapes the interpretation of future events. (Baars, 1988, cited in Schmidt, 1990, p. 138)

Translators may use their competence in an automatic manner as Orozco and Hurtado Albir (2002) state; however, before becoming automatic, TC requires a level of consciousness so that translators can have a basis on which they can justify their decision-making processes. Also translators today have more freedom to perform their work, and translations are no longer blindly attached to the source text, translators need to be prepared to discuss their translation choices with any player in the translation process (e.g. the target audience, the client

who requested the translation), which makes consciousness not only an advantageous state to possess but also a vital one. As educators, our aim is to make the educational stage the period in which translation students mostly acquire and develop TC, making it into the ideal period for students to make use of, in Schäffner's words (2000), «awareness and conscious reflection» to produce their translations. Table 1 shows some of the (sub-)competences some scholars have listed as being the most relevant for translators to develop in order to carry out their tasks. These models were chosen because of the authors' curriculum design stance, which has a direct impact on the teaching of translation.

TABLE 1. *Models of translation competence.*

Kelly's model (Kelly, 2005)	Schäffner's model (Schäffner, 2000)	Pacte's model (Pacte, 2009)
language competence	linguistic competence	bilingual sub-competence
cultural competence	cultural competence	extra-linguistic sub-competence
instrumental competence	textual competence	knowledge about translation
Professionalization	domain/subject specific competence	instrumental sub-competence
interpersonal competence	(re)search competence	strategic sub- competence
subject area competence	transfer competence	psycho-physiological components
attitudinal competence		

Source: own elaboration.

(Sub)competences such as linguistic, cultural, and instrumental (knowledge related to the use of documentation resources and information and communication technologies applied to translation) appear either in all three models or at least in two of them, which is an indication that they may be indispensable translation competences to be developed by the would-be translator. Under the Pacte's model, the *strategic sub-competence*, which guarantees the solution of problems encountered, is considered to be essential to control the translation process. According to the group,

its function is to plan the process and carry out the translation project (selecting the most appropriate method); evaluate the process and the partial results obtained in relation to the final purpose; activate the different sub-competences and compensate for any shortcomings; identify translation problems and apply procedures to solve them. (Pacte, 2009, p. 209)

For Schäffner (2000), in addition to specific competences translation students need to have knowledge of basic concepts and approaches to translation. She explains that «if they can learn very explicitly, from the very beginning of their studies, what translation is and what translation competence includes, this knowledge will help them to make informed decisions in producing target texts» (p. 155). She also argues that they need to develop awareness of translation strategies in order to apply them to different text types and domains for a variety of purposes. Moreover, because the translator is no longer a lonely professional who works from home only accompanied by a set of good dictionaries and reference books, interpersonal skills is an added advantage for translators to develop (this aspect is contemplated in Kelly's model under *interpersonal competence*).

Kelly (2005) suggests that such a skill can be developed in the classroom by means of collaborative work. However, the author warns that teachers must be aware that organising students into groups is not enough to develop the ability to work in a team, as «specific skills need to be acquired consciously through practice and reflection» (p. 76).

TRANSLATION ERROR

Although paying too much attention to errors may be counterproductive when assessing translation students —especially when addressing motivation issues as already investigated in the area of English Language Teaching (see, for example, Han et al., 2019)— it is extremely important to make students aware of inadequacies so that they can place themselves in their own learning map and also find more appropriate solutions to the task at hand. Nevertheless, in order to avoid excessive error marking, teachers may want to focus on what the target text should convey instead of making students too attached to the source text.

According to Nord (1997), «if the purpose of a translation is to achieve a particular function for the target addressee, anything that obstructs the achievement of this purpose is a translation error» (p. 74). She notes that for the purpose of translation training, this functional definition of translation error may be advantageous to students, who do not have full command of either source or target languages at early stages of their learning process. In order to keep on track of the purpose, she suggests that the translation brief can be formulated in such a way that students can be able to perform a translation task despite deficiencies in terms of translation competence. The author defines *translation brief* as

the communicative purpose for which the translation is needed. The ideal brief provides explicit or implicit information about the intended target-text function(s), the target-text addressee(s), the medium over which it will be transmitted, the prospective place and time and, if necessary, general style conventions, measurement conventions, translation conventions. (Nord, 1997, p. 137)

The author adds that when students receive clear instructions of what is expected from their texts, they tend to make fewer linguistic mistakes. To our own experience, students feel less anxious when they produce a text that is evaluated in terms of how well it works in the target language. Therefore, we see the positive aspect of working through the concept of *brief* with them. It is not the case that by doing so any sort of translation is acceptable, but by following a brief different translations can achieve the purpose therein set, which can be indeed a very enriching experience for students.

Although Nord (1997) argues for a less rigid approach to evaluation at early stages of training, she presents a translation error classification to guide teachers in later stages when more objective criteria may be necessary. Hurtado Albir (2015b) also presents a list of translation errors that should be considered during correction. Table 2 shows some of the errors that these two authors list.

TABLE 2. *Translation errors.*

Hurtado Albir	Nord
1. Errors that affect the meaning of source text (ST), such as wrong meaning, addition, omission, inadequate register.	1. Pragmatic errors: inadequate solutions to problems such as lack of receiver orientation.
2. Errors that affect the expression of the target language: spelling, lexical, textual, cohesion/coherence, style.	2. Cultural errors: inadequate decision regarding reproduction/adaptation of culture-specific conventions.
3. Pragmatic errors.	3. Linguistic errors: inadequate translation when the focus is on language structure.
	4. Text-specific errors: related to a specific translation problem. It can usually be evaluated from a functional or pragmatic point of view.

Source: own elaboration. Adapted from Hurtado Albir (2015b, pp. 20-21) and Nord (1997, pp. 75-76).

Nord (1997) notes that although pragmatic errors are not difficult to solve once they are detected, they are very serious because «receivers tend not to realise they are getting wrong information» (p. 76). Moreover, continues the author, «pragmatic errors cannot be detected by looking at the target text only (for instance, by a native-speaker revisor) unless they really produce incoherence in the text» (p. 76).

Hurtado Albir (2015b) further proposes a scale of grade reduction. For serious errors (e.g. wrong meaning, grammar or stylistic errors), the author suggests that 2 points be deducted, and for less serious errors (e.g. spelling, graphic accents and typos), 0,5–0,25 points deducted. However, the author observes that it is essential that students are able to detect the errors by themselves and find the best solution to fix them. Thus, teachers

should, instead of giving them the right solution, guide them to the identification of errors. It is important, therefore, for students to be familiar with errors and also learn how to deal with them. The author suggests that the use of abbreviations after a given error facilitates its identification (e.g. *SP* for spelling, or *WO* for wrong order). According to Hurtado Albir (2015b) by doing so, students can redo the translation without the identified errors.

We look next at the three types of assessment that, together, offer a more holistic approach to assessing translation students, followed by the concepts of *peer* and *self-assessment* as additional evaluation tools.

DIAGNOSTIC, SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Martínez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001) point out that in the pedagogical context, evaluation has traditionally been equated with measuring in order to judge; according to this perspective, the evaluator is therefore a judge, while the person evaluated has to submit to the evaluator's authority, which is not always either just or objective. (p. 275)

The authors remind us, however, that such a scenario has been gradually shifting to one where examinations and objects of knowledge give place to the subjects (both trainer and the trainee) in a more equitable relationship in which students are encouraged to take a more active role towards their own learning. In this sense, Angelelli (2018) argues that we should move beyond traditional methods of assessment in which test results are the only basis for assessing students' performance. The author calls for a broader approach to assessment combining students' test results with «evidence of quality of performance and achievements gathered through, for example, observations,

portfolios and group work» (p. 436). In this new setting, formative assessment has been gaining momentum, pushing summative assessment away from center stage.

As Kelly (2005) indicates, summative assessment involves a grade or an accreditation. Under this, which is normally done in examination conditions, as the author reminds us, the teacher sets a task, which is then marked to establish whether or not students reached the level required to pass to a higher level or receive a diploma. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is «any marking, correction or comment which gives students feedback on their learning precisely in order to help them learn more, or better» (p. 133). However, the author notes that summative assessment can have a formative function when final exams are marked and returned to students with feedback on how to improve their translation tasks.

According to Kelly (2005), in a student-centered scenario, there is no place for norm-referenced assessment, which is based on «typical» or compulsory statistical distributions of grades (e.g. A = the top 10%, B = the following 25%). The author defends a criterion-referenced assessment, in which grading is attached to the idea of learning and is «based on the degree of attainment of the intended outcomes which form the basis of the entire teaching and learning process» (p. 141). The author explains that this type of assessment is more qualitative in nature and is normally expressed in letters or in descriptive terms; however, grades can be expressed in figures if this is the requirement. She gives the example of a brief-oriented translation task in which students are asked to identify cultural differences between source and target readership, and then to propose appropriate solutions for these problems. The text difficulty should take into account students' level of competence. She adds that, with regard to assessment, the combination of students' actual

translation and the comments should make it relatively simple to establish whether or not the intended outcome has been achieved. Regarding grades, the author suggests the following:

- » **Excellent**, when all cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in all or almost all cases;
- » **Very good**, when almost all the cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in almost all cases;
- » **Good**, when most of the cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in a significant number of cases;
- » **Satisfactory**, when a significant number of cultural differences has been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed on occasion;
- » **Unsatisfactory**, when no significant number of cultural differences has been identified, and when appropriate solutions have been proposed they are not dealt with in an appropriate fashion following the translation brief (Kelly, 2005, p. 141-142).

Kelly (2005) goes on to explain that even when teachers prefer/have to convert qualitative grades into quantitative, they should allow «lower earlier grades to be discarded or given much less weighting» (p. 142) so that students' progress can be also taken into account. To our understanding, however, evaluation, either by using adjectives or grades, should be followed by detailed comments directly aimed at individual students.

In addition to summative and formative assessment, another form of evaluation that has been receiving more attention in translation education is *diagnostic assessment*, also known as *needs analysis* or *initial diagnosis assessment* (Kelly, 2005).

This type of evaluation, based on a set of questions, is used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses when they join a given module, which is a valuable tool for teachers to better plan their lessons and choose adequate material that considers students' needs. The answers to the questions can be gathered in a variety of ways, such as short essays on motivation and expectations, translation exercises, class debate on expectations, or as part of a questionnaire, usually applied on the first day of class. Some helpful questions to gather information on students' requirements are³:

- » What do students know when they join the module?
- » What modules have they taken previously?
- » What modules are they taking simultaneously?
- » How old are they?
- » Are they full-time or part-time students?
- » Do they have any special needs?
- » What kind of teaching and learning environment are they accustomed to?
- » What learning styles do they prefer?
- » Why are they taking this module?
- » What do they expect to learn?

Kelly (2005) also draws attention to the fact that we live in a society in which students know more about computers and technology in general, and also have more hands-on experience of the world, be it through the internet or traveling, which has been made more accessible because of cheaper flights, for instance. On the other hand, as university education is opening to larger sections of society (which happens to be the case of Brazil), the proportion of students with considerable prior knowledge and

3 Adapted from Kelly (2005, p. 43).

those with less prior knowledge has been gradually changing. With this greater diversity, it is difficult to plan lessons that cater to individual student needs. Thus, the author says that it is paramount to find a «happy medium» during the planning stage and to be flexible at the implementation stage.

Another aspect worth reflecting on during the *diagnostic assessment* stage is that of learning styles. Kelly (2005) focuses on three important premises related to them. First, and most importantly, the fact that not everyone learns in the same way. The author observes that although researchers do not believe learning styles to be unchangeable, they are deeply rooted, thus, difficult to change. Second, from a constructivist point of view, learning happens «when changes or additions are made to pre-existing knowledge and understanding, constituting a process of individual transformation» (p. 47). A social constructivist approach has a more collective view of learning, that is, the exchange of experience and knowledge among students also contributes to their transformation. In fact, experience, which is presented by Kelly (2005) as the third premise, be it acquired individually or collectively, is a major factor in learning, as we learn through experience, gained in different ways and contexts. The author subscribes to current research suggesting that students tend to reach higher levels of learning when they are encouraged to actively participate in realistic activities, when they exercise independence, as well as when they work collaboratively.

Kiraly (2012), whose work is built around the notion of collaborative translation task, sees the classroom as a place where students should first experience the real challenges of their future career:

The translation student, in my view, should have plenty of opportunities to actively, viscerally and collaboratively

experience the challenges, quandaries and pressures, and the often contradictory allegiances and unexpected pitfalls to which translators are subjected – during their studies and not only after their completion. This is embodied cognition, an essential feature of professional education. (p. 84)

We discuss *peer* and *self-assessment* in the next section, practices that we believe to be key in promoting a more student-centered and participatory environment. Although assessment is normally carried out by teachers, in a formative assessment environment, these alternatives can be explored.

PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Peer assessment is carried out by other students from the same group or level. Rollinson (2005), who writes on peer feedback in ESL writing class, notes that students may feel that classmates are not qualified enough to judge their work, and are, therefore, a poor alternative to teacher assessment. The author laments such perceptions, as they may prevent teachers from using what he calls «a highly profitable interaction on many counts» (p. 23), which presents a few advantages over teacher assessment, as it can be «less threatening, less authoritarian, friendlier, [and] more supportive» (p. 24). Such a view can perfectly be applied to feedback on translation, especially because it also entails writing in its process. For Kelly (2005), peer assessment has the added advantage of benefiting all students «by developing the ability to evaluate, to justify decisions and comment, and to revise translations» (p. 143). Rollinson (2005) notes that studies conducted by Caulk (1994), Berg (1999) and Chaudron (1984) show that peer feedback is different from that of the teacher. While the latter is more general, the former is more specific and, therefore, can be seen as complementary.

Although peer feedback seems to bring many benefits to students, it will be most valuable if it is properly implemented in the sense that the role of the teacher as the oracle be replaced by that of facilitator. In a study conducted by Heine (2019) with 19 undergraduate students in an L2 web-based communication course, the author points out the need for discussion about it before and after its implementation, because, although students have a good understanding of the assessment they receive, especially if it comes from the teacher, they are unsure whether the feedback they provide will be carried out by their peers, therefore, they do not know of the relevance of their feedback. Heine (2019) highlights that the focus of Translation Didactics agenda is on «feedback training to help developing students' capacity to make qualitative judgments – as will be required from them in the profession» (p. 353).

With regard to *self-assessment* (see Kelly, 2005; Pakkala-Weckström, 2019; Li, 2018), it is carried out by students themselves on their own work and progress. Kelly (2005) notes that this type of evaluation is important in any profession and in translation it is perhaps more so for future freelance translators. It is, however, a difficult skill to acquire, and the author points out that teachers often choose to introduce self-assessment once students have carried out peer assessment.

At the end of each unit of Hurtado Albir's (2015b) book, the author includes a self-assessment form with open questions so that students can reflect on what they have learnt regarding the learning objectives of a particular unit. The last unit is dedicated to a more comprehensive self-assessment, in which students are asked to reflect on topics such as previous knowledge and expectations; conception of translation; translation competencies acquired throughout the course and so on. While Table 3 shows an example of open questions on students' conceptions of

translation, Table 4 shows a multiple-choice form of assessment in the same subject. Hurtado Albir (2015a) also proposes that students create a reflective diary in which they can report their experience regarding the learning process, both inside and outside the classroom, as well as regarding the teaching (e.g. contents, material used by the teacher, methods). Additionally, they may also add information on translation reports and translations they have reviewed.

TABLE 3. *Self-assessment form (open questions).*

My conception of translation

1. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the most difficult aspect of translating?
2. How do you define translation? (maximum of three lines)

Source: own elaboration.

TABLE 4. *Self-assessment form (multiple choice questions).*

2. Review your ideas on translation

1. The way the translator does his/her translation is determined by who commissioned the job.
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
2. The aim of every translation is to produce a text whose form is as close as possible to the source text.
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
3. Most of the translation problems can be solved with the help of good dictionaries
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
4. A text should be translated in different ways according to the target text readers
5. I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree

Note: own translation. Adapted from Hurtado Albir (2015b, p. 239).

Kelly (2005) suggests that teachers also need to go through this process. Regardless of the assessment criteria put in place by institutions, the author proposes that individual teachers should implement «their own formative assessment techniques in order to have feedback from students and colleagues from which to learn and introduce improvements» (p. 146). According to the author, techniques such as questionnaires, debates, interviews, although popular, should be left to the end of the term so that students feel more comfortable answering the questions, which minimizes the pressure to «please» the teacher.

Another example of self-assessment is the one proposed by Pakkala-Weckström (2019) which suggests the use of a *student self-evaluation grid*. According to the author, this tool provides a structured framework for evaluating both one's translation process and the translation product. By way of conclusion, the author states that the use of the grid as a tool for *self-monitoring* and *quality-control* can help students to «conduct detailed retrospective analysis of their strengths and weaknesses in translating» (p. 281), despite the fact that the students' responses tend to be subjective to a certain extent. In this sense, the author stresses that careful instructor's monitoring would be required as previously suggested by Kelly (2007).

In the next section we finally look at our own Brazilian context, which has been gradually incorporating assessment forms other than the summative option.

OUR SPECIFIC BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

There are currently a number of public and private institutions that offer BA programmes in translation in Brazil, federal universities such as Universidade de Brasília (UNB), Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB), Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (UFOP), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS),

and Universidade Federal de Uberlândia (UFU), among them. However, our discussion is based on our experience as educators in an institution that offers only postgraduate degree in TS, where the undergraduate students are language students who have the TS module for three semesters (*Introduction to TS* in the first semester; TS I in the third semester, and TS II in the fourth semester)⁴. Many students, however, do not intend to become teachers and they see translation as a possibility for their future career. In fact, we have been witnessing students' growing interest in translation in the language and literature classroom.

A study conducted by Collet and Emmel (2014) with undergraduate language students corroborates this increase in interest in translation. The authors note that during the period included in the study, 2010 to 2014, of a total of 67 undergraduate dissertations⁵, 26 were in the field of translation, which amounts to 38% of the total number of dissertations. In the English program alone, this percentage is of 33% (7 out of 21).

For the authors, the results indicate that the increase in interest happened after students had completed their three compulsory translation modules, and they strongly believe that students would choose the optional modules to give continuation to their education. It seems that the experience these students had with TS was a key factor to their interest. We believe that the way students are taught and assessed may play a vital role in triggering their interest.

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- 4 The university informing our discussion is Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) and in addition to the three semesters mentioned, there are other modules in translation offered to the English language undergraduate students: Special topic in translation (36hrs.); TS: writing and revision (36hrs.); TS: translation lab (72hrs.), TS in English I (36 hrs.), and TS in English II (72h).
- 5 Including all the languages on offer, namely English, German, Spanish, Italian, and French.

Students enter the language program still very much influenced by a series of misconceptions about translation and the translator's role. A number of negative reviews of translated work, which often blame translators for everything they deem to be «wrong», unsurprisingly wither their enthusiasm for the profession. Who has never heard comments about how badly translators translate film titles when, in fact, translators have little or no say in the translation of these elements? Dealing with such misconceptions requires teachers to present translation in earnest and to develop students' translation competence and critical thinking (Chen, 2019). Although the practice is not the centerpiece of the TS modules, we strive to make room for it so that students can properly consolidate learning following exposure to key theoretical concepts discussed in TS.

With regard to evaluation, although summative assessment is an institutional requirement, formative assessment is used too, especially by means of feedback, collaborative work, with which students also have the opportunity to exercise peer feedback, and questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester. For example, at the beginning of the term students are usually asked to write a paragraph on their conception of translation, which is then shared with the class. At the end of the semester, they are asked to review their text and either complement it or write a new one. It is interesting to see how they broaden their conception of translation and how critical they become.

Regarding teacher feedback, we try to give feedback as timely as possible, either face-to-face or in writing (both handwritten and computerised). Peer assessment, on the other hand, is still seen with mistrust, especially by novices, who prefer to receive feedback from someone they see as an «expert». Therefore, students still need to be made aware of the importance of assessing and being assessed by their peers. As for self-assessment,

it is still in its embryonic state at the classroom level. We notice that at times students feel anxious to assess their own progress not only for not being used to doing so but also for fear of bias. Overall, we note that students are still hesitant to assume a more active role when it comes to assessment. Therefore, it is of vital importance to keep encouraging them to evaluate their peers and their own work and, most importantly, to give them guidance on how to do it.

In our Brazilian context, teachers often have to follow their institution's assessment criteria, which are often focused on summative assessment; however, we suggest that formative assessment be used throughout the semester, which can be used either for learning purposes only or translated into grades. Whatever teachers choose to do, they need to keep it consistent and inform students from the beginning how they/their work will be assessed. But whatever form of assessment is used, it is essential to have students' development as the main objective. From our experience, students feel more confident when their translations are evaluated based on their functionality in relation to the target reader. Although linguistic errors should be pointed out to students, reducing their grades based on such errors may be counterproductive, as the text as a whole may compensate for specific errors. We need to avoid the adoption of a criterion heavily based on grading so that translation evaluation can mirror that of the language teaching setting, where formative evaluation has been discussed for some time now (Nunan, 1988).

Although students may still be concerned with grades at the end of the semester, we note their growing sense of pride for producing texts they and their peers consider being of good quality. Such a positive response is especially noticed when translations produced by students are openly discussed in the classroom. This kind of activity generates lively debates

in which, between praise and constructive criticism, students exchange ideas; suggest different translation strategies; alternative vocabulary and so on. It is very rewarding to see that students are normally very keen on having their texts evaluated in these classroom activities. Such exercises are very positive for everybody involved, and that is when the teacher's mediation is of great value because while students who have produced a below expectation translated text need to feel that errors are very much part of the process and that their texts can be further improved, students who have produced good texts need to be encouraged to keep on producing texts of quality. As expected, these students additionally learn a great deal when presented with a number of possible translations of the same source text. This is a beneficial activity not only because of its pedagogical potential but also because students hardly realize that they are both assessing and being assessed.

With regard to teacher assessment, teachers can create their own system for this type of activity to award points towards active participation at the end of the semester, for example, leaving the comments raised during the activity as part of formative assessment. In our particular case, we believe that by encouraging students to talk about translation we are helping them to demystify translation and the translator's role and develop their confidence as future translators. By doing so, whatever the grade they may obtain at the end of the term is of secondary importance.

FINAL REMARKS

This article addressed some points related to the assessment of translation students, which has been attracting more academic interest in the last few years. Translation feedback, translation error and translation competence (Hurtado Albir, 2015b; Nord,

1997; Schäffner, 2000), key concepts in translation assessment, were briefly discussed, and some aspects of models designed by authors (Hurtado Albir, 2015a; Kelly, 2005) whose works focus on translation education were also presented. Most importantly, these authors agree that we need to look at translation student assessment in a more holistic manner, making use of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment. However, there is consensus that formative assessment is the form of evaluation educators should mostly use; especially because of the importance it places on feedback, which should be seen as a path to strengthen and consolidate learning. Feedback can be given by the teacher to students or by students to their peers; however, our experience shows that students still rely a great deal on feedback from the teacher. Besides feedback, students and teachers can evaluate their own performance by means of self-assessment, advantages of which are still to be gained in the particular context here discussed due to lack of practice.

By bringing our own classroom experience, we acknowledge that there is still some way to go before achieving the holistic assessment that some translation scholars propose. The perpetuation of misconceptions about translation and the translator's role is a common scenario in Brazil, and it is not different among novice students. Therefore, at the same time that teachers strive to implement formative assessment they need to overturn these misconceptions. We are, nevertheless, confident that we are on the right path when we encourage students to talk about translation and to practice it in a participatory environment where formative assessment is carried out through feedback from all players involved. When properly used, feedback can become a powerful tool for students' development as a would-be translator. Furthermore, its regular use can make students more receptive to assessment, which is an element

that is part of the profession. As translation students, they are going to benefit from the feedback provided by teachers and peers, which in turn will prepare them to cope with the demands of the industry as professional translators. Hence, they will be able to deal more successfully with either negative or positive feedback provided by all the stakeholders in the working environment. Therefore, we see formative assessment, with its powerful/empowering combination of peer, teacher and self-assessment, as capable of equipping students to justify their translation choices whenever questioned.

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De la percepción a la pronunciación: la enseñanza de las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín a hispanohablantes*

*From Perception to Pronunciation: Teaching Mandarin Chinese
Retroflex Consonants to Spanish-Speakers*

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RESUMEN

Este estudio se enfoca en comprender los aspectos necesarios para enseñar la percepción y pronunciación de cuatro consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín a un público hispanohablante. A través de una intervención pedagógica diseñada para la percepción y la producción de dichas consonantes en segmentos fonéticos aislados y contextualizados, estudiantes de chino pertenecientes a distintos niveles fueron orientados hacia la concientización fonológica y en el entrenamiento perceptivo sobre las retroflejas. De este estudio se desprenden cuatro reflexiones orientadas hacia el diseño de intervenciones focalizadas en la pronunciación: la promoción del reconocimiento, el uso de un modelo interactivo de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas, la guía de la percepción a través de realimentación personalizada y la focalización en las etapas iniciales de aprendizaje. Las implicaciones pedagógicas de este estudio resaltan la necesidad de incorporar, con mayor fervor, prácticas de entrenamiento perceptivo en las clases de lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: *chino mandarín, consonantes retroflejas, enseñanza, hispanohablante, percepción, pronunciación.*

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on understanding the necessary aspects to teach the perception and pronunciation of four retroflex Mandarin Chinese consonants to a Spanish-Speaking audience. Through a pedagogical intervention designed for the perception and production of these consonants in isolated and contextualized phonetic segments, students of Chinese belonging to different levels were guided towards phonological awareness and the perceptual training of retroflexes. Four reflections connected to the design of pedagogic interventions focused on pronunciation emerged from this study: the promotion of noticing, the use of an interactive model of language teaching and learning, the guidance of perception through personalized feedback and the focus on the initial stages of learning. The pedagogical implications of this study highlight the need to incorporate perceptual training practices more eagerly in foreign language classes.

Keywords: *Mandarin Chinese, perception, pronunciation, retroflex consonants, Spanish-Speaking, teaching.*

EL APRENDIZAJE DEL CHINO MANDARÍN hace parte de las realidades y necesidades impulsadas por el mundo globalizado. La motivación por aprender esta lengua se evidencia en todos los continentes del mundo debido al importante rol comercial que China ha desarrollado en las últimas décadas. Una de las estrategias movilizadas por China para la difusión del chino mandarín es el establecimiento de sedes del Instituto Confucio. Esta entidad promueve la enseñanza de la lengua con fines comunicativos y de acercamiento a la cultura china (Confucius Institute Headquarters [Hanban], 2014).

Ahora bien, la enseñanza de la pronunciación del chino mandarín a poblaciones hispanohablantes resulta un tema poco explorado. La investigación alrededor de la didáctica de la pronunciación del chino y de sus rasgos particulares se encuentra significativamente apoyada en el inglés y en la mediación de esta lengua para aprenderlo. De igual forma, la investigación y la literatura encontrada sobre la pronunciación del chino tiende predominantemente a enfocarse en la descripción, enseñanza y aprendizaje de rasgos prosódicos como los tonos (Duanmu, 2007). Lo anterior debido a su complejidad y su gran distancia tipológica de otras lenguas internacionales mayoritarias tales como el inglés, el francés, el español, el árabe, el ruso, entre otras. Además, se encuentra poca información relacionada con la didáctica de la pronunciación de otros rasgos fonémicos de la lengua, no menos importantes y complejos, tales como las consonantes retroflejas.

En el caso particular del aprendizaje y la enseñanza de los sonidos retroflejos por parte de hispanohablantes, se encuentran estudios contrastivos entre el chino mandarín y el español, que han señalado que las consonantes retroflejas son unos de los rasgos del chino mandarín más distantes del español; por esta razón, pueden ser causantes de dificultades en el aprendizaje

de la pronunciación de dicha lengua (Miranda Márquez, 2014; Varela Rivera, 2014). Adicional a esto, diversos autores arguyen la necesidad de desarrollar una innovación metodológica que apunte a solucionar los problemas de aprendizaje de la pronunciación del chino por parte de hispanohablantes (García, 2015; Hou, 2015). A la fecha, el artículo de Hou (2015) es el único en Colombia que resalta la necesidad de realizar más investigación en torno a la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del chino en este contexto que contribuya a alcanzar desarrollos metodológicos que suplan las necesidades propias de los aprendientes colombianos de la lengua china.

En este artículo se presenta el caso de una experiencia pedagógica desarrollada en torno a la enseñanza de la pronunciación de las consonantes retroflejas del chino a aprendientes de esta lengua de la Universidad de los Andes. El alcance de este estudio exploratorio radica en motivar la enseñanza y adquisición de una pronunciación precisa de segmentos fonéticos en la lengua meta, ya que esta es considerada una herramienta fundamental para hacer la comunicación más efectiva (Jones, 1997). En este sentido, es de gran interés para el campo de la pedagogía de lenguas extranjeras entender qué estrategias y técnicas pueden promover el aprendizaje de sonidos inexistentes en el repertorio lingüístico de la L1 o de rasgos fonológicos problemáticos. Además, este estudio busca contribuir a la comprensión de los procesos de aprendizaje y enseñanza de chino mandarín en hispanohablantes, así como proveer indicios que guíen la formulación de innovaciones metodológicas que suplan las necesidades propias de los aprendientes colombianos.

De esta manera, se aborda un recuento teórico fundamentado en algunos principios de la adquisición de segundas lenguas (ASL). En seguida, la revisión teórica se centra en la adquisición y enseñanza de la pronunciación y en particular en las características

fonético-fonológicas del chino mandarín que son de interés para este estudio. Luego, se presentan las preguntas orientadoras y la metodología de la investigación seguida del reporte de resultados y la discusión con la literatura.

MARCO TEÓRICO

Adquisición de segundas lenguas en el contexto de instrucción formal

La adquisición de segundas lenguas (ASL) es un campo de estudio enfocado en investigar diversos fenómenos asociados al proceso de aprendizaje de lenguas después de que la primera (L1) ha sido adquirida (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Ortega, 2009). Desde esta disciplina, las lenguas que se adquieren de manera subsecuente a la primera lengua pueden denominarse segundas lenguas o lenguas adicionales (L2). Asimismo, esta disciplina investiga el impacto de varios factores en el desarrollo de una L2. Por un lado, existen ciertos factores que pueden ejercer una influencia universal en la adquisición de una L2. Este es el caso de la edad del aprendiente, el entorno lingüístico, la tipología de la L1 y los procesos cognitivos de aprendizaje. Por otro lado, debido a que es posible evidenciar disparidades en el dominio de la L2 en personas con influencias universales similares, se considera que hay ciertos factores individuales que ocasionan estas diferencias. Algunos de estos factores son la motivación, la aptitud lingüística y el filtro afectivo (Krashen, 1982). Desde ASL, se estudian también casos de aprendizaje de segundas lenguas tanto en contextos denominados naturalistas como de instrucción formal. Un contexto naturalista es aquel en el que los aprendientes no reciben ningún tipo de lecciones organizadas, sino que aprenden la lengua informalmente a través de la interacción regular con personas o comunidades

que hablan la lengua meta o el entorno en el que se encuentran. Un contexto de instrucción formal, por su parte, implica que el aprendiente recibe clases o lecciones organizadas e intencionadas con el fin de aprender la lengua meta (Ortega, 2009).

La adquisición de una L2 en contexto de instrucción formal posee una serie de particularidades que repercuten en los procesos de aprendizaje y en los niveles de desempeño alcanzados por los aprendientes (Ellis, 2005; Housen & Pierrard, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Entre los aspectos más distintivos de la adquisición en este contexto se resalta que el aprendizaje de la L2 es el objetivo central de las clases. Esto significa que, en muchas ocasiones y según el enfoque de enseñanza, las estructuras de la lengua meta son explícitamente enseñadas a los aprendientes. Otro rasgo particular a tener en cuenta es que el tiempo destinado para el aprendizaje es usualmente limitado y cuantificado, especialmente si se aprende una L2 que no se usa frecuentemente para la comunicación en otros entornos con los que el aprendiente entra en contacto fuera de clase. Otra característica importante de este contexto es el *input* modificado. Este implica que el docente altera su discurso de diferentes maneras para asegurar que los aprendientes comprendan el discurso utilizado en clase y la comunicación en el aula sea efectiva (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Además de las características mencionadas, otro rasgo esencial, que tiene lugar en el contexto de instrucción formal, está relacionado con el tratamiento del error en el proceso de adquisición. Se trata de la realimentación correctiva (*corrective feedback*). Esta refiere al señalamiento de formas incorrectas en la lengua meta en el aula de clase, ya sea de manera explícita o implícita (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Según Ellis (2005), la realimentación correctiva contribuye en gran medida al desarrollo de la precisión lingüística y discursiva en el uso de la L2. El sustento

de esta afirmación radica en que el señalamiento de una forma imprecisa puede ayudar a los aprendientes a considerar ciertas formas lingüísticas meta y reconocer en qué difiere su producción de dichas formas. Además, la realimentación no es útil solo para el aprendiente que la recibe, sino que es potencialmente beneficiosa para todos los estudiantes de la clase. Dado que este rasgo es fundamentalmente dependiente del contexto en el que surge, no existe un consenso sobre cómo debe darse la realimentación para que repercuta positivamente en el aprendizaje de una L2. Frente a esto, Ellis (2005) encontró, en su revisión sistemática de la literatura, que si bien los profesores tienden a usar formas más implícitas para realimentar, la evidencia apoya el uso de realimentación explícita, al ser esta la que provee mayores niveles de reparación de las formas imprecisas producidas por el aprendiente.

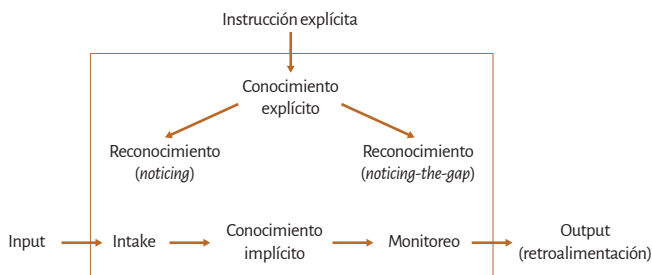
Existen distintas hipótesis y conceptos para explicar los procesos de desarrollo de una L2. El primer concepto relevante es el de *interlengua*. Esta noción acuñada por Larry Selinker en 1972 hace referencia al sistema lingüístico intermediario que cada aprendiente construye a partir de las hipótesis sobre la lengua meta que este va formulando en distintos momentos de su proceso de aprendizaje (Ortega, 2009). En este sentido, la interlengua es diferente a la L1 del aprendiente y tampoco corresponde con el sistema lingüístico de una persona que tiene a la lengua meta como L1 (Tarone, 2018). Este sistema se visualiza en un *continuum* dinámico donde cada aprendiente se nutre de su repertorio lingüístico existente para consolidar un sistema propio de la lengua meta. A pesar de las diferencias individuales que conlleva la consolidación de dicho sistema, se encuentran hipótesis que explican su operatividad; una de estas es la estabilización, la cual refiere a un estado de equilibrio alcanzado en el desempeño de la lengua meta donde los cambios o elementos nuevos que

se incorporan son mínimos, en comparación con los estadios iniciales de aprendizaje (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Long, 2003). En su análisis, Long (2003) retoma la estabilización con base en el constructo de fosilización iniciado también por Selinker en 1972, e indica que el desempeño estabilizado no comprende la totalidad de la interlengua, sino aspectos observables en esta que se desvían de la forma esperada de la lengua meta. Dichos aspectos resultan de una combinación de factores como transferencias lingüísticas, preferencias perceptivas, diferencias tipológicas, edad y otras limitaciones cognitivas generales. También, la estabilización puede ser atribuida a la sensibilidad o falta de esta hacia la realimentación, la presencia de monitoreo interno y el reconocimiento de la diferencia entre el *input* y el *output* propio. Particularmente, los estudios sobre estabilización se han enfocado en las estructuras gramaticales y sintácticas, pero en menor medida en la pronunciación (Long, 2017).

La ASL igualmente busca comprender cómo opera el conocimiento explícito e implícito en la adquisición de la L2, lo cual ha sido ilustrado en la Figura 1. Ellis (2003) afirma que la instrucción explícita de una estructura lingüística ayuda a que el aprendiente tome consciencia de esta en el *input*; así, logra almacenar ese conocimiento en la memoria a largo plazo e interiorizarlo para su posterior uso. La instrucción y conocimiento explícitos también permiten que el aprendiente compare su *output* con la estructura meta, con el fin de monitorear su producción. En línea con esto, la toma de consciencia y atención que el aprendiente trae al proceso de adquisición de la L2 ha sido denominado reconocimiento (*noticing*). De acuerdo con la hipótesis del reconocimiento (Schmidt, 1995), cuanto más se reconozca la forma necesaria y faltante en la L2, mayor será el aprendizaje. Este reconocimiento es también un paso previo a la fase de comprensión del sistema de la L2, en la cual el aprendiente

adquiere autonomía para abstraer patrones y reglas de la lengua meta. Por último, la hipótesis de la interacción (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Long, 1983) evidencia la naturaleza dinámica del proceso de adquisición de la L2, así como el objetivo comunicativo que subyace al lenguaje. Esta interacción se caracteriza por la presencia de un *input* modificado para ser comprensible y de una negociación del significado que opera como una forma de realimentación correctiva. La interacción conlleva a la evolución de la interlengua en tanto que los aprendientes van reconociendo, descubriendo y tomando decisiones que les permiten hacer uso de la lengua en un contexto comunicativo determinado.

Figura 1. El proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua.



Fuente: adaptada de Ellis (2003) y tomada de Rodríguez Fandiño (2019).

Adquisición de la pronunciación en el contexto de instrucción formal

La adquisición de la pronunciación de una L2 ha sido objeto de un sinnúmero de debates y estudios en diversos subcampos de la lingüística aplicada (Jones, 1997). Una perspectiva psicolingüística explica que

tanto la percepción como la producción del discurso implican una coordinación e integración sensomotora aguda que va

desde la producción precisa de fonemas, tonos y entonaciones hasta un rápido y preciso control de los movimientos de la laringe, lengua y de los labios. (Li, 2013, p. 151)

En el campo de la percepción del habla, diversos modelos buscan explicar los fenómenos y procesos cognitivos subyacentes a la percepción, asimilación y eventual influencia de estos en la producción fonético-fonológica en el marco de la adquisición de una L2 (Best & Tyler, 2007, con el *Perceptual Assimilation Model* – PAM; Elvin & Escudero, 2019, con el modelo *Second Language Linguistic Perception* – L2LP; Flege, 1992, con el *Speech Learning Model* – SLM). Desde dichos modelos cognitivos experimentales, las investigaciones se han centrado en visibilizar y predecir la manera en que el aprendiente de una L2 construye categorías fonético-fonológicas en su repertorio perceptivo lingüístico para poder asimilar los sonidos que percibe de la L2. Según estos modelos, el aprendiente clasifica como diferentes aquellos sonidos de la L2 que se distinguen contundentemente de aquellos que ya tiene como hablante nativo de su L1. En particular, los modelos revisados afirman que cuanto más lejano sea el sonido meta de un sonido existente en su L1, hay más probabilidad de que el aprendiente distinga dicho sonido y lo categorice e incorpore como algo nuevo. Por el contrario, cuanto más cercano sea el sonido es menos probable que se distinga y eventualmente produzca correctamente dentro de la expectativa de la lengua meta. Un ejemplo de esto son los diferentes sonidos vocálicos del inglés (frontal /a/; central /ʌ/ y posterior /ɔ/, /ɑ/) que pueden representar dificultades perceptuales para un aprendiente hispanohablante que únicamente posee una variante de la vocal anterior /a/ y los asimila como cercanos.

La configuración por etapas del modelo L2LP de Elvin y Escudero (2019) resulta pertinente para comprender las

implicaciones de este estudio y posibles derivaciones del mismo. Desde el L2LP cinco *ingredientes* se extienden a lo largo de tres etapas macro para predecir la adquisición y el desarrollo del habla. En la primera etapa operan tres ingredientes fundamentales: el reconocimiento de los sonidos meta, su comparación con los sonidos ya existentes en el repertorio lingüístico del aprendiente y la categorización de éstos según la tarea de aprendizaje que el aprendiente lleve a cabo. Según este modelo, la clasificación que logre el aprendiente en esta etapa inicial determinará su desarrollo y etapa final en el proceso. Adicional a esto, las investigadoras resaltan la importancia de que el resultado óptimo en la etapa final de desarrollo de percepción del habla se deberá a características individuales del aprendiente, así como a la cantidad de *input* que este reciba.

Las perspectivas de esta naturaleza agudizan la complejidad que implica la enseñanza de la pronunciación, puesto que requiere un trabajo perceptivo consciente que aún es difícilmente identificado e investigado para el aula de clase. Adicional a esto, uno de los hitos empíricos y teóricos que ha sustentado la dificultad de adquirir y enseñar la pronunciación de la lengua meta es la hipótesis del periodo crítico, la cual alude a la influencia determinante del factor edad en el desarrollo de la percepción y producción de rasgos particulares de la lengua meta, en particular en la adquisición de la pronunciación similar a la de un hablante nativo (Ortega, 2009).

Si bien esta hipótesis ha sido objeto de debate en cuanto a si la enseñanza de la pronunciación debe ser explícita o implícita (Krashen, 1982), es importante contemplar las diferentes recepciones de los aprendientes a distintos enfoques de enseñanza. De acuerdo con Jones (1997), las técnicas de imitación y repetición, lectura en voz alta y análisis contrastivo entre los sonidos de la L1 y la L2 siguen siendo las más usadas para la

enseñanza de la pronunciación. Asimismo, el autor aconseja que la explicación explícita de los sonidos no sea descartada, ya que puede incrementar la precisión y la fluidez en la pronunciación. No obstante, se observa que muchos de estos ejercicios suelen ser mecánicos y aislados en el caso de la clase de L2. Por lo cual, Jones (1997) señala que la dificultad radica en transferir dicho conocimiento al uso comunicativo real.

Los enfoques avanzados por Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) para la enseñanza de la pronunciación resultan ser alternativas esenciales para la clase de L2. El enfoque intuitivo-imitativo presupone que los aprendientes tienen la habilidad de escuchar e imitar los sonidos de la lengua meta sin necesidad de una explicación explícita de estos. El enfoque analítico-lingüístico rescata la instrucción explícita sobre las descripciones articulatorias basadas en el Alfabeto Fonético Internacional (AFI) y en la configuración del aparato fonador. Estos enfoques resultan complementarios para apoyar la focalización de la escucha, la imitación y la producción.

La pronunciación inteligible resulta un componente necesario para la comunicación oral efectiva. En este sentido, los docentes deben tener a la mano distintas técnicas pedagógicas, algunas de ellas con un enfoque comunicativo, así como un conocimiento detallado del sistema fonético-fonológico de la lengua para poder enseñar pronunciación.

El caso del chino mandarín

La literatura referente a la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la pronunciación del chino mandarín ha estado predominantemente versada en los tonos de esta lengua inspirados en la taxonomía tonal propuesta por Chao (1930, 1956). Dicho énfasis en este rasgo vocálico se debe especialmente a que los tonos son un aspecto característico del chino mandarín y el más problemático

para aprendientes hablantes de las lenguas occidentales (Xing, 2006). Entre las investigaciones referentes a los tonos que se relacionan con el enfoque pedagógico explorado en este caso, se encuentra el estudio de Wang et al. (2003), quienes concluyen que el entrenamiento perceptivo tuvo un efecto positivo en la producción de los tonos del chino. Con estos resultados se evidencia una ampliación del foco de la didáctica de la lengua al combinar tanto la percepción como la producción (Hendry, 2017; Rohr, 2014). No obstante, al momento de hacer esta revisión, no se hallaron estudios análogos relacionados con las retroflejas.

De otra parte, el mecanismo por medio del cual se ha difundido la enseñanza y aprendizaje de esta lengua es el Pinyin, un sistema de marcación romana diacrítica, que indica cómo un carácter se debe pronunciar en la lengua. La creación de este sistema estuvo apoyada en posibles equivalencias fonéticas entre los grafemas usados en el inglés y los sonidos del chino mandarín. En este orden, dos componentes caracterizan dicho sistema: 23 iniciales (声母, shēngmǔ) y 34 finales (韵母, yùnmǔ) (cf. Chao 1948b, Li & Thompson 1981, Norman 1988, citados en Xing, 2006, p. 41). Los cuatro segmentos fonéticos de interés en este estudio hacen parte del grupo de iniciales en dicho sistema de romanización.

Cabe resaltar que no todas las equivalencias representadas por el Pinyin son completamente inteligibles. Este es el caso de los cuatro fonemas de interés en este estudio. La consonante fricativa retrofleja sorda que es representada como «sh», se asocia usualmente con la consonante fricativa postalveolar sorda en inglés /ʃ/. Frente a esto, podría haber lugar a una posible confusión con otro fonema, que se representa en Pinyin como «x», pues consiste en la fricativa alveolo-palatal sorda y, por ende, también se asocia con el mismo sonido del inglés. La consonante fricativa sonora es representada como «r» y puede estar cercana a uno de los alófonos del fonema /r/ en inglés. Por

su parte, la consonante africada retrofleja sorda no aspirada es representada como «zh» y no tiene una equivalencia con el inglés. Su contraparte aspirada es representada como «ch», lo que en inglés se conoce como la africada palato-alveolar sorda /tʃ/. Ahora bien, este sonido del inglés se suele comparar con el fonema representado como «q» en Pinyin, que vendría a ser una africada alveolo-palatal sorda aspirada. En la Tabla 1 se propone una serie de equivalencias reales entre los símbolos de Pinyin y los símbolos del AFI. Del mismo modo, se comparan las equivalencias popularmente supuestas con los sonidos del inglés en diversos recursos de aprendizaje del chino mandarín que usan el Pinyin¹.

TABLA 1. *Equivalencias entre Pinyin, Alfabeto Fonético Internacional (AFI) y sonidos del inglés.*

Pinyin	AFI	Fonemas del inglés con los que se asocia popularmente	Palabras que contienen los fonemas en chino
sh	/ʃ/	/ʃ/ shine	水 shuǐ
r	/z/	/r/ red	人 rén
zh	/ʒ/	No hay equivalencia	中 zhōng
ch	/tʃ/	/tʃ/ church	茶 chá
x	/ç/	/ʃ/ shine	小 xiǎo
q	/tʃ/	/tʃ/ church	去 qù

Fuente: elaboración propia.

A pesar de su extendido uso como medio de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la lengua china, el Pinyin ha suscitado resultados controversiales en diversas investigaciones que pueden llevar a cuestionar su eficacia. En el ámbito de las lenguas romances

¹ Algunos de estos fueron:

<https://chinesePod.com/tools/pronunciation/section/10>

https://resources.allsetlearning.com/chinese/pronunciation/The_%22j%22_%22q%22_and_%22x%22_sounds

existen algunos casos. El estudio realizado por Bassetti (2007) argumenta que el Pinyin puede distraer a los aprendientes y ralentizar su proceso de aprendizaje de la pronunciación meta. Esta autora encontró que, incluso después de tres años de exposición al chino, algunos aspectos fonológicos no indicados explícitamente en el Pinyin no habían sido adquiridos en su totalidad por los aprendientes. En particular, Bassetti (2007) evidenció que, si el Pinyin no indicaba explícitamente la existencia de una tercera vocal en un diptongo para formar un triptongo, los aprendientes tendían a omitir dicha vocal. Por el contrario, cuando el Pinyin sí indicaba su existencia, los aprendientes producían el triptongo. La investigadora concluyó que el Pinyin afecta la adquisición de ciertos rasgos fonéticos-fonológicos por parte de aprendientes que han tenido hasta tres años de exposición al chino mandarín. Este estudio destaca una posible dependencia que pueden desarrollar los aprendientes.

Por su parte, Varela Rivera (2014), en un material de reconocimiento de dificultades de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la pronunciación del chino, también enfatiza sobre este punto, basándose en las diferencias de correspondencia entre los símbolos del Pinyin y los sonidos del español. También arguye que estas diferencias pueden ocasionar que los aprendientes hagan una equivalencia automática de los sonidos que resultaría en la adquisición de una pronunciación imprecisa.

METODOLOGÍA

El objetivo general de esta investigación es comprender los aspectos propios del fenómeno de adquisición de las consonantes retroflejas en aprendientes hispanohablantes de chino mandarín para informar el desarrollo de herramientas y estrategias de enseñanza que fomenten la precisión en la percepción y la producción de estos fonemas. Con este propósito, se diseñó

una intervención pedagógica para la percepción y producción de las consonantes retroflejas del chino en segmentos fonéticos aislados y contextualizados. También, se exploraron las actitudes de los estudiantes frente a las diferentes estrategias y técnicas de enseñanza de pronunciación a las que han sido expuestos durante su proceso de aprendizaje de chino mandarín, incluyendo la intervención pedagógica propuesta en este estudio.

Contexto y participantes

Esta investigación se llevó a cabo en la Universidad de los Andes, donde hay una sede del Instituto Confucio desde el año 2007. Este instituto ofrece seis cursos de chino mandarín con una intensidad de 4,5 horas semanales durante cuatro meses organizados para ser tomados de manera consecutiva. Una vez se hayan tomado los seis cursos, se espera que los estudiantes estén en capacidad de tomar el examen estandarizado de proficiencia de chino mandarín HSK 4, que equivale a un nivel B2 según el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCERL) (Instituto Confucio de la Universidad de los Andes, s.f.). Durante el primer semestre de 2019, el instituto contaba con cerca de 100 estudiantes activos tomando cursos de lengua china.

Los participantes fueron seis estudiantes de la Universidad de los Andes de distintos programas de pregrado, quienes al momento del estudio aprendían chino mandarín en los cursos dictados por el Instituto Confucio. Dichos estudiantes se autoseleccionaron voluntariamente para participar en la investigación después de recibir una convocatoria abierta. Asimismo, leyeron y conservaron una copia del consentimiento informado, en el que recibieron información sobre la investigación, el procedimiento, los riesgos y los beneficios de participar en el estudio. De estos seis participantes, tres se encontraban tomando el primer curso de la lengua, mientras que los tres restantes se encontraban en el cuarto

curso. De ese grupo de seis estudiantes, solo tres completaron todo el procedimiento planteado en el estudio, dos del primer curso y uno del cuarto.

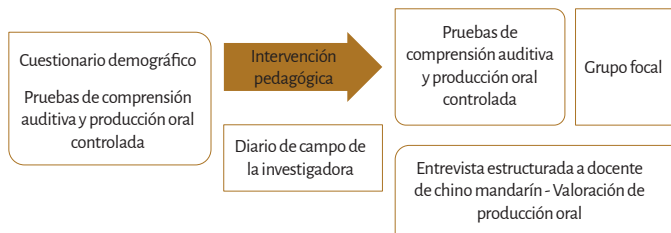
Diseño de investigación

Esta investigación se encuadró principalmente en un paradigma epistemológico pragmático (Creswell, 2014). En este paradigma se busca entender el problema planteado a través del uso de distintas fuentes de información y se parte del hecho de que el problema y sus soluciones están adscritos a un contexto social específico. Adicionalmente, la interpretación de los datos se apoyó en un paradigma constructivista. Esto de nuevo enfatiza el contexto específico del problema y el papel que juegan las interacciones entre las personas que hacen parte de él. En el paradigma constructivista, se resalta que las experiencias y subjetividades de la investigadora intervienen en la forma en la que se interpretan los datos que provienen de las perspectivas de diferentes actores (Creswell, 2014). Por estas razones y apoyado en los paradigmas anteriormente mencionados, se recolectaron datos que representaran las perspectivas de los diferentes involucrados en este proceso: los aprendientes de chino participantes, la investigadora y una docente de chino mandarín consultada en calidad de experta.

El enfoque metodológico de esta investigación fue predominantemente cualitativo. El propósito de seguir este enfoque era obtener una imagen lo más completa posible del problema estudiado en su contexto específico (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010). De esta manera, se pretendía comprender el contexto local de enseñanza y aprendizaje de chino mandarín, las prácticas de enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la pronunciación usadas en este contexto y los significados que los aprendientes de chino dan a dichas prácticas. Para ello, la investigadora llevó

un diario de campo durante el desarrollo de la intervención pedagógica y se realizó un grupo focal con los participantes al finalizar la intervención. El diario de campo tuvo como objetivo identificar situaciones que fueran aprovechadas por los participantes para el aprendizaje o que, por el contrario, fueran un obstáculo para este fin. Por su parte, la función del grupo focal fue recoger los puntos de vista de los participantes frente a la intervención pedagógica y su relación con la historia y el proceso de aprendizaje de cada uno de la pronunciación del chino en particular y de la lengua china en general.

Con el fin de caracterizar a los participantes y establecer un diagnóstico de su pronunciación, se les solicitó responder un cuestionario demográfico virtual. Adicionalmente, se aplicaron pruebas de comprensión auditiva y producción oral controlada antes y después de la intervención pedagógica. El componente de producción oral de estas pruebas fue valorado por una docente de chino mandarín del Instituto Confucio completamente bilingüe en chino (L1) y español (L2). Dicha valoración se llevó a cabo en una escala de 0 a 4, donde 0 representa que el sonido escuchado no corresponde en absoluto al sonido esperado en chino y 4 representa que el sonido escuchado corresponde completamente con el sonido esperado en chino. La docente también emitió valoraciones cualitativas de las diferencias entre los participantes y su desempeño previo y posterior a la intervención pedagógica. Los instrumentos y técnicas de recolección de datos con sus respectivos momentos de aplicación se presentan en la Figura 2.

Figura 2. Diseño de investigación.*Fuente:* elaboración propia.

Intervención pedagógica

La intervención pedagógica estuvo conformada por tres sesiones de aprendizaje activo de 80 minutos cada una. El diseño de esta intervención pedagógica se apoyó teóricamente en la guía de enseñanza de la pronunciación del inglés de Celce-Murcia et al. (2010). Pese a que este manual no está dirigido a la enseñanza del chino mandarín, fue seleccionado por su explicación detallada de las técnicas de enseñanza de la pronunciación del inglés, así como la argumentación que sustenta el uso de dichas técnicas en el aula. A diferencia de la falta de explicitud de los estudios exitosos de entrenamiento perceptivo en chino mandarín, esta guía establece pautas claras que son fácilmente adaptables para su uso en la enseñanza de lenguas distintas al inglés. Con esta directriz, la intervención pedagógica inició con una concientización fonológica, continuó con un entrenamiento en percepción auditiva y concluyó con una práctica en producción oral controlada. Los objetivos y ejes temáticos para cada sesión se pueden consultar en el anexo A. En los anexos B, C y D se encuentran algunas actividades y materiales utilizados durante la intervención como ejemplo

de las estrategias y recursos empleados para cumplir con los objetivos de aprendizaje².

Para cumplir con los objetivos de reconocimiento, percepción auditiva y aplicación a la producción oral, se diseñaron talleres, guías y autoevaluaciones tanto para desarrollar individualmente como en parejas o en plenaria. Con estas actividades se buscó que los estudiantes reflexionaran sobre los sonidos de interés del estudio y la forma de aprenderlos. Asimismo, se procuró que los participantes consideraran los rasgos fonéticos distintivos de cada fonema y que cooperaran entre ellos para llegar a acuerdos y soluciones que les fueran útiles para el aprendizaje. Las sesiones contaron con cuatro grandes fases: la primera de activación de conocimiento previo, la segunda de reflexión grupal, la tercera de práctica y la cuarta fase de autoevaluación. La realización de los talleres y actividades de evaluación estuvo mediada por la tecnología, pues todos los materiales diseñados para esta intervención se cargaron a un curso virtual en la plataforma Blackboard Learn.

Análisis de los datos

Para analizar el grupo focal y el diario de campo de la investigadora se siguieron los pasos de codificación propuestos por Charmaz (2006) para realizar un análisis cualitativo en el contexto de la teoría fundamentada. El paso inicial fue hacer una codificación en la que a cada segmento de los datos se le asignó un nombre o código que resumía la idea principal de dicho segmento. Después de esta codificación inicial, se realizó una codificación enfocada en la que se usan los códigos más frecuentes encontrados hasta el momento, aunque sin dejar de

2. Para mayores detalles sobre la intervención, vea la monografía de Rodríguez Fandiño (2019).

estar abierto a códigos o ideas nuevas. Luego se llevó a cabo una codificación axial en la que los códigos se agruparon en categorías y subcategorías según su nivel de relación (Charmaz, 2006). Las categorías obtenidas en este proceso de análisis se presentan en el apartado de resultados. Por otro lado, para las pruebas de comprensión auditiva y producción oral controlada se tuvieron en cuenta las frecuencias de respuesta y los porcentajes de acierto de cada participante. Estos resultados se presentan como parte de una caracterización de los tres participantes que cumplieron con todos los pasos de recolección del estudio.

RESULTADOS

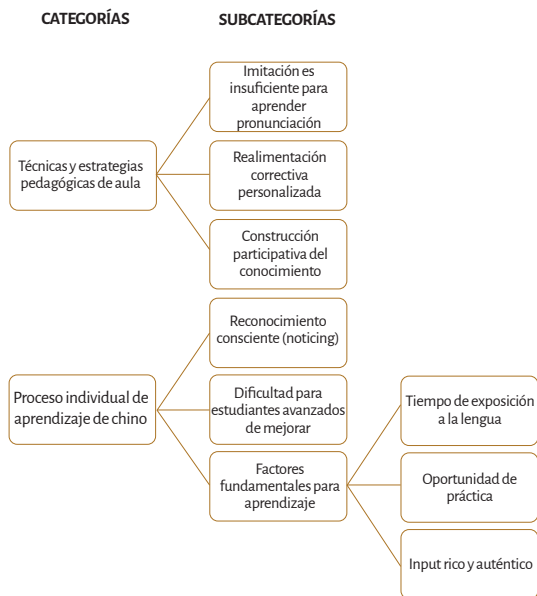
Con ayuda del cuestionario virtual aplicado previo a la intervención pedagógica, se caracterizó a los participantes de la siguiente manera. Todos los participantes manifestaron saber por lo menos otra lengua además de español y chino mandarín en un nivel B1 según el MCERL. Para todos, el inglés es la segunda lengua, mientras que el francés es la tercera lengua para cuatro de los seis participantes. A partir de esta información, es posible afirmar que se trabajó con un grupo de estudiantes con diversas experiencias multilingües. En cuanto a sus percepciones sobre el aprendizaje, cuatro participantes estuvieron de acuerdo con que la pronunciación del chino mandarín es un aspecto difícil de aprender. Además, los tres participantes del curso 1 estuvieron completamente de acuerdo con que aún no logran entender cómo pronunciar los cuatro sonidos de interés del estudio. Esto dividió a los participantes en dos grupos de percepciones sobre los sonidos meta según su nivel de chino mandarín, lo que quiere decir que los más experimentados llegaban con mayor confianza en su entendimiento y producción de las consonantes retroflejas. Otro factor para tener en cuenta es que cuatro participantes reportaron haber viajado a China a estudiar la lengua en estancias

que no superaron un mes de duración. Esto les puede haber brindado una ventaja de experiencia cultural y de exposición a la lengua en contexto naturalista.

La caracterización fue más profunda para los participantes que completaron el procedimiento, pues se acompañó con un diagnóstico sucinto de la percepción auditiva y la producción oral controlada de estos tres aprendientes. En general, los porcentajes de acierto en la producción oral fueron visiblemente mayores a los porcentajes de la comprensión auditiva en ambos momentos de la aplicación de las pruebas para los tres participantes. Con porcentajes por encima del 80%, el participante de nivel avanzado tuvo un desempeño inicial más alto que los participantes de nivel básico y este se mantuvo relativamente estable en las diferentes pruebas y momentos de aplicación. En la valoración cualitativa, la docente de chino mandarín señaló que uno de los participantes del primer curso lo hizo mejor en la prueba posterior. Dicha mejoría también se refleja en un incremento notable en los porcentajes de acierto, que fue superior a 30 puntos porcentuales en la habilidad de comprensión auditiva e igual a 16 puntos porcentuales en la producción oral controlada. En cuanto al participante de nivel básico restante, no presentó una diferencia consistente entre las pruebas previas y las posteriores.

A partir del análisis cualitativo del grupo focal y del diario de la investigadora fue posible identificar dos categorías con sus respectivas subcategorías. Por un lado, está la categoría relacionada con las técnicas y estrategias pedagógicas propias del aula usadas en la intervención y fuera de ella para la enseñanza y aprendizaje del chino mandarín y su pronunciación. Por otro lado, está aquella que se refiere al proceso de aprendizaje individual del chino y su pronunciación por parte de cada persona. En la Figura 3 se presentan las categorías y subcategorías encontradas en los datos.

Figura 3. Categorías encontradas en los datos cualitativos.



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Dentro de la categoría de técnicas y estrategias pedagógicas de aula, se observó que la *imitación sola es insuficiente para aprender correctamente la pronunciación*. Esta idea surgió de manera reiterada en la discusión grupal y fue una de las premisas con las que se diseñó la intervención pedagógica. Un participante expuso que «el problema es que nosotros simplemente vemos lo que hacen ellos (los docentes) con sus labios, porque no podemos ver como la lengua, de qué manera se está posicionando» (Grupo focal). Los participantes consideraron que el problema de la imitación radica en que, por lo general, es sólo repetición sin demasiada conciencia de la articulación. Uno de ellos describe

el proceso de aprendizaje por imitación así: «yo estoy entonces imitando a alguien y ya, pero si yo sé de qué manera tengo que posicionar la lengua, abrir la boca o los labios pues voy a hacer mi mejor intento para pronunciar» (Grupo focal).

La segunda subcategoría dentro del ámbito pedagógico propio del aula apunta a una técnica complementaria para guiar la imitación y es la *realimentación personalizada*. Desde la perspectiva de los participantes, el señalamiento por parte del docente de aquellos aspectos que necesitan mejorar es de gran importancia para refinar su pronunciación. La siguiente interacción ocurrida en el grupo focal ilustra lo que estos aprendientes han experimentado en el aula:

P1: Es que cuando a uno le dice que repita son los 25 (estudiantes) diciendo la misma cosa al tiempo.

P2: ¡Exacto! Entonces yo nunca sé si lo estoy diciendo bien, porque pues yo lo escucho y yo repito lo más parecido posible, pero él (el profesor) no me puede *corregir* y pues mis compañeros tampoco porque están en el mismo plan que yo en ese momento.

Asimismo, la investigadora tomó notas sobre la actitud de los participantes frente a la realimentación en la primera sesión de la intervención: «cuando noté que no estaba funcionando la actividad como la había planeado, es decir, de explorar a partir del conocimiento previo de ellos, entonces empecé a guiarlos de manera explícita y fue un poco más fácil para ellos». De modo que esta necesidad de un docente que haga explícito el error y monitoree su proceso de aprendizaje fue señalado por los participantes e identificado por la investigadora.

La tercera dinámica de aula traída a colación fue la *participación de los aprendientes en la construcción del conocimiento, pues hizo la experiencia más significativa para ellos*. En lugar de tomar ideas ajenas, el hecho de discutir y llegar a acuerdos sobre los diferentes

conceptos les permitió a los participantes interiorizarlos de mejor manera. Uno de los participantes mencionó que «una cosa es que tú (la investigadora) nos lo digas y nosotros como ¡ah sí! Pero si no entiendo ¿qué? Entonces es importante como que nosotros interioricemos eso y sepamos de qué manera se diferencia la ch con la sh» (Grupo focal). También se observó que el conocimiento o las asociaciones de un participante pueden ser útiles para ayudar a entender a los demás. Para ilustrar esto, la entrada de la segunda sesión del diario de la investigadora comenta sobre el momento en el que un participante hizo un aporte al muro de discusión virtual compartido en Padlet de lo que a él le ayudaba a entender la diferencia entre las consonantes de interés: «esa fue una gran contribución, que puso en el Padlet, y a los demás les ayudó a asimilar la diferencia por la forma tan clara y simple de definirla».

En cuanto al grupo de las subcategorías del proceso individual de aprendizaje, se evidenció que las actividades y los materiales propuestos promovieron una toma de conciencia por parte de los participantes sobre las formas fonéticas esperadas, es decir que, dieron lugar a un *reconocimiento consciente* (*noticing* de acuerdo con Schmidt, 1995). A continuación, se presenta una interacción extraída del grupo focal como ejemplo del tipo de testimonios que refieren a esta subcategoría. Los verbos mentales, de acuerdo con la taxonomía elaborada por Biber et al. (1999), son resaltados para enfatizar el reconocimiento:

P1: Yo *nunca había visto* lo de cómo posicionar la lengua para hacer la fonética o pronunciación bien, entonces como que me sirvió, o sea, *me hizo caer en cuenta* que yo a veces pues no lo hacía bien y yo *pensaba* que lo hacía bien, pero no lo hacía bien.

P3: Nunca le había *prestado tanta atención* a eso, sino que yo me guiaba más que todo por el contexto. Entonces yo *sé*

que esta palabra se dice así y si yo *escuchaba* algo que suena así entonces *sabía* que era esa palabra, pero nunca *me puse a fijarme* cuál era (la consonante inicial).

De igual manera, se identificó una posible *dificultad para los participantes más avanzados de mejorar en ciertos aspectos de la lengua*. Esta subcategoría refleja que los aprendientes más avanzados son conscientes de la estabilización de diferentes aspectos de la lengua, en el sentido en la que la definen Gass y Selinker (2008). Al respecto, los aprendientes avanzados señalaron que el impacto de la intervención pedagógica en estas instancias de su proceso de aprendizaje no fue tan significativo como podría haber sido en las etapas iniciales de este. Algunos testimonios son:

P3: Por ejemplo, para mí [...] ha sido complicado como borrar esto que yo ya tengo e integrar esto nuevo.

P4: Me gustan muchísimo los contenidos, o sea como que, si hubiese visto eso como empezando, yo creo que me hubiese servido muchísimo. Por ejemplo, a ti (refiriéndose a un participante de nivel básico) te debe haber servido muchisisisimo (sic) eso. (Grupo focal)

Además, uno de los participantes indicó que en los niveles avanzados ya no se presta tanta atención a la pronunciación, «siempre es un vocabulario, ejercicios aplicando el vocabulario, gramática. Nunca hay como pedazos de pronunciación. Uno no lo practica y entonces uno asume que lo que uno aprendió debe estar bien, aunque probablemente no lo esté» (Grupo focal).

Por último, vale la pena mencionar dentro de una misma subcategoría tres factores que los participantes consideran fundamentales en su proceso individual de aprendizaje de la pronunciación del chino y que deberían ser promovidos en el

aula y fuera de ella. Estos factores son el *tiempo de exposición a la lengua*, la *oportunidad de práctica* y el contacto con *input rico y auténtico*. Se tenía previsto desde la concepción de la intervención pedagógica que en tres sesiones de 80 minutos no es posible dar cuenta de aprendizaje y así lo manifestaron también los participantes. Sobre el tiempo y la oportunidad de practicar comentaron que: «a mí me gustó mucho, aunque fueron tres sesiones entonces es poquito» y «la última sesión fue la sesión de práctica, pero entonces tal vez sí hizo falta más práctica» (Grupo focal). La discusión relacionada con el *input* refiere ampliamente a la variación dialectal del chino mandarín. Los participantes coinciden en que no hay suficientes oportunidades para aprender distintas variantes, por lo que no les sería posible reconocerlas en contextos comunicativos reales. Sobre esto, un participante expresó:

Es importante hacer énfasis como en esa, como en la diversidad del chino, como en unas partes pueden pronunciar de una manera y en otras de otra manera y luego está la robótica que es la que nos han enseñado.

DISCUSIÓN

Con el propósito de explorar las actitudes de los aprendientes de chino mandarín frente una intervención pedagógica enfocada en desarrollar la percepción y producción de las consonantes retroflejas de esta lengua, los resultados señalan cuatro ideas generales a tener cuenta. Estas son: la promoción del reconocimiento, el uso de un modelo interactivo de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas, la guía de la percepción a través de realimentación personalizada y la focalización en las etapas iniciales de aprendizaje. Asimismo, la caracterización de la percepción y producción de los participantes en las pruebas

previas y posteriores a la intervención ayudan a interpretar cómo lo observado y discutido se puede ver reflejado en el dominio de la pronunciación alcanzado por los aprendientes de chino mandarín. A través del aumento notable en el porcentaje de acierto de un participante de nivel básico y un cambio mínimo en el desempeño de los dos participantes restantes, uno de nivel básico y otro de nivel avanzado, se evidencia el posible impacto de los puntos más relevantes de la intervención.

La premisa de integrar un enfoque analítico-lingüístico (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) al diseño de la intervención pedagógica fue apoyada por los participantes, quienes reaccionaron expresando rechazo hacia el uso de un enfoque exclusivamente imitativo. Esto se debe a que la imitación no les provee las herramientas suficientes para mejorar la percepción y producción de las consonantes retroflejas. En este sentido, manifestaron que las actividades y los materiales elaborados para hacer explícita la instrucción les permitieron dirigir su atención sobre los sonidos meta, es decir que entraron en una etapa de reconocimiento consciente o *noticing*. Otro aspecto que promovió el reconocimiento fue la construcción conjunta de reflexiones en torno a la pronunciación del chino, pues las perspectivas de algunos participantes les permitieron enfocarse a todos en ciertos rasgos que habían pasado por alto. La importancia del reconocimiento radica en que este ayuda a almacenar el *input* como conocimiento en la memoria de largo plazo y suscita una comparación de la propia producción con la forma esperada en la L2 (Ellis, 2003). En pocas palabras, a mayor reconocimiento, hay mayor oportunidad para el aprendizaje (Schmidt, 1995). Esto se hizo evidente en algunos aprendientes en la conversión del conocimiento explícito en implícito y en otros en la formulación de comparaciones entre su producción y la pronunciación meta.

El siguiente punto clave de la intervención fue el uso de un modelo interactivo de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas. Las actividades de la intervención requerían que los participantes interactuaran y conversaran entre sí para reflexionar sobre las estructuras lingüísticas de manera metalingüística y para usar dichas estructuras de interés de forma comunicativa. De igual manera, el desarrollo de las actividades y el uso de los materiales promovieron la modificación del habla para hacerla comprensible para los compañeros y la negociación de significados para llegar a acuerdos e involucrarse en realimentación correctiva (Long, 1983). Como los participantes señalaron, esto hizo la experiencia más significativa para ellos y su aprendizaje, pues no se descuidó la naturaleza comunicativa de la lengua al momento de aprender unos sonidos específicos.

El papel de la realimentación correctiva también debe ser destacado. Dicha realimentación les proporcionó a los aprendientes la información necesaria para trabajar y mejorar en los aspectos imprecisos de su pronunciación. La realimentación correctiva es uno de los factores que activa el reconocimiento por parte de los aprendientes, lo que a su vez potencia su aprendizaje (Ellis, 2005). Además, la realimentación constituye no solo una guía para mejorar la producción, sino también la percepción. El modelo L2LP de Elvin y Escudero (2019) permite entender la importancia de la realimentación correctiva para guiar la percepción. De acuerdo con estas autoras, al momento de estar expuesto con los sonidos de la L2, el aprendiente categoriza dichos sonidos y, a partir de su categorización, se hacen evidentes los obstáculos que tendrá que enfrentar en sus etapas de desarrollo para poder adquirir los contrastes de la L2. Por esta razón, el señalamiento explícito del profesor puede ser de gran ayuda para los aprendientes que no logran percibir apropiadamente

el contraste entre los sonidos meta o no saben cómo encarar su aprendizaje (Elvin & Escudero, 2019).

Además, es importante resaltar que esta investigación apunta a una focalización de las intervenciones pedagógicas centradas en la concientización fonológica y el desarrollo perceptivo en etapas iniciales del aprendizaje de la L2. Al respecto, los participantes del nivel avanzado afirmaron que les era difícil integrar nuevos conocimientos sobre formas lingüísticas que habían adquirido en el pasado y que habían estado produciendo de una manera determinada por largo tiempo. Adicionalmente, el incremento considerable en los porcentajes de acierto de un participante de nivel básico en las pruebas de comprensión auditiva y producción oral controlada después de la intervención revela un posible impacto de ésta en las etapas iniciales de aprendizaje. De igual forma, el desempeño constante del participante de nivel intermedio apoya la hipótesis de que la instrucción explícita y el reconocimiento asociado a ella no es suficiente para alterar la percepción o producción de un sonido de la L2 adquiridas con anterioridad (Long, 2003). Esto puede ser una señal de que este aprendiente ha estabilizado su pronunciación de las consonantes retroflejas. Esta evidencia también va de la mano con el modelo L2LP de Elvin y Escudero (2019), pues es justamente en las etapas iniciales en las que los aprendientes se benefician más del entrenamiento para lograr adquirir los contrastes de la L2.

Los puntos claves de los resultados permiten formular una recomendación pedagógica general para implementar una intervención enfocada en la pronunciación. Lo primero que vale la pena destacar es que, pese a que la percepción tiene una influencia importante en la forma en la que los aprendientes producen los sonidos meta de la L2, no es usual que las técnicas de enseñanza de la pronunciación enfatizen en su entrenamiento. Al respecto, hay que señalar que este puede ser guiado para que sea más preciso

y se refleje en mejoras en la producción. El modelo L2LP de Elvin y Escudero (2019) proporciona pautas para llevar a cabo el entrenamiento perceptivo. Dicho modelo funciona tanto para la enseñanza de sonidos que pueden ser considerados fáciles por los aprendientes como aquellos catalogados como difíciles, dentro de los que se encuentran las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín. También, hay que resaltar que este entrenamiento requiere de tiempo y práctica suficientes. Otro aspecto que Elvin y Escudero (2019) y los participantes mencionaron es que los aprendientes pueden sacar provecho del entrenamiento con diferentes hablantes para que se acostumbren a la variabilidad en las realizaciones del sonido meta.

CONCLUSIONES

Este estudio consistió en explorar qué insumos, herramientas y estrategias didácticas pueden contemplarse para enseñar las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín a partir de una intervención pedagógica focalizada en la pronunciación de dichos sonidos. Los hallazgos de este estudio se orientaron hacia la relevancia de tener en cuenta la promoción del reconocimiento, el uso de un modelo interactivo de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas, la guía de la percepción a través de realimentación personalizada y la focalización en las etapas iniciales de aprendizaje. Las limitaciones de este estudio se asocian al corto tiempo asignado a las intervenciones, dado que en el lapso dedicado a esta investigación resulta difícil evidenciar un progreso sustancial en la pronunciación de los participantes. Asimismo, el número reducido de participantes resulta otra limitación de este estudio, puesto que sería importante corroborar si los hallazgos reportados se reflejan en una población más amplia y variada. Para finalizar, las recomendaciones que emergen de este trabajo apuntan a dos grandes líneas. Por un lado, es

importante fomentar el estudio de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del chino mandarín en la población hispanohablante, dado que es una creciente tendencia en América Latina. De acuerdo con Lafontaine (2018), en el año de esta publicación se registraban más de cien mil aprendientes de chino en las diferentes sedes del Instituto Confucio en esta región. Por otro lado, en especial atendiendo a las orientaciones del modelo de Elvin y Escudero (2019), es primordial promover una mayor conciencia acerca del potencial del entrenamiento perceptivo para aprendientes de lenguas extranjeras.

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ANEXOS

Anexo A.

Ejes temáticos y objetivos de aprendizaje para las tres sesiones de intervención pedagógica

SESIÓN 1

Eje temático: concientización fonológica.

Objetivos de aprendizaje:

Al finalizar la sesión 1, el participante estará en capacidad de:

- » Reconocer qué son los pares mínimos y cómo estos inciden en la comunicación.
- » Reconocer algunos rasgos fonéticos contrastivos que repercuten en la formación de pares mínimos.
- » Identificar y comparar pares mínimos en español.
- » Reconocer y comparar pares mínimos en chino mandarín que incluyen las consonantes retroflejas.

SESIÓN 2

Eje temático: percepción de los sonidos retroflejos.

Objetivos de aprendizaje:

Al finalizar la sesión 2, el participante estará en capacidad de:

- » Identificar y comparar las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín.
- » Desarrollar una percepción (inicial o avanzada) de las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín.
- » Producir palabras y expresiones cortas que contienen las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín.

SESIÓN 3

Eje temático: aplicación del reconocimiento perceptivo en la producción de sonidos retroflejos.

Objetivos de aprendizaje:

Al finalizar la sesión 3, el participante estará en capacidad de:

- » Identificar pares mínimos en chino mandarín que incluyen consonantes retroflejas y discutir sobre los rasgos fonéticos contrastivos que ocasionan una diferencia de significado.
- » Desarrollar una percepción (media o avanzada) de las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín.
- » Producir palabras y expresiones cortas que contienen las consonantes retroflejas del chino mandarín.

Anexo B. Actividad

SESIÓN 1:

Taller de exploración de las diferencias entre *zh*, *ch*, *sh*, *r* en chino mandarín

Tomando como base los conceptos explicados y lo que descubrieron realizando el taller de pares mínimos del español, exploren las diferencias entre las iniciales escritas en pinyin como *zh*, *ch*, *sh* y *r* en chino mandarín. Sigán los pasos sugeridos a continuación. No se preocupen mucho por usar los términos lingüísticos técnicos.

1. Desde sus experiencias de aprendizaje de chino, discutan cuáles creen ustedes que son los rasgos distintivos o los aspectos que describen a cada una de las iniciales de interés. Tengan en cuenta sus propias percepciones, lo que les han dicho sus docentes de chino y lo que han leído o escuchado fuera de clase.
2. Vean los siguientes videos y comparen las iniciales entre sí. Pongan a prueba las hipótesis que construyeron en el punto anterior a medida que escuchan.
 - » Sonido *ch*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-TJIfDSr2A>
 - » Sonido *zh*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gMdgAgo-EQ>
 - » Sonido *sh*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvmIs_6J93g
 - » Sonido *r*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5CGsB7Uy-o>

3. Formulen una descripción para cada inicial. Tengan en cuenta:
 - » Punto de articulación: posición de la lengua y su relación con otras partes de la boca.
 - » Modo de articulación: cómo sale o fluye el aire al pasar por la boca.
 - » Sonoridad: si vibran o no las cuerdas vocales.
 - » Otros rasgos que sean importantes (ejemplo: cuánto aire sale de la boca).

Anexo C. Material

SESIÓN 3:

Lista de chequeo para autoevaluación de la pronunciación³

zh

- ☐ Curvé mi lengua hacia el paladar.
- ☐ Inicié con una parada total del aire («mini t»).
- ☐ Mi lengua tuvo contacto por un momento con el paladar.
- ☐ No expulsé más aire del necesario para la articulación.

ch

- ☐ Curvé mi lengua hacia el paladar.
- ☐ Inicié con una parada total del aire («mini t»).
- ☐ Mi lengua tuvo contacto por un momento con el paladar.
- ☐ Expulsé aire al momento de pronunciarla.

sh

- ☐ Curvé mi lengua hacia el paladar.
- ☐ Mi lengua **no** tuvo contacto con el paladar.

r

- ☐ Curvé mi lengua hacia el paladar.
- ☐ Mi lengua **no** tuvo contacto con el paladar.
- ☐ Hice vibrar mis cuerdas vocales al momento de pronunciarla.

3 Elaborada a partir de las discusiones plenarios llevadas a cabo entre los participantes y la docente en las sesiones 1 y 2.

Anexo D. Actividad

SESIÓN 3:

Juego del número telefónico

Para este juego, cada número tendrá como equivalente una sílaba en chino con las iniciales de interés. A continuación, se presentan las equivalencias.

1 = zhi	6 = chang
2 = chi	7 = shang
3 = shi	8 = rang
4 = ri	9 = chu
5 = zhang	= shu

1.

- a. En parejas y por turnos, cada una debe dictarle su número de celular a su compañera usando las palabras equivalentes a cada cifra, en lugar de los números como tal.
- b. Para comprobar el número dictado, hagan una llamada perdida o escriban un mensaje de WhatsApp a ese número.
- c. Si hubo inconvenientes y no lograron obtener el número correcto, discutan qué aspectos de la pronunciación o de la comprensión auditiva ocasionaron el fallo comunicativo.

2. Cambien de pareja y repitan el ejercicio.

The Effect of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating as Metacognitive Strategies on the EFL Writing Process *

El efecto de las estrategias metacognitivas en el proceso de escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research was to find out the effect metacognitive strategies had in the writing performance of second semester students at the modern languages program in a university. The project followed three stages: A) a diagnostic whose aim was to reveal the main difficulties in the writing performance done with interviews, questionnaires, diary entries and a pretest. B) an action that consisted in the application of six lesson plans, divided into three main phases, each aimed at the application of three metacognitive strategies. The lesson plans followed the CALLA model (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach). C) an evaluation to know the results obtained at the end of the process, including a posttest. The findings reported the effectiveness of using metacognitive strategies for enhancing writing in content, vocabulary, mechanics, accuracy, and fluency, which subsequently allowed to increase the students' self-motivation, self-awareness, and self-confidence towards EFL writing.

Keywords: *CALLA model, EFL, metacognitive strategies, writing.*

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta investigación acción fue encontrar el efecto que tuvieron las estrategias metacognitivas en la escritura de estudiantes de segundo semestre del programa de lenguas modernas de una universidad. El proyecto se desarrolló en tres etapas: A) un diagnóstico cuyo propósito fue revelar las principales dificultades en la escritura a través de entrevistas, cuestionarios, entradas de diario y un pretest. B) una acción que consistió en la ejecución de seis planeaciones de clase divididas en tres fases, cada una de ellas dirigidas a la aplicación de tres estrategias metacognitivas. Las planeaciones de clase siguieron el modelo CALLA (siglas en inglés para Enfoque de Aprendizaje Cognitivo del Lenguaje Académico). C) una evaluación para conocer los resultados obtenidos al finalizar el proceso, incluido un postest. Los hallazgos reportaron la efectividad del uso de estrategias metacognitivas para mejorar la escritura en cuanto al contenido, vocabulario, mecánicas, precisión y fluidez, lo que a su vez permitió incrementar en los estudiantes su automotivación, autoconsciencia y autoconfianza hacia la escritura del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: *escritura, estrategias metacognitivas, inglés como lengua extranjera, modelo CALLA.*

APPROXIMATELY 86% OF THE WORLD'S population can write and read today (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). In recent years, writing has gained a greater impact on society as a tool to communication and learning. For this reason, people who do not write well nowadays will face difficulties not only in the acquisition of a foreign language, but also in further education and employment. Hence, «the need to help students acquire academic literacy skills has gained momentum as higher education institutions have expanded in both number and provenance of students» (Negretti, 2012, p. 3). EFL teachers are then faced with the demanding task of devising strategies that help learners cope with their illiteracy, so as to decrease the number of students failing to realize their personal, educational, and professional capabilities.

EFL in Colombia has proven to have some significant gaps. According to the English Proficiency Index by EF Education First (2020), Colombia ranked 77 among 100 countries participating around the world, thus labeled as «very low level» considering the score bands established by EF. Likewise, Education Intelligence, the British Council's global higher education service reported in 2015 that writing, compared to the other skills, generated low scores (20 out of 30 points) in the Test of English as a Foreign Language–TOEFL, meaning Colombian students are classified as «fair» for writing (British Council, 2015). In the same way, the International English Language Testing System–IELTS, also widely accepted by universities around the world, shows that in 2013 students were classified as «modest» users with partial command of the writing skill (British Council, 2015).

Furthermore, according to the Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación–ICFES (2020) in its report 2016-2019, the test Saber Pro (ECAES), implemented by ICFES, reported

that only 8% of the undergraduate students from different degrees reached level B1, indicating the need to set off efforts to achieve a significant transformation in the teaching and learning of English in Colombia. Briefly, based on the previous results, students' English proficiency is at a low to medium level, meaning that they will face significant difficulties and will be at great disadvantage in the current academic world.

Thus, national policies and programs established by the Ministry of Education (Programa Nacional de Inglés 2015-2025) «Colombia Bilingüe» indicate that Colombia aims at reaching the highest level of English in South America, through the development of communicative skills in this language to support the inclusion of Colombian people in the global market (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2014). Such goal requires a large amount of well-trained graduated teachers. For this reason, it is imperative to educate students from the early stages of their learning process to be capable of fulfilling the current demands in different professional fields.

This article aims at showing and explaining the results of an action research project conducted with second semester students at a modern languages program in a public university in Colombia. The central issue that motivated this study laid on helping the students to improve writing considering the results obtained in the diagnostic stage, that evidenced low level of performance in aspects as content, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and accuracy. The purpose of this study was to analyze and describe the effects of the implementation of different metacognitive strategies in the writing process while planning, monitoring, and evaluating using the CALLA model proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

The project followed three stages: first, a diagnostic whose aim was to reveal the main difficulties in grammar, mechanics,

fluency, correct structure, varied vocabulary, and lack of strategies in the writing performance of the target population. This was achieved through interviews, questionnaires, diary entries, and a pretest. Second, an action that was sub divided into three main phases, each consisting in the application of six lesson plans with three metacognitive strategies each following the CALLA model; the writing of narrative, descriptive, comparison, contrast, cause, and effect paragraphs had the purpose of aiding the students in the use of metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating, as Correales et al. (2007) stated that conscious use of metacognitive strategies in the classes helped their students to significantly improve writing. Also, the teacher-researcher used a diary, rubrics to check the artifacts, the four corners instrument, and an observation scheme. Third, an evaluation to analyze the data collected and determine the level of improvement the students reached after the implementation of nine metacognitive strategies, including a posttest. After the triangulation, the findings displayed the effectiveness of using metacognitive strategies for enhancing writing.

This research project was implemented with 23 young adults ranging from 17 to 24 years old in second semester at undergraduate school of Modern Languages in Colombia. Learners showed different levels of proficiency; some are re-takers, or had taken English courses in English institutions, or diploma courses before entering the major in Modern Languages. Most students in this course are very interested in English, for this does not represent a constraint in terms of motivation.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was based on Action Research, following the model proposed by Kemmis et al. (2014); likewise, the method of inquiry was qualitative, as this project aimed at intervening an

academic context and overcoming classroom problems through the implementation of data collection techniques, analysis, and interpretation of the information collected, to have an impact on a specific aspect of the teaching and learning process. Also, it was conducted in three stages: a) the diagnostic, which was the application of three instruments to confirm the assumption of low performance in writing; b) the intervention, which consisted in the implementation of six lesson plans, each one with three different metacognitive strategies, previously chosen and adapted to affect the low level of performance found in the target group; c) the evaluation, which entailed the analysis of the process once completed and the formulation of pedagogical implications, conclusions, and recommendations.

Population

The participants for this study were 25 undergraduate Modern Languages Program students; 14 girls and 11 boys whose ages ranged from 17 to 24 years old. This group of learners already went through a process of learning English for one semester, about 240 hours. During that first semester, they took three different 5-hour English classes: Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Grammar, each subject with a number of 5 hours per week. The individuals were selected considering the following reasons: First, second semester students that have already taken one first course on the Reading and Writing component. The second reason is that second semester is fundamental to reinforce the theory and necessary concepts that will allow them to move from the writing of paragraphs to the writing of essays in third semester. Third, this particular group was known for having difficulties related to the writing skills, as it was confirmed in the interviews applied to the former teachers of this group, and the pretest carried out in the diagnostic stage.

Description of the problem

Taking into account the data gathered in the diagnostic stage, the most prominent issue found was the low performance that students had in this skill, particularly in vocabulary, content, grammar, punctuation, and fluency, being the last two the most noticeable; likewise, their lack of strategies, their negative attitude towards writing and the transfer from L1 to L2 represent a great barrier for learners to perform well in a given task.

In this sense, the students lack of tools in general to be aware of their own mistakes, which can explain why students did not perform as expected at this level in the writing component. Therefore, according to Oxford, the metacognitive devices are essential to provide a way for learners to successfully coordinate and respond to the challenges presented during their own learning process (Oxford, 1990, p. 136).

Research question

The research question «How can metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating affect EFL writing in second semester students?» arose from the low writing performance of second semester students of Modern Languages, as evidenced in the writing assignments done in class. Also, their poor writing performance was initially detected by teachers in the previous semester, and later corroborated through the different instruments administered in the diagnostic stage, namely an interview using a questionnaire for teachers of the Reading and Writing component, a written survey administered to the target group, and a journal kept by the researcher describing relevant events during some classes. Additionally, a pretest in the form of a written assignment was conducted with the students to confirm their performance. These qualitative and

quantitative procedures were carried out as proposed by Burns (1999) because they

provide continuing accounts of perceptions and thought processes, as well as of critical events or issues which have surfaced in the classroom. Diaries and journals contain more subjective and personal reflections and interpretations that the relatively formalised recordings of notes. (p. 89)

Diagnostic stage

Instruments.

Interviews. The researcher designed a written questionnaire with the purpose of exploring the perceptions teachers have towards the teaching of English at the program and their opinion about the students' performance in the four skills. This instrument allowed to gather different points of view to give a transparent and objective perspective of the issue; it involved pre-established questions in a written format. Besides, this instrument was easier and less time-consuming in its administration; the transcription of the responses provided accurate information that was later triangulated and analyzed to determine and corroborate some shortfalls students had in writing (Burns, 1999).

Survey. This instrument allowed to examine the students' perception towards writing and determine their difficulties in learning. To elaborate it, the researcher took into account the language level of the students, the clarity of the instructions and the brevity of the questions. The survey contained eight questions and it was applied to 23 second semester students.

Diary. This personal document provided continuing accounts of subjective reflections and interpretations of phenomena happening in the classroom (Burns, 1999). The personal side

of the teacher-researcher and the impressions were registered and interpreted in four entries, one per class.

Pretest (narrative paragraph task). A pretest was carried out to evaluate the students' writing proficiency before the implementation of the metacognitive strategies. The task consisted in writing a narrative paragraph with a topic sentence, three supporting sentences with examples and a conclusion describing the most embarrassing day of their lives. This type of writing was chosen as it facilitates students to include reflections about events of their own life, resulting in a meaningful task for them (O'Malley & Valdez, 1996).

Later, the writing was evaluated using a rubric adapted from Cushing Weigle (2002). This same process was applied after the intervention stage (posttest) to evaluate and determine whether or not the students' level of performance in writing improved.

Triangulation of data. After carrying out the corresponding analysis to each instrument in the diagnostic stage, the researcher conducted a triangulation of data that is essential in action research to check on validity. The aim of triangulation is to gather multiple perspectives of different participants, in this case from the four perspectives, to gain a richer and less subjective point of view on the issue being studied (Burns, 1999).

According to Freeman (1998), the raw data resulting from three instruments corresponding to three views: a survey applied to the students, a questionnaire applied to teachers and a teacher's diary was organized in small charts to assign codes to it. The researcher designed the instruments to find out the perspectives of the participants to determine the problem. After the information was carefully examined, the five emerging codes served to provide a more global view of the phenomena occurring in the classroom. Next, the codes were grouped according to the number of occurrences found throughout the three instruments.

The information collected was deeply studied and analyzed using a grounded data analysis technique proposed by Freeman (1998).

The researcher compared the information gathered from the instruments to find relationships among them. This triangulation was executed to confirm validity and reliability among the instruments (Burns, 1999), and to identify the main problematic issue as displayed in Table 1:

TABLE 1. *Triangulation of data.*

N°	Codes/ categories	Operationalization	Instruments				
			Questionnaires students	Interviews teachers	Diary researcher	Frequencies Total	Percentages
1	Fluency	Code describes the time students take to start writing, as well as the logical sequence followed in writing.	22	14	12	48	25,13%
2	Vocabulary	Code describes the use of lexicon use in writing.	12	8	5	25	13,08%
3	Accuracy	Code describes the coherent use of grammar, tenses, sentence structure.	14	18	6	38	19,89%
4	Content	Code describes the topic, supporting and concluding sentences in a paragraph.	8	19	9	36	18,84%
5	Mechanics	Code describes the use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in writing.	27	11	6	44	23,03%
Totals			83	70	38	191	100%

Note: triangulation of data in the diagnosis stage. Own elaboration.

Table 1 shows the five categories that emerged after analyzing the instruments. This shows fluency with 48 occurrences (25,13%), evidencing the students' poor ability to use cohesive devices (linkers and connectors) appropriately to bind elements of a text together (Harmer, 2004). According to Oxford, the metacognitive devices are essential to provide learners with tools to successfully coordinate their own learning (Oxford, 1990).

Implementation stage

Considering the data gathered in the diagnostic stage, the intervention followed the phases of Educational Action Research proposed by Kemmis et al. (2014) who emphasized on a complementary process consisting mainly of four essential stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This stage was aimed at the implementation of planning, monitoring, and evaluating as metacognitive strategies to improve students' vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, content, and accuracy writing. Hence, six lesson plans were implemented using nine different metacognitive strategies; those strategies were distributed into three different phases, each one containing two lesson plans which were designed considering the students' preferences and needs, and based on the guidelines proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) who suggested the incorporation of activities inside the language classroom to promote the development of students' awareness of metacognitive strategies through four stages: a) preparation, b) presentation, c) practice, and d) evaluation.

Additionally, observational and non-observational instruments were administered during and after every phase to evaluate writing: a teacher-researcher's diary used to keep notes and reflections of the class and students' writing production; the four corners used to discover the students' attitude and opinion towards writing and the metacognitive strategies; a rubric to

evaluate the performance at the end of every lesson plan; an external observer scheme filled by three professors in every phase to have a peripheral viewpoint of the students' performance. A posttest was additionally conducted to know the level students reached at the end of the implementation. Its results were later compared with the ones obtained in the pretest to evaluate the effect of the metacognitive strategies on mechanics, accuracy, fluency, content, and vocabulary writing.

Phase 1. Table 2 shows that lesson plans 1 and 2 comprised the writing of a narrative paragraph and a descriptive paragraph through the use of three metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. The researcher designed and applied four data collection instruments to gather information regarding the students' performance.

TABLE 2. *Distribution in phase 1.*

Phase	Lesson plans	Topic	Strategy classification according to O'Malley & Chamot, 1990	Strategy description	Strategy definition	Data collection instruments
Phase 1	Lesson plan 1 Lesson plan 2	Narrative paragraph Descriptive paragraph	Planning	Overviewing and linking with already known material	Learning why the activity is done and building the needed vocabulary.	Teacher-researcher's diary. Four corners. Rubric. External observer.
			Monitoring	Organizing by means of crib sheets	Crib sheets are used to keep notes about special information for future references.	
			Evaluating	Self-monitoring checklist	The checklist allows to identify the strengths and difficulties at the end of the writing process.	

Note: distribution of lesson plans and metacognitive strategies in phase 1. Own elaboration.

Lesson plan 1 provided three metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating that would facilitate the writing of a narrative paragraph about «an unforgettable experience». This topic took into account the needs and preferences stated by the students in the survey conducted in the diagnostic stage. Likewise, such metacognitive strategies were selected considering the theory of language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). For each stage, Oxford (1990) listed the strategies: *overviewing and linking with already known material*, *organizing by means of a crib sheet*, and *self-monitoring checklist*. These kept in mind the level of students, their background knowledge and the required skills for writing this type of paragraph. The worksheet contained an introduction, the objective of the lesson, the topic, the theory about narrative paragraphs, and prompts that indicate step by step how to achieve the expected outcome.

In the first 2-hour session, the students received a clear explanation of the worksheet and proceeded to read the introductory part that provided theory about the narrative paragraph to be developed in this lesson. After that, the students developed the points of the first strategy: *overviewing and linking with already known material*. As the topic was «an unforgettable event», they were asked to write a list of events and choose the most meaningful in their lives. Then, they answered some guiding questions to organize what they wanted to include in the paragraph. Once done, they created a list of descriptive language to enrich their writing in terms of content and vocabulary.

Next, the students used the second metacognitive strategy, named *organizing by means of a crib sheet*, to write important aspects to remember once they were engaged in the writing process. The worksheet provided some ideas, but the students had to write their own so as to revise them while solving the task.

In the second 2-hour session, the students reviewed the metacognitive strategies used in the previous class to write the paragraph; this took them approximately 1 hour. Afterwards, the students used the third metacognitive strategy *self-monitoring checklist* to revise the composition. They read the paragraphs and applied corrections if the case to finally deliver it to the teacher.

Lesson plan 2 was designed to reinforce the use of the same three metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating implemented in the first lesson. These were expected to help the students to write a descriptive paragraph about «a person you truly admire». The worksheet contained an introduction, the objective of the lesson, and prompts to explain step by step the procedures to achieve the expected outcome.

In the first 2-hour session, the students read the introductory part of the worksheet to find out the theory and instructions needed to develop this task. They looked into the explanations about the descriptive paragraph, the topic and the objective of the lesson. Later, the students developed the points of the first strategy called *overviewing and linking with already known material*.

As the topic was to describe a person they truly admire, they chose one important person for them and listed special features about his/her uniqueness. Afterwards, they answered some guiding questions to organize the ideas and wrote a list of figurative language to enrich the paragraph. Then, the metacognitive strategy *organizing by means of a crib sheet* led them to write the most important aspects to remember once engaged in the writing process.

In the second 2-hour session, the students reviewed the points developed in the previous session. Next, they wrote the paragraph which took them approximately 1 hour, to finally use

the third metacognitive strategy *self-monitoring checklist* that contained five guidelines to help them correct the paragraph before its deliver to the teacher.

After analyzing the first two lesson plans corresponding to the first phase of implementation and the artifacts checked by using a rubric, there was evidence of the positive effect the metacognitive strategies had on the performance of second semester students in the writing tasks. This evidenced that the metacognitive strategies *overviewing and linking with already known material*, *organizing by means of a crib sheet*, and *using a self-monitoring checklist* helped enhance writing, since content had better structure and there were fewer grammar mistakes. Besides, students paid more attention to mechanics and used more accurate vocabulary. Such finding is linked to Oxford (1990) who states that these strategies support the second language learning by providing learners with enough tools to be aware of their advances.

Phase 2. Table 3 displays lesson plans 3 and 4 aimed at the writing of a comparison paragraph and a contrast paragraph by means of strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. During this second phase, the researcher applied the same four data collection instruments to gather information about the students' writing performance.

TABLE 3. *Distribution in phase 2.*

Phase	Lesson plans	Topic	Strategy classification according to O'Malley & Chamot, 1990	Strategy description	Strategy definition	Data collection instruments
Phase 2	Lesson plan 3 Lesson plan 4	Comparison paragraph Contrast paragraph	Planning	Setting objectives	The students set their own objectives according to the task at hand.	Teacher-researcher's diary. Four corners. Rubric. External observer.
			Monitoring	Graphic organizers	Venn diagrams are used to organize key ideas that are to be developed in the paragraph.	
			Evaluating	Peer correction and conferencing	A checklist is used to identify each other's strengths and weaknesses in their products.	

Note: distribution of lesson plans and metacognitive strategies in phase 2. Own elaboration.

Lesson plan 3 implemented three more metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating: *setting objectives*, *using graphic organizers* and *peer correction*. They were chosen taking into account the theory of language learning (Oxford, 1990) and the level of performance and background knowledge up to this point. The strategies hoped to enable learners to write a comparison paragraph about «your life as a 14-year-old student with your life as a student today». The worksheet comprised an introductory part, the theory on comparison paragraphs, and a step-by-step description on how to use each metacognitive strategy.

In the first 2-hour session, the students read the theory and explanation about comparison paragraph and the strategies to be used. No objectives were given in the worksheet because the metacognitive strategy *setting objectives* asked the students to do so. The objectives must be clear, attainable, and aimed at both, the achievement of an effective writing product and the improvement of aspects that had been difficult for them in writing.

Once the students set the objectives, they used the Venn diagram to establish relationships between two topics by placing them on the left and the right side of the diagram. The similarities found shaped the core of the comparison paragraph. The next step was to make a list of possible connectors to link the ideas.

In the second and third session, the students developed the paragraph. Once it was finished, they exchanged it with a classmate to make peer correction to identify difficulties in fluency, accuracy, mechanics, content, and vocabulary. When the students read and determined the main aspects to improve, they held conversations (small conferencing) with their classmates to help them realize about the mistakes done in the paragraphs.

Likewise, lesson plan 4 used the same metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating used in the previous lesson. This time, the strategies were expected to provide the students with tools to develop a contrast paragraph on «the differences between single life and married life». The worksheet had an explanation on contrast paragraphs and series of gradual prompts to guide the students on the use of the metacognitive strategies to accomplish the task.

As the students were familiarized now with the working procedures, in the first 2-hour session they gave a quick read to the introductory part of the worksheet and answered some guiding questions to set the objectives. Then, they completed

the Venn diagram to organize their ideas on single life and married life. After that, they wrote the paragraph making emphasis on differences.

After the task was completed, the students exchanged their paragraphs to check possible deficiencies in writing. Then, they met up to socialize the comments and inform the mistakes found for the sake of applying the pertinent corrections. At the end, the students revised and verified the accomplishment of the objectives set at the beginning of this lesson.

The metacognitive strategy *setting objectives* used since the beginning of the lesson allowed students to have clear goals of what they wanted to achieve by the end through the implementation of the metacognitive strategies to write their paragraphs. As supported by Negretti (2012) «mental representation of the task will therefore influence metacognitive dynamics entailed in writing» (p.7). Yet, there was an unfavorable mark as a result from the confusion students expressed before completing the *Venn diagram*. On the other hand, the strategy peer correction and conferencing helped the students to focus their attention on the construction of sentences with effective grammatical patterns. Likewise, sharing recommendations with peers rather than the teacher is an effective way to encourage those who may be traumatized when making errors, since although it is inevitable, students can and should actually learn from them using metacognitive strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Phase 3. Table 4 portrays lesson plans 5 and 6 directed towards the writing of a cause paragraph and an effect paragraph through the strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. During the third phase, the researcher applied the same four data collection instruments to gather information about the students' writing performance.

TABLE 4. *Distribution in phase 3.*

Phase	Lesson plans	Topic	Strategy classification according to O'Malley & Chamot, 1990	Strategy description	Strategy definition	Data collection instruments
Phase 3	Lesson plan 5 Lesson plan 6	Cause paragraph Effect paragraph	Planning	Self-questioning	Samples of paragraphs and guiding questions to identify important steps when writing.	Teacher-researcher's diary. Four corners. Rubric. External observer.
			Monitoring	Mark schemes	A template is used to indicate actions they can take while writing (regarding grammar, mechanics, and content).	
			Evaluating	Self-correcting and evaluating	Providing statements to identify strengths and weaknesses in their products (concerning grammar, mechanics, and content).	

Note: distribution of lesson plans and metacognitive strategies in phase 3. Own elaboration.

Lesson plan 5 introduced three different metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating: self-questioning, using mark schemes and self-correcting-evaluating. The worksheet contained the explanation about cause paragraphs, a set of clear steps on how to use the metacognitive strategies, and the topic for this lesson which was explaining the reasons why learning English – or any other language – is difficult.

The first strategy was *self-questioning*. The students answered some guiding questions based on a sample of cause paragraph to consciously recognize the proper use of mechanics, accuracy, content, and vocabulary. After that, they answered another set of questions to reflect upon personal thoughts that could arise from the previous activity.

Later, the students checked a printed template with small statements to indicate important aspects about the use of indentation, capital letters, punctuation marks, spelling, connectors, tenses, and content to have in mind while writing the paragraph. Then, the students used *self-correcting-evaluating*, which consisted in reading a series of rules and examples on fluency, accuracy mechanics, content, and vocabulary to guide the students to check and improve their paragraphs.

Lesson plan 6 was applied to strengthen the use of the metacognitive strategies to find out how much they helped the students to achieve a high level of performance in writing. Worksheet 6 guided the students to develop an effect paragraph to explain the results, either positive or negative of learning a second or foreign language.

As done in the previous lesson, the students answered some guiding questions from a sample paragraph to gather ideas on how to properly write the paragraph. After that, they used the template, which was expected to help them remember key rules about accuracy, fluency, content, mechanics, and vocabulary. Finally, the students verified their paragraphs using the statements given to correct the possible mistakes.

When analyzing the results obtained after carrying out both lesson plans, it was evidenced that the metacognitive strategies *self-questioning*, *mark schemes*, and *self-correcting-evaluating* helped learners to elaborate complete paragraphs with well-thought-out sentences and examples connected with adequate linking words. Additionally, vocabulary, mechanics, and accuracy had the same number of positive occurrences, which represents a significant improvement. As stated by Oxford (1990), the metacognitive strategies are essential in providing the learners with ways to coordinate their own learning by focusing their attention on important aspects of the language.

Triangulation in the implementation stage. After comparing the perspectives of the different instruments used, Figure 1 reports the number of positive and negative occurrences found in each instrument administered during the implementation stage to find out the impact of the metacognitive strategies in writing.

Figure 1. Triangulation of data.

Instruments	Categories																			
	Phase 1								Phase 2								Phase 3			
	Content		Rethorical Resources		Vocabulary		Accuracy		Mechanic		Content		Rethorical Resources		Vocabulary		Accuracy		Mechanic	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Teacher's diary	5	1	3	3	2	0	4	0	3	1	6	1	5	1	4	1	4	1	4	2
Artifacts analysis	13	10	11	12	12	11	5	18	5	18	34	12	39	7	42	4	35	11	36	10
Four corners	25	21	19	27	23	23	9	37	12	34	20	3	17	6	13	10	16	7	18	5
External observer	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Total	44	32	34	42	38	34	19	55	21	53	61	16	62	14	60	15	56	19	59	17

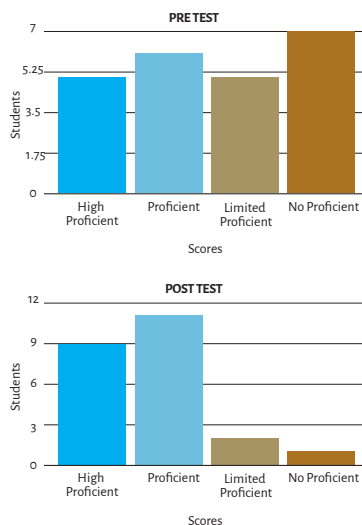
Note: triangulation of data in the implementation stage. Own elaboration.

In Figure 1, most of the positive occurrences were found in phases 2 and 3. This means that the students improved writing in terms of fluency, accuracy, content, vocabulary, and mechanics due to the use of the metacognitive strategies in the different workshops. In fact, this data confirmed what Oxford (1990) stated regarding the benefits of implementing such strategies for writing instruction. According to her, students often feel overwhelmed when having too much unfamiliar vocabulary, confusing rules, and different writing systems, causing them to lose focus which «can only be regained by the conscious use of metacognitive strategies» (Oxford, 1990, p. 136). To sum up, intervening writing classes with the metacognitive strategies allowed second semester students to enhance writing progressively.

Evaluation stage

Additionally, a pretest and a posttest were administered to determine the level of performance of the students in writing. These tests were applied before and after the implementation of the metacognitive strategies, and consisted in the writing of a narrative paragraph on familiar topics. The teacher-researcher used an analytic rubric to evaluate these paragraphs. The results are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Pretest and posttest comparative results.



Note: level of proficiency in writing before and after the metacognitive strategies.
Own elaboration.

Figure 2 shows substantial improvement in all aspects of writing in the posttest. The amount of non-proficient and limited proficient students went down from 52,1% to 13% after the implementation of the metacognitive strategies. Likewise,

there was a remarkable increase in the percentage of students who became high proficient in the posttest going up from 47,8% to 86,9%. As such, the metacognitive strategies used in the regular instruction of writing empowered the students with the necessary tools to perform better in the tasks.

The data collected after six workshops using the metacognitive strategies in the regular instruction of the classes allowed to identify a significant improvement in content, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and mechanics, as evidenced in Table 5 and Table 6.

TABLE 5. *Pretest results.*

Scores Categories	High proficient (4-5)	Proficient (3-3,9)	Limited proficient (2-2,9)	No proficient (1-1,9)
Fluency	6	5	7	5
Accuracy	5	6	5	7
Mechanics	4	7	8	4
Content	5	7	3	8
Vocabulary	6	6	8	3

Note: results of the pretest by categories. Own elaboration.

TABLE 6. *Posttest results.*

Scores Categories	High proficient (4-5)	Proficient (3-3,9)	Limited proficient (2-2,9)	No proficient (1-1,9)
Fluency	15	5	2	1
Accuracy	8	10	2	3
Mechanics	11	9	2	1
Content	15	6	1	1
Vocabulary	13	8	0	2

Note: results of the posttest by categories. Own elaboration.

The progressive development of the lesson plans using the CALLA Model (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) provided students with flexibility to move back and forth between phases to understand, practice, and reinforce the strategies proposed in each lesson. Additionally, the learners coordinated their own learning process by being self-aware of their strengths and directing their attention to their weaknesses to improve aspects of writing through planning, monitoring, and evaluating stages.

Furthermore, the students had scarce knowledge on strategies for developing the writing tasks, as evidenced in the diagnostic stage. Hence, the teaching of metacognitive strategies supposed active learners able to acquire a repertoire of steps to facilitate the organization and linking of new information in a conscious way, and developing habits to «use them on new tasks that are similar to the learning activities on which they were initially trained» (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.196).

FINDINGS

Fluency

The participants showed a significant improvement in fluency as evidenced in the number of positive occurrences in phase 2 and 3. This means that students were able to connect ideas clearly and coherently using the appropriate connectors, due to the metacognitive strategies setting objectives and self-questioning, as analyzed in the four corners. Besides, the students could initially discover and connect with the nature of the lessons, predicting possible flaws to be improved as they were developing the task (Oxford, 1990). As mentioned by the teacher-researcher in the diary, the students showed great interest in not only making proper use of connectors but also being able to finish the writing task on time.

Accuracy

A considerable improvement was noticed in accuracy mainly in phases 2 and 3 of the implementation, since the number of positive occurrences was higher than in phase 1. The students manifested in the four corners that the metacognitive strategies peer correction and conferencing and self-correcting and evaluating guided them to become aware of grammatical aspects through reviewing their own work and evaluating and comparing their progress with that of their peers over time (Oxford, 1990). Furthermore, the rubrics showed gradual progress in the use of complex constructions, articles, prepositions, and tenses in general. This is corroborated by the observation schemes that noted the use of peer correction always before handing in the paragraphs to the teacher, which led to infer that corrections suggested by their peers were taken into consideration.

Content

Content showed one of the highest improvements after the implementation. As evidenced in the teacher-researcher's diary, the metacognitive strategies functioned as a productive unit that contributed to ameliorate the students' difficulties in writing, especially in the structure of paragraphs. Additionally, the analysis of the rubrics showed content going up from 34 negative occurrences to 104 positive occurrences. Equally, the students stated that the strategies organizing by means of crib sheets, graphic organizers, and self-questioning helped them to clearly arrange the main points of the paragraphs. This goes hand in hand with Oxford (1990) in regards to the use of notes to write down «new target language expressions or structures and the contexts in which they were encountered» (p. 156). Also, the external observers often noted the students editing and restructuring their papers before delivering them to the teacher.

Vocabulary

The students displayed a major development of vocabulary in phases 2 and 3, as evidenced in the rubric's analysis, where it went up from 27 negative to 111 positive occurrences, and in the four corners where they went up from 22 negative to 47 positive. Moreover, the external observers confirmed that the metacognitive strategy overviewing and linking with already known material is vital in vocabulary building as the students could preview «the basic principles and/or material (including new vocabulary) for an upcoming language activity, and link these with what the learners already know» (Oxford, 1990, p. 152). Also, peer correction and conferencing not only helped the students to enrich their paragraphs in terms of vocabulary, but also provided an alternative to promote autonomy in the classroom by encouraging them to rely more on their classmates than on the teacher. Likewise, with self-correcting and evaluating the participants reviewed the effectiveness of words and expressions used in the paragraphs and applied adjustments if necessary. It is worth to mention that the external observers reported the use of dictionary as an aid to widen their lexicon during the writing tasks.

Mechanics

Mechanics was the most challenging aspect of writing in the students' questionnaire. However, the number of students who obtained low scores in the pretest diminished compared to those in the posttest going down from 12 to 3. Furthermore, there was main improvement in phases 2 and 3 with a total of 127 positive occurrences. This is confirmed by the teacher-researcher's diary, which reported great interest in making proper use of punctuation marks and spelling in the paragraphs. Also, the rubrics analysis displayed 82 positive occurrences in phase

2 and 3 compared to 12 in phase 1. This suggested gradual improvement as the strategies were implemented and reinforced during the tasks. Besides, the four corners and the external observer schemes emphasized that the metacognitive strategies self-monitoring, peer correction and conferencing and mark schemes guided students to both make consistent use of basic punctuation marks, capitalization and spelling, and to promote self-learning and self-confidence by encouraging them to find each other's mistakes under a non-threatening environment fostering language acquisition.

All in all, the progressive improvement resulted from an adequate identification, modeling, and scaffolding of the metacognitive strategies in the regular instruction, that provided the students with opportunities to learn, practice, and reinforce them, as evidenced throughout the tasks developed in the implementation stage. The information and the data portrayed above is used as support to acknowledge the importance of this study to influence positively second semester students' writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Regular classroom instruction carried out with metacognitive strategies of planning supposes an innovative way to engage students at early stages of the writing task, because it provides with new procedures that help in conflict resolution. This means, the students are able to anticipate possible difficulties and devise ways to face them, which also fosters self-awareness and self-confidence allowing to establish higher possibilities of performing better. For this reason, it is advisable for teachers and language instructors to incorporate planning.

Likewise, the use of metacognitive strategies of monitoring provides confused learners with ways to clarify doubts and

keep a specific focus in writing. It also fosters students' self-comprehension of strengths and difficulties to pursue language goals by being aware of what they are doing.

Similarly, the metacognitive strategies of evaluation promote self-autonomy and self-motivation, since the students can execute mental processes to examine learning outcomes. Besides, monitoring own mistakes and evaluating overall progress empower students with ways of determining which of the actions performed were either thoughtless so they can be improved, or purposeful so they can be incorporated in the coming task. Furthermore, evaluating strategies allow students to check if their products respond to the prompts of the task and to the personal goals established at the beginning. Hence, language teachers are encouraged to implement these strategies regularly in their lessons.

In essence, the implementation of metacognitive strategies facilitates the acquisition, storing, and practice of new information, stimulating the students to work independently and confidently towards settled learning goals. The evidence discussed in the triangulation of the evaluation stage reports that the reinforcement of metacognitive strategies supposes more opportunities for students to become gradually more aware and familiarized with their own development, leading them to coordinate their own learning when working with incoming tasks.

Moreover, the CALLA model for teaching strategies assists language teachers in the development of integral and intended lessons that incorporate strategies in the normal course of a class rather than as an additional activity. In this way, both teachers and students have the opportunity to effectively introduce and practice the strategies and content through the phases

that constitute the CALLA model: preparation, presentation, practice, and evaluation.

The phases of the CALLA model aim at providing language teachers with the possibility to describe the kind of strategies to introduce, the content topic, and the outcome intended for the lesson. Also, these phases allow flexibility, since the students have the opportunity to go back and forth to reinforce previous knowledge and consolidate new one. For this reason, language teachers who look forward to implementing metacognitive strategies are recommended to use the CALLA model to benefit learning.

Additionally, in the constant search for ways to make students feel drawn to learning, it was important to include purposes in writing, so they have a wider range of possibilities to share experiences, to describe interesting events, to analyze concepts, to research on important facts, to give their opinions and persuade to change or contribute to someone else's ideas. In this way, learners feel encouraged to continue writing as they sense their work has value beyond the classroom.

Besides, the use of meaningful topics supposes a key point to motivate the students to engage in writing, as they can express their ideas with major ease on topics that are interesting for them, which also contributes to improve their performance in writing. This means, students become active learners by being not only concentrated in solving a task and producing an outcome, but also empowered to spread ideas through their texts knowing the impact they might have in society. Therefore, it is appropriate to design tasks whose topics are relevant for the students to foster motivation and enhance the students' writing.

To conclude, the implementation of metacognitive strategies proves to be a fruitful way to help second semester students in writing. Thus, if the main objective is to enrich the students'

learning experience and to enhance writing, EFL teachers, language institutions, and universities are advised to use these strategies as part of the curriculum and lesson planning. It is also relevant to point out that the usefulness of metacognitive strategies is not limited only to writing, but also to other language skills and academic fields. For this reason, the author of this study encourages researchers to inquire into this matter to broaden the field of action and help learners in their daily struggle to be better each day.

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Collaborative Online International Learning: Language and Cross-Cultural Experiences of University Students^{*}

Aprendizaje colaborativo internacional en línea: experiencias lingüísticas y crosculturales de estudiantes universitarios

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study reports on a collaborative online project between the University of Washington at Tacoma (USA) and the Universidad Veracruzana at Veracruz City (México). The project was implemented as part of the internationalization of higher education policies of the participating universities, which include pedagogical practices oriented toward foreign language learning, the internationalization of the curriculum, and virtual exchange.

The study documents cross-cultural learning experiences between two groups of students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a Collaborative Online International Learning approach (COIL); and how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence. The language of instruction was English and the students interacted through an online platform and a social network.

The methodological design was qualitative-interpretive. Data was generated using interviews, linguistic samples (writing samples), and the interactions of the participants prompted by the use of an online platform and a social media network. Data analysis was realized through a content approach, which led to the formulation of assertions based on themes that emerged.

Results indicate that the pedagogical approach implemented (COIL) prompted reflexion on issues related to language learning, cultural understanding, and common life experiences, and that it was conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence.

Keywords: *Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), cross-cultural competence, English language learning, internationalization of the curriculum, virtual exchange.*

RESUMEN

Este estudio de corte cualitativo reporta la implementación de un proyecto educativo en línea entre la Universidad de Washington, campus Tacoma (EUA) y la Universidad Veracruzana región Veracruz (México). Este proyecto fue implementado como parte de las políticas de internacionalización de la educación superior de las universidades participantes, las cuales incluyen prácticas pedagógicas orientadas hacia el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, la internacionalización del currículo y el intercambio virtual.

Este estudio describe las experiencias de aprendizaje entre dos grupos de estudiantes de diferentes contextos lingüísticos y culturales en un enfoque de Aprendizaje Colaborativo Internacional en Línea (COIL por sus siglas en inglés); y entender la relación de esas experiencias con el desarrollo de la competencia cros cultural.

El idioma utilizado en el proyecto fue el inglés y los estudiantes interactuaron mediante el uso de una plataforma en línea y una red social.

El diseño metodológico fue cualitativo-interpretativo. Los datos se generaron utilizando entrevistas, muestras lingüísticas (trabajos escritos), mientras que la interacción de los participantes se llevó a cabo a través de una plataforma en línea y una red social. El análisis de los datos se realizó a través de un enfoque de contenido, lo cual llevó a la formulación de hallazgos basados en temas que emergieron de los datos.

Los resultados indican que el enfoque pedagógico (COIL) promovió la reflexión de los estudiantes sobre temas relacionados con el aprendizaje de idiomas, el entendimiento cultural y las experiencias de vida que identificaron tener en común; los resultados también mostraron que el enfoque fue conducente para el desarrollo de algunos aspectos de la competencia cros cultural.

Palabras clave: *aprendizaje colaborativo internacional en línea (COIL), aprendizaje del inglés, competencia cros cultural, intercambio virtual, internacionalización del currículo.*

MANY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION around the world face the challenge of structuring opportunities for students to have access to international learning experiences, including foreign language learning. Thus, a growing number of universities and institutions are generating innovative instructional approaches, which take advantage of computer and communication technologies, to promote cross-cultural interactions through international collaboration and the internationalization of the curriculum.

An example of these educational dynamics is the emerging field of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (also known as Virtual Exchange, Virtual Mobility, or Tele-collaboration). In this vein, The State University of New York's COIL Center (also referred to as The SUNY COIL Center), can be considered as the leading instance of this teaching and learning paradigm.

According to Rubin (2017), «COIL is not a technology or a technology platform but rather a new teaching and learning paradigm that develops cross-cultural awareness across shared multicultural learning environments» (pp. 33-34). Rubin (2017) states that the difference between regular online distance courses and COIL courses is that «...COIL is based upon developing team-taught learning environments where teachers from two cultures work together to develop a shared syllabus, emphasising experiential and collaborative student learning» (p.34). The author indicates that «[COIL] courses give new contextual meaning to the ideas and texts they explore, while providing students new venues in which to develop their cross-cultural awareness» (Rubin, 2017, p.34).

de Wit (2013) points out that

the term «collaborative online international learning» combines the four essential dimensions of real virtual mobility:

it is a collaborative exercise of teachers and students; it makes use of online technology and interaction; it has potential international dimensions; and it is integrated into the learning process. (de Wit, 2013, para. 9)

The following list represents some features of the COIL approach according to The SUNY COIL Center (2019):

- » The fostering of cross-cultural learning experiences.
- » The use of technology through online and blended learning environments.
- » The fostering of collaboration between university professors and students with their peers in different geographical locations and from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- » The use of innovative online pedagogies.
- » Globally networked learning.
- » Virtual exchange/mobility.
- » Curricular internationalization.
- » Length of course: COIL academic courses can be one or two semesters in length.
- » Language of instruction: English is very often used in COIL courses. However, the language of instruction may be negotiated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Online International Learning (also known as a virtual exchange, virtual Mobility, or Telecollaboration) varies greatly in terms of project design and implementation, as well as in research designs. However, many projects are concerned with aspects of cultural competence (e.g., cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, global competence, etc.), virtual mobility, internationalization of the curriculum or

internationalization at home. The following studies are examples of those types of pedagogical practices.

Appiah-Kubi and Annan (2020) conducted a study with engineering students from the University of Dayton (UD) in the United States and engineering students from the University of Ghana (UG). The researchers designed an 8-week long online collaboration and used statistical tests to identify differences between the COIL teams and students who did not participate with COIL. Scores in the exams, the project work, and the total class scores were also used to evaluate the students' performance. A post-project survey was given to the student participants of the two colleges. Results showed that

the COIL teams performed significantly better on the project work. In addition, 70% (of the 11 students from the University of Ghana) and 85% (of the 20 students from the University of Dayton) respectively reported that the collaboration was either effective or very effective. (Appiah-Kubi & Annan, 2020, p. 109)

Swartz et al. (2019) implemented a study focusing on the measurement of dimensions of intercultural competency through the implementation of a 6-week virtual collaboration. The collaboration between virtual teams involved classrooms in three different European countries. Through instructional activities, «the students were exposed to the challenges of collaborating internationally as to increase their intercultural competence» (Swartz et al., 2019, p.1). Methodologically, the researchers measured the constructs of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication based on surveys. The results suggested contradictory results since students reported «a heightened awareness of the difficulties of intercultural communication. Despite a general appreciation of the project and its outcomes,

negative results, such as an increased dislike of intercultural interaction, emerged» (Swartz et al., 2019, p. 1).

Naicker et al. (2021) used a mixed-methods approach to assess students' preparedness and experiences of a COIL course among South African students. The course focused on «generating understanding and appreciation of cultural differences in nutritional habits and food patterns between the Netherlands and South Africa» (Naicker et al., 2021, pp. 2-3).

The authors utilized a global competency questionnaire to assess students' preparedness for internationalization and used focus groups to determine barriers and enablers of students' experiences during the COIL course. According to the results, the study showed that

Pre-COIL, students expressed difficulty in adapting to new situations ($p < 0,001$). However, post-COIL, students were more open to learning about other cultures different religions and traditions ($p < 0,00$). Key barriers of student experiences included technological challenges, language, and partner dynamics while key enablers were a structured course outline, student's openness to COIL and increased academic self-efficacy. (Naicker et al., 2021, p. 1)

Concluding the statements by the researchers suggested that «keeping the focus on the student central to COIL, an effective learning system can be intentionally developed, giving students a study abroad experience without leaving home» (Naicker et al., 2021, p.10).

de Castro et al. (2018) investigated aspects of the development of intercultural competence through the implementation of a COIL project for undergraduate nursing students at universities in the United States and the Philippines. The project was designed for students «to gain appreciation for working in

multicultural environments in the future» (de Castro et al., 2018, p. 2). Students completed assignments and interacted within their learning groups using discussion boards within an online environment to complete 2 sets of assignments. Data was generated through reflective essays, visual representations (an infographic and video recording), and an intercultural competence self-evaluation instrument given at the beginning and conclusion of the COIL project.

The researchers found that there was a change in the students' intercultural competence («difference in the scores from the start of the course to the end was +7,4 points» (de Castro et al., 2018, p.4)). To achieve this, «students completed an intercultural competence self-evaluation at the beginning and conclusion of the COIL experience. Students rated their self-perceived ability... interacting with persons from other cultures according to 15 areas» (de Castro et al., 2018, p.4).

The researchers concluded that «students from both countries improved their skills in intercultural interaction, as they expressed valuing shared learning with peers in another country and reported gains in intercultural competence» (de Castro et al., 2018, p. 4).

Nava-Aguirre et al. (2019) reported on the approach to internationalize the curriculum of the Business School at the Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico. The researchers indicate that the purpose of the project was «to increase students' knowledge in business and to develop intercultural competences through virtual interactions» (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 732) through the integration of a COIL project under an experiential learning approach.

The specific COIL project of the business school consisted in redesigning the curriculum of four undergraduate courses in Global Business. These four courses included international

activities that fostered experiential learning among students from Mexico, Europe (one group, and the United States (three groups). (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 724)

The COIL project lasted 4 weeks out of the 16 total weeks per semester and included writing assignments, debates and presentations. The researchers concluded that the internationalization strategies were conducive to the development and increase of aspects of intercultural competence. In addition, «those strategies could represent opportunities for international learning for students who do not have opportunities to study abroad, interact, and collaborate through experiential activities with an international component» (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 740).

Online International Collaborations and Foreign Language Learning

In recent years, there have been a number of studies that have investigated international collaborations using online learning environments as it relates to foreign language learning. In this regard it is important to refer to O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019), who point out that syntheses of research, as well as articles, edited collections, and specialized journals in this particular area are available.

Akiyama and Cunningham (2018) synthesized 55 projects that took place in university foreign-language classes in online collaborations. The analysis sought to identify the arrangements for telecollaboration and how those types of projects changed over the last two decades. The study «identified six commonly adopted arrangements of SCMC-based telecollaboration...[and] also found that, while certain pedagogical practices in telecollaboration have matured, the field is undergoing reconceptualization and expansion with the advancement of technology

and diversification of participants» (Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018, p. 49).

Çiftçi and Savaş (2018), who realized a meta-synthesis of research papers published between 2010 and 2015, present another example of research synthesis. The synthesis included papers focusing on language and intercultural learning within online environments. The study identified research trends under five main themes: «(1) the participants' overall views on their telecollaborative experiences, (2) language learning through telecollaboration, (3) intercultural learning through telecollaboration, (4) the challenges experienced within the telecollaborative projects, and (5) the needs for further effective telecollaboration» (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018, p. 278).

Similarly, O'Dowd (2016) provided an overview of the most significant emerging trends and tendencies in online collaboration practices. The main trends identified included (1) the diversification of partnerships and networks, (2) the rise of critical and cross-disciplinary approaches, (3) the combination and integration of telecollaboration with other modes of education, and (4) the emergence of videoconferencing as an important tool for online intercultural interaction. In all of those patterns, aspects of foreign language learning played a central role.

Specific research studies on cross-cultural competence and language learning are also available. An instance of that type of research is that published by Casañ-Pitarch et al. (2020), who set out «to determine if a telecollaborative project contributed to enhance students' foreign language skills and cross-cultural competence» (p. 78). The researchers devised a program in which Ukrainian and Spanish students collaborated so that their language competence in English and their cross-cultural competence could be measured. The measurement instruments utilized by the researchers in this study were a standardized

language test and a cross-cultural test, which were administered as pre and post-tests. Results indicated that «the students who participated in this virtual exchange programme enhanced their competence on both foreign language cross-cultural competences by taking an active part in the telecollaborative project work» (Casañ-Pitarch et al., 2020, p. 78).

Lázár (2014) analysed data from a five-month international web-based collaboration project that involved four different English as a foreign language groups (EFL) in four different countries in Europe. The study sought «to explore the participating students' intercultural competence development and their perceptions of the usefulness of their online collaboration in this respect» (Lázár, 2014, para. 1). The data generation and analysis included the learners' written production, teachers' evaluations, observations and group interviews. The conclusion statements suggested that «despite the learners' initial difficulties...the data indicate noticeable development in their intercultural competence throughout the five months of the web collaboration project» (Lázár, 2014, para. 1).

THE PRESENT STUDY

Justification

There is a wide variety of research conducted in the area of collaborative online learning with an international scope (Godwin-Jones, 2019); however, researchers have identified the need for studies that include in their design ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018; Godwin-Jones, 2019). Focusing on reflection and based on a qualitative design, this study is proposed to investigate cross-cultural experiences of university students related to international collaborative online learning, the development

of cross-cultural competence, and foreign language learning in these types of learning environments.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- » To identify the types of cross-cultural learning experiences that were prompted through a writing project in English; and how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence.
- » To identify the implications for the English language learners group of the cross-cultural learning experiences prompted through the implementation of the COIL project.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- » What types or cross-cultural experiences as analytical categories emerged from an online international collaboration project?
- » How do those experiences relate to aspects of the development of cross-cultural competence?
- » What are the implications of cross-cultural learning experiences for the English language learners' group?

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the implementation of writing activities on topics that promote reflection and collaboration between two groups of students linguistically and culturally different in an online virtual environment be conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural Competence

Based on the literature on cultural psychology, cultural competence refers to a psychological construct that entails «...a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that together form a personal attribute that facilitates smooth and effective communication and interaction with people who are culturally and linguistically different» (Lonner, 2013, p.1).

In order to avoid confusion in the context of the present study (e.g., cross-cultural vs. intercultural), it is important to refer to the literature review by Wilson et al. (2013). The authors point out that «the construct has been examined across and within national boundaries in connection with cross-cultural transition and adaptation, and in terms of intercultural relations within multicultural societies» (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 900). That is, cross-cultural communication relates to interactions among people from the same culture with those from another culture. On the other hand, intercultural communication involves interactions among people from different cultures who may live in a multicultural society.

Cross-Cultural Competence

This study affiliates with the concepts put forth by Wilson et al. (2013), who have situated cultural competence within a culture learning framework and in the context of cross-cultural transition. In this perspective, cross-cultural competence refers to «culture-specific skills required (a) function effectively within a new cultural context and/or (b) interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds» (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 900).

Additionally, Deardorff (2017) points out that «cross-cultural competence is a complex concept generally defined by a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills one needs to be successful in engaging with difference» (Deardorff, 2017, para. 1). The researcher adds that

core dimensions of cross-cultural competence include attitudes (respect-valuing other cultures, openness-withholding judgment, curiosity and discovery), knowledge and comprehension (cultural self-awareness, cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic awareness), and skills (to listen, observe and evaluate, to analyze interpret and relate); as well as perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness. (Deardorff, 2017, para. 1)

Virtual Exchange

In the context of second language education, O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019) define virtual exchange (or telecollaboration) as «a pedagogical approach to bringing together groups of learners from different cultural contexts for extended periods of online intercultural collaboration and interaction» (p. 1.). This approach aims to develop learners' foreign language skills, digital literacies, and intercultural as it is integrated into educational programs (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2016).

Within the virtual exchange, Casañ-Pitarch et al., (2020) indicate that «through project-based and task-based approaches, teachers facilitate students working immersed in concrete situations with specific tools, with which they must communicate with each other, negotiating the meaning of their own language to achieve specific objectives» (p. 79).

Internationalization of Higher Education

Academic collaborations such as the COIL approach need to be understood within the context of the evolving concept of internationalization of higher education. de Wit (2019) points out that «“internationalization of higher education” as a concept and strategy is a recent phenomenon that has emerged over the last thirty years, driven by a dynamic combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales and stakeholders» (p.10). Altbach and Knight (2007) explained that globalization relates to the context of economic and academic trends of the 21st century while «internationalization included the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions —and even individuals— to cope with the global academic environment» (p. 290).

In the past two decades, one of the more prevalent definitions of «internationalization» found in the literature is that put forth by Jane Knight (2003), who defines the term as «... the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education» (p.2). That is, internationalization means including the international, intercultural and global dimensions to the substantive functions of higher education institutions: teaching, researching, and outreach.

In this context, de Wit et al. (2015) put forth an updated definition of Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) as the process of «integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society» (p. 29).

According to Knight and de Wit (2018) the term «...internationalization has become a very broad and varied concept,

including many new rationales, approaches, and strategies in different and constantly changing contexts» (p.2). In a critical review on internationalization in higher education, de Wit (2019) argues that in recent years, there has been a shift in paradigm since

rapid changes are taking place in international higher education, which only have increased in range and complexity over the past decade. Key changes in higher education globally are its massification, the global knowledge economy, and the emphasis on reputation and rankings. (de Wit, 2019, p. 10)

Internationalization of the Curriculum

In this study, we subscribe to Leask's (2015) definition of *internationalization of the curriculum*, which refers to «the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study» (p.9).

Leask (2015) indicates that internationalizing the curriculum should aim «...to facilitate the development in all students of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will equip them, as graduates, professionals, and citizens of the world to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected global society» (Leask, 2015, p.12).

METHOD

This study was designed following the qualitative-interpretative research methodology. The term interpretive is useful since

(a) it is more inclusive than many of the others (e.g., ethnography, case study); it avoids the connotation of defining these approaches as essentially nonquantitative (a connotation

that is carried by the term qualitative), since quantification of particular sorts can often be employed in the work; and (c) it points to the key feature of family resemblance among the various approaches- central research interest in human meaning in social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher. (Erickson, 1986, p. 119)

Erickson (1985) indicates that research procedures require

(a) intensive, long-term participation in a field setting; (b) careful recording of what happens in the setting by writing field notes and collecting other kinds of documentary evidence (e.g. memos, records, examples of student work, audiotapes, videotapes); (c) subsequent analytic reflection on the documentary record obtained in the field; and (d) reporting by means of detailed description using narrative vignettes and direct quotes from interviews as well as by more general description in the form of analytic charts, summary tables, and descriptive statistics. (Erickson, 1985, p. 6)

Project: The COIL English Writing Class Project

Three professors and forty students of two public state universities members of the COIL Global Partner Network —University of Washington (UW) at Tacoma (USA) and the Universidad Veracruzana (UV) at Veracruz City (México)— collaborated on an online/web-based project that lasted six weeks.

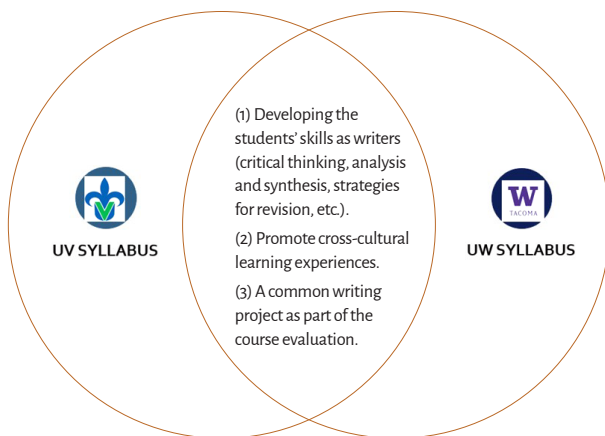
The students were distributed into two courses: one course co-taught by two Mexican instructors to twenty Mexican students enrolled at UV while the other course was taught by an American instructor to twenty students enrolled at UW. The courses differed in some aspects of their content since the Mexican course was an English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

course whereas the US group was a college-level Introduction to Academic English Writing course. However, both courses included the development of writing skills in English, as well as critical thinking and the discussion of social issues through writing. As a result, the Mexican and the American professors each developed their own syllabi but they joined their courses by sharing a common writing project that was part of each of the courses' final grading criteria (see The SUNY COIL Center, 2019) on course development).

The theme of the project was *language, community and social change*. The objectives of the courses were: (1) developing the students' skills as writers (critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, strategies for revision, etc.); and (2) to promoting cross-cultural learning experiences between students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) approach.

The negotiation of the writing project on the part of the professors within the COIL methodology, including the content, scope and evaluation criteria, was successful since the three of them sought to help students find and develop their voice in through their writing. Whether it be a personal, professional, or academic voice, the professors agreed that today students must learn to navigate within various contexts, both local and global and that the COIL approach was one effective way to achieve their pedagogical goals (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Two courses linked by common goals and grading criteria.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2. Description of the course and themes for the COIL project.

Brief Course Description:

This course in **academic writing** focuses on developing your skills as a writer in some key areas through the theme of Stories, Community, and Social Change. Throughout the quarter, you will be putting into practice skills such as: 1) critical thinking; 3) analysis and synthesis of readings; 4) rhetorical awareness; and 5) strategies for revision.

Course Theme: Stories, Community, and Social Change

Everyone has a story about who they are and how they relate to the community in which they live. Not everyone has an equal voice, however—some stories remain untold and unheard. **This is a problem.** Our big question this quarter is "How can stories, that aspect of our lives that we all share and yet we take for granted, be used to generate positive and empowering change in our communities?" This question will drive class discussions, and will provide the starting place for your writing. You will be reading a variety of texts around this theme, including a book about creative thinking (see the next paragraph), as well as several real-life stories that illustrate themes of agency, persistence, and compassion and scholarly articles about the phenomenal power that stories have to create empathy and build community.

- Paper #1, Literacy Narrative: 700 words, 15% (approximately 2 pages typed and double-spaced, 12-point font). See Canvas/Unit 3 for complete guidelines. We will be partnering with a class from Mexico on this assignment. You will be sharing your stories with these students and they will be sharing their stories with you. Part of this assignment, then, requires you to write a reflective response to your Mexican counterpart. In the revised draft of your paper, you will need to refer to their story, relating it to your own in some way—either as a contrast to your own experience, or as a parallel to your experience.

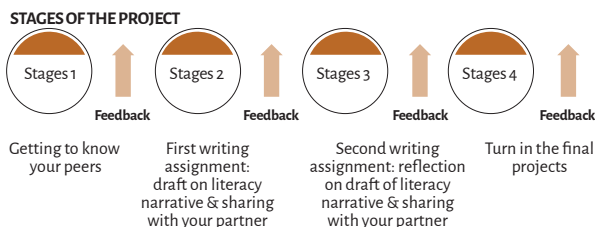
Source: own elaboration.

The phases of the Project: The project was comprised by the following stages (see Figure 3):

1. Getting to know your peer: the students were randomly paired (one student from UV and one from UW). Then, they were asked to introduce each other in order to get acquainted before they worked on their projects (see Figures 4 and 5 for examples of this stage).
2. First writing assignment: students were given the specifications and instructions to generate a draft on the topic they selected for their literacy narrative. Then, they were instructed to share their stories with their American or Mexican counterparts to receive each other's feedback on their narrative.
3. Second writing assignment: the students exchanged a reflection-writing piece to the literacy narrative life stories shared by their Mexican or American counterpart as a response to the first assignment.
4. Turn in the project: after a revision and feedback phase, the students were asked to turn in their final projects.

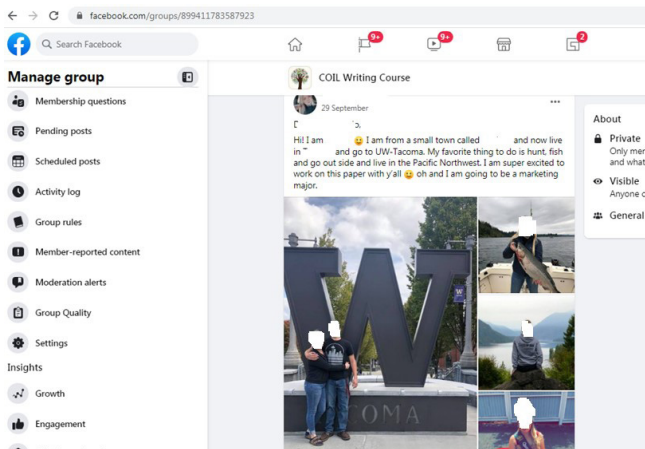
The project consisted of four stages each lasting one week but the whole project lasted six weeks since two weeks were added so that students and teachers could provide feedback on the final assignment and about the project itself.

Figure 3. Stages of the COIL writing project.



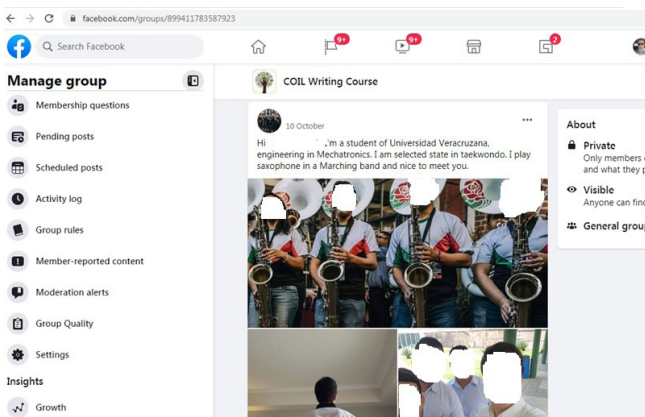
Source: own elaboration.

Figure 4. Example of stage 1 in the COIL writing project – US Student.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 5. Example of stage 1 in the COIL writing project – Mexico Student.



Source: own elaboration.

The Medium of Interaction: The following online tools were used in the project to prompt interaction (see Figures 6 and 7):

Facebook closed group. A Facebook group was created for the students to complete stage number one described above. Using a Facebook group allowed the students to interact and get to know their peers. On the other hand, the Facebook group allowed the professors to control the students' interactions by setting rules for the group. It also allowed for the monitoring of the students' participation during the activities.

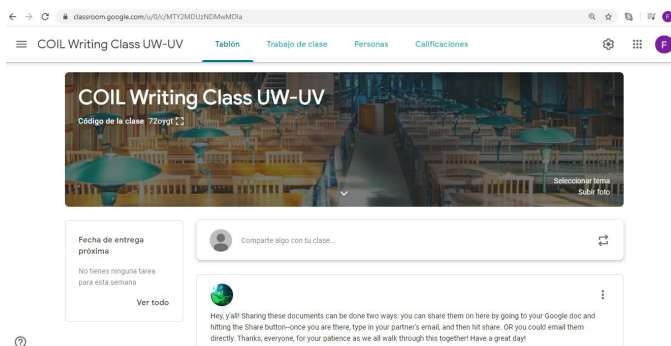
Google classroom: This free online platform allowed students to have access to a shared medium of instruction where instructions and assignments were uploaded, as well as uploading their work for sharing and revising. In addition, it allowed the professors to monitor the students' progress, provide feedback and it allowed the students to submit the assignments described in stages two, three and four in the previous section.

Figure 6. Closed Facebook group as the medium of interaction.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 7. Free online platform as an instructional tool for the COIL Project.



Source: own elaboration.

Selection of the Participants in the Study

The Professors/Facilitators: The three professors who participated in the study signed up voluntarily for an open invitation by their universities for those instructors who were interested in collaborating under the COIL methodology. The call for participation required potential candidates to be proficient in using technology and be familiar with the COIL approach and online or blended learning modalities. The professors who participated were selected by the COIL coordinators at their universities and then put in contact with each other to establish the collaboration.

The American professor is an English literature and writing professor working on the University of Washington's Writing Program. The professor holds a Ph.D. in Modern British Literature and Critical Theory and works on a number of topics, ranging from pedagogy to interdisciplinary connections between literature and music.

The two professors at the Universidad Veracruzana teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at the Language Center of the University; both hold graduate degrees; one of them holds a Master's degree in English Language Teaching the other one holds a Ph.D. in Language and Literacy from an American State University.

The Students: Twenty students, who were purposefully selected by their professors, comprised the Mexico group. That is, in order to participate in the collaboration with their US partners, the students had to be enrolled in an upper-intermediate or advanced English as a Foreign course so that their English language proficiency be within the B1 threshold level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (350-450 hrs. of instruction approx.). This criterion was established to ensure that the collaboration with their US peers could be realized using the English language as the medium of instruction. The students also had to show a positive attitude for engaging in cross-cultural activities and be familiar with online and blended learning modalities.

The Mexican students' age ranged from 21 to 25 years old, although there were two students over 50 years old. Seventeen of those participants were college students and three participants were enrolled at the language center as external students taking English courses as part of the university's outreach program. In this group, nine students were female and eleven were male.

The US group was comprised of twenty college students, who were also purposefully selected by their professor. In this case, the students had been enrolled in an English course focused on academic writing, be willing to engage in cross-cultural activities with students from a Mexican university, be familiar with online and blended learning modalities. The students' age

ranged from 18 to 25 years old and nine students were female while eleven were male.

Data Collection

Observations and field notes were implemented throughout the duration of the project (six weeks). Students were observed in-class as well as in some online sessions in which they interacted with their peers. Then, semi-structured in-depth interviews (see Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) were conducted during and after the implementation of the project. Twelve student participants provided data regarding their perspectives and experiences participating in the COIL project. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Finally, writing samples generated during the writing assignments were purposefully selected for analysis as a triangulation strategy to verify data that emerged during interviews (Erickson, 1986; Gibbs, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was done using a content approach to qualitative data analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Erickson, 1986; Gibbs, 2018). Data generated from interviews, writing samples and observations was coded and categorized. Based on this analytic process, themes were identified, which led to the construction of assertions.

Three assertions emerged from the data, and in order to verify their truth value, they were constantly tested against the data corpus. The data management and analysis were realized with the assistance of a qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti). The use of the software allowed for the systematic organization data for coding, categorizing, and constructing assertions involved in qualitative data analysis.

RESULTS

This study sought to investigate (1) the types of cross-cultural learning experiences that were prompted through a writing project in English in a COIL learning environment; (2) how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence; and (3) the implications of the cross-cultural learning experiences prompted through the implementation of a COIL project for the English language learners' group. In order to contextualize the results in this study, a display of data is presented in the following section. Then, the results are laid out.

Data Display

Types of Cross-Cultural Experiences: With respect to the types of cross-cultural experiences, three main themes emerged during the students' interactions and reflection activities. Those themes were: experiences related to language, experiences related to cultural understanding, and common life experiences the students shared.

Experiences related to language. In terms of experiences related to language, data indicated that students engaged in conversations and reflection on what it means to learn a foreign language. Further, as students reflected, they acknowledged the fact that mastering English may determine real-life opportunities for young people in the US and other countries; and this fact may have an impact in their future. For example, a US *student* provided the following response to his Mexican peer's writing assignment:

Your story made me think a lot about the process that people from other cultures go through to learn English, it's a tricky language to learn since its conventions are very unique compared to Spanish which is similar to a lot of Latin-based languages. For me learning Spanish was difficult and I gave up though recently I have found the passion to try and relearn Spanish

because it's a really important part of my culture and family values. I feel like your essay has helped contribute to that passion, your perseverance with English is something I look up too.

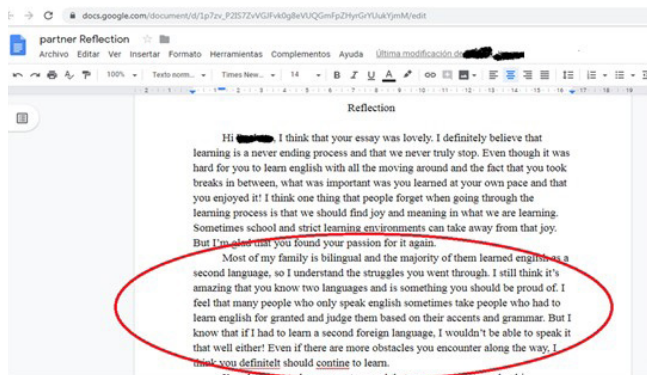
Similarly, another US student provided the following feedback to her Mexican peer's writing piece:

Your story touched me in a sense that I can heavily relate to. I became emotional reading your narrative because I struggle in the opposite way you do with Spanish. I've been studying Spanish for 5 years now and I'm very passionate about it...I understand the language very well but speaking it in the proper grammatical way and writing are my struggles... I think that learning a new language is very difficult and, in your story, you acknowledged this. That was a great way to connect with the reader emotionally and putting the language barrier struggle in perspective.

Another instance of the US students' perspective about language is portrayed in Figure 8. In this particular instance, the US student sympathized with her Mexican peer since most of her family members were born in the US and were English speakers but their first language was not English. Therefore, she perceived them as being English learners who became bilinguals. Furthermore, the US student reflected on and acknowledged the fact that mastering English may determine real-life opportunities for young people. In an interview, she concluded that

Both my partner and I were lucky to have someone to teach us another language since we were little, because in real life there are many families who already know how to speak more than one language...And in conclusion [we] both agree that learning [another] language open[s] new doors to greater opportunities in life.

Figure 8. A sample of a reflection assignment by a UW student.

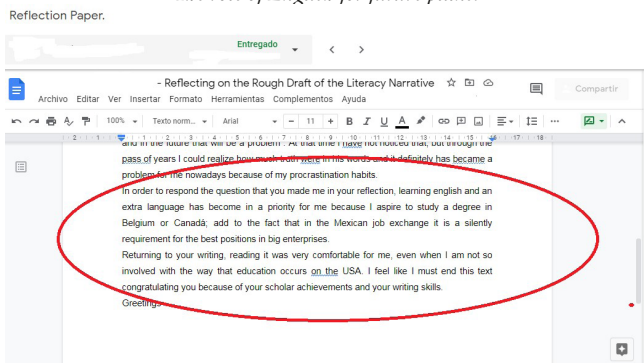


Source: own elaboration.

A student in the Mexico group highlighted the crucial role that learning English as a foreign language has in her future professional goals and aspirations (see Figure 9). This is shown in the following reflecting statement in response to her US peer:

In order to respond the question that you made me in your reflection, learning [E]nglish and an extra language has become in a priority for me because I aspire to study a degree in Belgium or Canadá; add to the fact that in the Mexican job exchange it is a silently requirement for the best positions in big enterprises. Returning to your writing, reading it was very comfortable for me, even when I am not so involved with the way that education occurs [in] the USA. I feel like I must end this text congratulating you because of your scholar achievements and your writing skills.

Figure 9. A reflection assignment by a UV student –
The role of English for future plans.



Source: own elaboration.

From the perspective of the students of the Mexico group as English language learners, data revealed that the COIL project provided opportunities to practice their English with *a real audience for real communication*. Thus, for the Mexico group, collaborating with their US implied opportunities to communicate in the language they were learning outside what they perceived as *textbook language*. During interviews two students stated the following:

Este proyecto fue una muy buena experiencia para mí. Me ayudo a practicar el idioma, conocer un poco más el estilo de vida de los estudiantes de Washington, perder el miedo a escribir y hablar en inglés, ya que muchas veces es lo que nos impide comunicarnos.

[This project was a good experience for me. It helped me practice the language, know more about the life style of the students from Washington, not to be afraid of writing and talking in English because many times that is what impedes communication].

Este tipo de proyectos son una gran oportunidad para nosotros como estudiantes de interactuar con la realidad y no solo quedarnos con lo que aprendemos en un libro, nos ayuda a saber cuánto potencial tenemos, nuestras debilidades y hasta donde podemos llegar personal y profesionalmente con solo saber un idioma más.

[This type of projects are a great opportunity for us as students to interact with reality and not only learn from the book, it helps us to know our potential, our skills and how far we can get personally and professionally just because we know another language].

Moreover, the students in the Mexico Group considered that the online collaboration provided opportunities for them to have access and interactions with students who they perceived as *native speakers*, which they considered beneficial for language practice. During an interview, a student pointed out:

Yo veía el inglés todo muy técnico, fue de como ver otra perspectiva es el inglés fluido desde la lengua materna de una persona; porque no es lo mismo practicar el inglés pues con una persona que también lo aprendió igual que tú o lo está aprendiendo igual que tú, o sea también la cultura, o sea por ejemplo, sobre cómo hacer preguntas a ciertas cosas, como hablar de ciertos temas que aquí lo vemos pues de una forma muy natural y ellos no, así como que otra perspectiva.

[I used to look at English from a technical point of view, it was like taking a look to a different perspective about [learning] the English language, like fluency of a person whose English is his/her first language; it is not the same to practice English with a person who learned the same way you did or who is learning the same way as you are, that is, the culture as well. For example, [we must think about] how to talk about certain

topics that we consider a natural occurrence but they do not, like having a different perspective].

Another student from the Mexican group emphasized the importance of having access to different discourse types in a foreign language through native speakers. In her reflection assignment the students provided the following statement in response to her US peer:

Reading your text was very interesting. The variety of languages in language is very large, learning how to speak depending on the situation and the people you interact with is complex, especially when the language you speak is not your native language...Speaking and writing differently is very important, it is like compar[ing] the way a lawyer talks to his jury and how a kindergarten teacher talks to his students. The multiple variet[ies] of words that exist in a language is amazing. The way you tell your story since you are a native speaker helped me a lot to understand what you were trying to say, maybe because you did it as if you were telling a friend...

Experiences related to cultural understanding. Data suggested that most of the students in both the US and the Mexico groups valued collaborating with one another. As they engaged in communication, most of the students became aware of some cultural aspects that encouraged interaction (and others that could potentially hamper it) between them. Specifically, data revealed attitudes and values that students from both groups considered important (e.g., respect for cultural differences, respect for views and values on certain topics for discussion, the importance of being polite when interacting, etc.). For instance, during an interview a US student mentioned that

in terms of the cultural aspect, we have to be very careful with what we write because there can be a cultural shock if we say something in the wrong way, which can be misunderstood and it is then when problems may arise, but in general, it was a great learning experience.

Likewise, a Mexico group student stated:

Me gustaría volver a trabajar con ellos [con estudiantes de Estados Unidos] porque lo más importante es que debemos aprender a tratar con ellos, porque ante todo el respeto, hay que ser tolerantes y pues tener cierto cuidado, porque si es importante aprender a convivir con otra cultura.

[I would like to work again with them [US students] because the most important thing is that we are able to learn how to treat them because first of all there should be respect, one should be tolerant and be careful to a certain extent because it is important to learn how to live with other culture...].

In a similar fashion, a Mexican student expressed:

...[Es también importante aprender] la cultura, o sea por ejemplo, sobre cómo hacer preguntas a ciertas cosas, como hablar de ciertos temas que aquí lo vemos pues de una forma muy natural y ellos no; así como que tener otra perspectiva.

[...It is also important to learn about the culture, for example, about how to ask questions about certain issues, like talking about certain topics that here [in Mexico] we consider as a very natural occurrence, unlike them; it is just like having a different perspective].

Additionally, data from interviews made evident that students exhibited aspects related to cultural self-awareness, perspective-taking, and empathy as it relates to *other people's realities*. For example, a student from the US group mentioned that

Sharing stories with someone from a different part of the world is essential to global social justice: in order to have a realistic view of the world one needs to learn to be aware of different people's stories. It is absolutely necessary for social change and understanding.

A different US student mentioned

I felt that we were able make a connection, even though we were so far from one another. [My partner's] story enabled me to think about stories on a global scale, and how they should transcend mere languages and borders.

Correspondingly, a student from the Mexico group indicated that she was able to reflect and somewhat challenge the preconceptions she had about her US partner. The student indicated that

...y en cuanto a su cultura, normalmente nosotros tenemos una cierta opinión sobre ellos pero yo pude conocer un poco más al menos de ella, de la ciudad de donde ella es, de sus tradiciones, y algunas otras cosas interesantes...

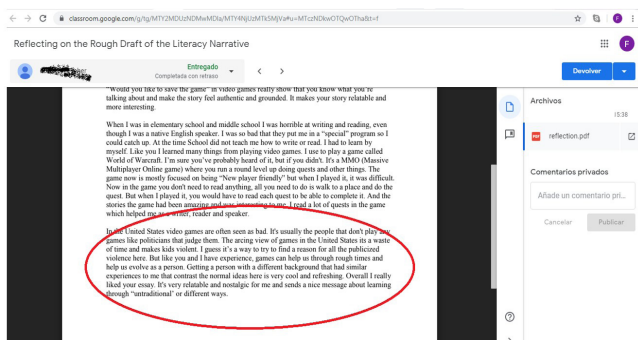
[...about their culture, usually we (Mexican students) have certain opinions about them (US students) but I was able to get to know a little more about her, about her city, about her traditions, and other interesting things ...].

Common life experiences. Data from interviews and writing assignments illustrated that both the US and Mexico groups found some commonalities between them. Some students indicated that they felt a sense of interconnectedness, as they shared some

personal interests. A US student pointed out that «it was cool seeing what my partner's life [was] like and I learned we have a lot in common». As shown in Figure 10, the student's writing assignment exemplifies his affirmation as it relates to an interest in videogames:

In the United States, video games are often seen as bad. It's usually the people that don't play any games like politicians that judge them. The view of games in the United States «it's a waste of time and makes kids violent». I guess it's a way to try to find a reason for all the publicized violence here. But like you and I have experienced, games can help us through rough times and help us evolve as a person. Getting a person with a different background that had similar experiences to me that contrast the normal ideas here is very cool and refreshing. Overall I really liked your essay. It is very relatable and nostalgic for me and sends a nice message about learning through «untraditional» or different ways.

Figure 10. Reflection piece by a UW student on life experience's theme.



Source: own elaboration.

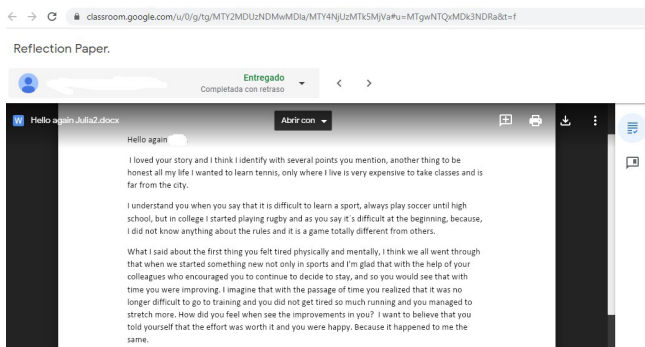
In a similar manner, a student from the Mexico group revealed that she related to her US peer since they overcame similar personal situations, specifically when it came to public speaking. During an interview, a student from the Mexico group described a personal struggle her US peer experienced:

Her main obstacle, so to speak, was public speaking, she was afraid of talking in public; however, she decided to overcome that fear and she would participate and speak in public in each event that took place in her town. She told me that even though she was afraid and all that but she held her fears back and was able to speak. I identify with her because I have had to talk in public and I understand how difficult that is; you get very nervous and all that but you still have to overcome that situation, and that is why I identify with her.¹

Along the same lines, Figure 11 elucidated the sharing of personal interests by students in US and Mexico groups. The text reveals that in this case, both students shared similar experiences as it relates to practicing sports. The reflection by the Mexican student suggests the importance of discipline, putting effort into what you do, and the importance of one friend's support.

1 Own translation. The original says: «Su principal obstáculo por así decirlo era hablar en público, tenía miedo de hablar en público, pero pues ella se planteó a qué tenía que superarlo y en cada evento que había en su ciudad ella subía a hablar en público. Aunque me platica que sí tenía miedo y todo eso, pero que pues si aguantaba y lograba hablar. Yo me identifico con ella, porque igual muchas veces he tenido que hablar en público y sé lo complicado que es; dan muchos nervios y todo, pero pues igual tenemos que superarlo, por eso me identifico.»

Figure 11. Reflection piece by a UV student on life experience's theme.



Source: own elaboration.

The COIL pedagogical approach fostered cross-cultural learning experiences typified in three main themes: language learning, cultural understanding, and common life experiences the students shared. The implementation of writing activities on themes that promoted reflection and collaboration between two groups of students linguistically and culturally different in a COIL environment were conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence, which confirmed the expected outcomes underpinning the study.

The data displayed in the previous section made evident that the students exhibited traits of a set of attitudes, knowledge and skills (such as using a foreign language) that facilitated effective communication with their international peers despite their cultural and linguistic differences; that is what Lonner (2013) defines as cultural competence. In the same way, the analysis of data from interviews and the products derived from the instructional activities that comprised the project (e.g., reflective writing assignments, excerpts, and interaction in the social network) revealed that the participant students displayed traits

of what Deardorff (2006, 2017) identifies as core dimensions of cross-cultural competence. Those dimensions include: respect for others, valuing other cultures, openness, curiosity, cultural self-awareness, as well as perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness.

Regarding the implications for foreign language learning, results indicate that for the language learners' group, collaborating with their US peers allow them to practice using English in a context different from *textbook language* they use in their classes. Further, results indicate that the students experienced some socio-cultural aspects of language learning that are important for language learning and communication. Finally, data suggests that the students in this group viewed the COIL project as a means to have access to people who they perceive as native speakers of English.

Overall, the findings presented in this section align with other studies as they relate to recent research themes and trends found in the literature. Those research trends related to the investigation of the participants' overall views on their telecollaborative experiences, language learning through telecollaboration, intercultural learning through telecollaboration, challenges of telecollaboration, and related studies in which aspects of foreign language learning played a central role (see Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018; Çiftçi and Savaş, 2018; de Castro et al., 2018; O'Dowd, 2016).

DISCUSSION

Godwin-Jones (2019) points out that in order to advance the field of telecollaboration (also referred to as virtual collaboration, or online collaboration) toward new opportunities, the goal should be to both models and encourage deeper reflection, with both teachers and learners provided with «longitudinal,

ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities» (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018, p. 291). Godwin-Jones (2019) also explains that constructs such as the development of cultural competence have been measured using standard evaluation criteria through quantitative instruments; he also highlights some criticism on the prevalent model. On the contrary, qualitative measures, which are also widely used, may provide a deeper understanding of the constructs under investigation.

Drawing from these perspectives and from a qualitative stance, this study provided insight into the importance of generating cross-cultural experiences for university students. Through writing and reflection as central elements, the participants had the opportunity to think about the similarities and differences that people from particular social contexts have. In so doing, they challenged their assumptions and perceptions about their international peers. Focusing on reflection, the students exhibited some dimensions of cross-cultural competence (positive attitudes, respect, openness, curiosity, self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness), which facilitated effective interactions with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This study also elucidated that using approaches such as COIL to prompt cross-cultural experiences has implications for foreign language learning. The COIL writing project structured opportunities for the group of English language learners to interact with «a real audience» for «real communication». That is, collaborating with their US peers allowed the students to (1) try a type of language learning different from «textbook language»; (2) communicate meaningfully and express their interests as young people; (3) negotiate new meanings, which entailed learning about the English language itself, as well as some socio-cultural aspects that are crucial for language learning

and communication (see Gibbons, 2009); and (4) have access to people who they perceive as native speakers, which represented opportunities to practice their English language skills.

In terms of the instructional design (writing assignments, tasks, learning outcomes, etc.) implemented by the professors, it proved to be pertinent to achieve the objectives of both the project and the study. These activities align with Belz (2007), who suggests the analysis of student work should include the interpretation of second language texts, events, behaviors, storylines, the use of artifacts and transcripts, and other type of data (even emotional responses) for looking into the development of intercultural competence. In the same fashion, Helm (2015) suggests the use of data from student essays, journals, blog entries, transcripts, or portfolios for assessment.

Concerning Internationalization as a policy for Higher Education, the implementation of this project provided an example of how two public universities structured opportunities for students to have access to international learning experiences. These collaborations are important for students to develop cross-cultural, linguistic and technological competencies they need. In addition, this type of support may provide an alternative for a larger number of students to access international learning experiences when international mobility is not an option (see de Wit & Leask, 2019; Rubin, 2017).

Limitations of the study were also identified, particularly in relation to technology tools used in the project. Few students considered that using a social network (Facebook) and an online platform (Google Classroom) was somewhat original. However, they found that the online platform was somewhat unfriendly and not as easy to navigate. Moreover, few students were not users of the social network used in the project (Facebook), or did not use social networks at all for different reasons. So,

the interaction with their international peers was based only on their writing assignments they shared through the Google classroom platform.

CONCLUSIONS

This study gave insight into an online international collaboration that was conducive to the development of some aspects of cross-cultural competence, which university students need in a globalized world. It also illustrated how those aspects may be developed based on the implementation of specific writing and reflection activities pairing a group of English as foreign language students, and a group of students whose primary language is English; this arrangement highlighted implications for foreign language learning.

The study aligned with others cited in the literature as it relates to strategies and actions that higher education institutions structure as part of their Internationalization policies, such as virtual exchange, cross-cultural learning, foreign language learning, internationalization of the curriculum, and pedagogical practices that are when face-to-face interaction is not possible.

Limitations associated with the selection of the technological tools (the online platform), assumptions about the participants' technology literacy skills, and assumptions about the students' use of social networks were identified. Finally, we emphasize that further research incorporating longitudinal designs and ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities (Godwin-Jones, 2019) to investigate issues discussed in the present study is needed. With reference to foreign language learning, further studies should focus on the development of specific linguistic features and language skills in collaborative online environments with an international scope.

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Análisis contrastivo (español/inglés) de la transitividad en «Continuidad de los Parques» de Julio Cortázar*

Contrastive Analysis (Spanish/English) of the Transitivity in Julio Cortázar's «Continuidad de los Parques»

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RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta un análisis contrastivo entre un fragmento del cuento «Continuidad de los Parques» de Julio Cortázar y la traducción al inglés realizada por Paul Blackburn para evaluar cómo se configuran los significados experienciales, circunscriptos en el enfoque tripartito de la gramática sistémico-funcional. La exploración de tales significados está comprendida dentro del sistema de la transitividad, que implica la elección de distintos tipos de procesos y de los participantes involucrados, bajo ciertas circunstancias. Los resultados arrojan luz sobre cómo el personaje principal percibe la presunta realidad que lo rodea y cómo se representan sus cambios de rol tanto en el fragmento de la lengua origen como en el de la lengua meta. A modo de conclusión, la comparación de la transitividad nos permite indagar sobre los recursos que el traductor utiliza para plasmar la sutileza y la precisión del estilo *cortazariano*. Pese a algunas divergencias, la traducción del fragmento retrata cabalmente la caracterización y la articulación de los contextos ficcionales del extracto original. Por último, es menester destacar que el presente análisis permitiría aventurar otros estudios de mayor alcance y también hacernos reflexionar sobre la importancia del análisis de la transitividad en otros campos, como el de la traductología y el de la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: *análisis contrastivo, «Continuidad de los Parques», gramática sistémico-funcional, significados experienciales, sistema de la transitividad.*

ABSTRACT

This article introduces a contrastive analysis between a fragment of Julio Cortázar's «Continuidad de los Parques» and the English translation done by Paul Blackburn to evaluate the configuration of experiential meanings, circumscribed in the tripartite approach in systemic functional grammar. The exploration of such meanings is comprised within the system of transitivity, which deals with the selection of different processes and the participants involved under certain circumstances. The results throw light on how the protagonist perceives his presumed surrounding reality as well as how his role changes are represented in both the source language text and the target language one. To conclude, the comparison of transitivity allows us to delve into how the translator chooses to materialize the subtlety and precision of Cortázar's style. Despite some divergences, the translation of the excerpt thoroughly depicts the characterization and articulation of the fictional contexts depicted in the original extract. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the present analysis would give rise to larger research studies in the same line, and would also make us reflect upon the importance of the analysis of transitivity in other fields, such as traductology and the training of foreign language teachers.

Keywords: «*Continuidad de los Parques*», *contrastive analysis*, *experiential meanings*, *system of transitivity*, *Systemic Functional Grammar*.

ESTE ARTÍCULO PRESENTA UN ANÁLISIS contrastivo —desde la perspectiva sistémico-funcional— de los significados experienciales entre un fragmento del cuento «Continuidad de los Parques» de Julio Cortázar (1996)¹ y su equivalente al inglés en la traducción de Paul Blackburn de *Blow up and other books* (Cortázar, 1967). Motiva la investigación el interés por comprender, en primer lugar, cuáles son las opciones lingüísticas del texto original y cómo éstas se articulan para dar origen a la contextualización ficcional del cuento; en segundo lugar, el evaluar cómo Blackburn decide traducir tales elecciones al inglés, con el fin de preservar (o no) la ficción narrativa *cortazariana*. Laurence Venuti (2008) explica cómo en 1959 Blackburn logra convertirse en el «representante y agente literario» de Julio Cortázar a nivel mundial, exceptuando Alemania, Italia y países hispanohablantes. Además, comparte las múltiples críticas prestigiosas sobre la traducción, ampliamente relacionadas con la impronta poética y modernista de Paul Blackburn. Por consiguiente, la traducción podría plantearse desde un principio como una versión noble y cabal.

Destaco, a su vez, la motivación por realizar un aporte respecto del uso de la gramática sistémico-funcional como un marco teórico propicio y pertinente para el análisis del género literario, donde no abundan los estudios con este enfoque.²

1 Este cuento fue originalmente publicado en el año 1956.

2 Entre los aportes encontramos el análisis que ofrece Montemayor-Borsinger (2009) de la configuración de temas marcados y no marcados en fragmentos de Jorge Luis Borges y Gabriel García Márquez. También, la ponencia de Juan Cegarra (2012) sobre los aportes del análisis temático a la descripción del género cuento (donde «Continuidad de los Parques» forma parte del corpus). Por último, el texto de Cegarra (2015) donde expone el desarrollo de la proyección temática del cuento «Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos» de Jorge Luis Borges.

A raíz de lo anteriormente expuesto, se plantea como objetivo general la comparación del primer momento narrativo³, haciendo hincapié en el sistema de la transitividad, donde se codifican los significados experienciales: los tipos de procesos elegidos por Julio Cortázar, cómo el traductor realiza la transposición de estos al inglés, la cantidad de participantes involucrados en cada caso (conjuntamente con sus papeles de participación) y bajo qué circunstancias.

Para tal fin, el artículo se organiza en seis secciones, además de la introducción y de las referencias. Luego de la introducción, leeremos sobre la metodología empleada, el objetivo específico y las características más relevantes de la totalidad del cuento de Cortázar, que se consideran esenciales para comprender la ambientación del fragmento seleccionado (y, consecuentemente, para interpretar los resultados y conclusiones sobre la comparación de éste con su equivalente en lengua inglesa). A continuación, se enumerarán algunas generalidades sobre el sistema de transitividad. Por último, se presentarán los resultados, seguidos de las conclusiones.

METODOLOGÍA EMPLEADA Y OBJETIVO ESPECÍFICO

Se explorará la configuración de la transitividad en la totalidad de las cláusulas finitas de ambos fragmentos (tanto principales como secundarias) con el objetivo específico de determinar cómo la selección de determinados procesos alteraría (o no) la configuración de los personajes del cuento (el lector de la novela y los amantes) y las circunstancias específicas donde acontecen los hechos.

3 Este cuento consta de tres momentos narrativos, que se describen en la tercera sección. A lo largo del artículo las frases «momentos narrativos», «momentos o niveles del relato» se utilizan como sinónimos.

Se analizarán las cláusulas subordinadas no finitas en dos circunstancias: 1. Donde el proceso se manifieste a través de un verbo principal seguido de una cláusula de infinitivo completiva y 2. En los grupos verbales complejos, donde se suele focalizar en el segundo verbo para su clasificación como proceso y se analiza, a su vez, si los participantes en la posición de sujeto (tanto del primer como segundo proceso) son correferenciales. Para diferenciar una perífrasis verbal de un verbo conjugado que selecciona una cláusula completiva, se evaluará la función que cumple cada proceso considerando dos factores: 1. Su carga semántica y cómo ésta afecta el resto de los procesos y 2. El papel o rol del participante que ocupa la posición canónica de sujeto. Al respecto, se seguirán los lineamientos propuestos por Thompson (2014), descritos en «Acerca de los grupos verbales complejos: impacto sobre la transitividad» (p. 128). Una vez definida esta cuestión, se clasificará la totalidad de los participantes.

Por último, se crearán taxonomías (tipologías de procesos, participantes y circunstancias) en el análisis de cada cláusula para luego observar la posible reiteración o variación de las mismas. Este procedimiento, que se visualiza en las Figuras 1-16 y en las Tablas 1 y 2 respectivamente, propiciará una suerte de descripción preliminar de los personajes involucrados y las circunstancias en el primer momento del relato.

Características del corpus: sobre la trama narrativa y estructuración del relato en «Continuidad de los Parques»

«Continuidad de los Parques» pertenece al segundo libro de cuentos en el que Cortázar profundiza y humaniza el tratamiento de lo fantástico como muestra de una realidad que nos trasciende. Es el cuento más breve de los que haya escrito. Presenta —como tantos otros— una estructura particular, donde dos relatos se

entrelazan⁴ para generar un tercero, por lo que puede resultar complejo distinguirlos en una lectura inicial.

El primer momento comprende el mundo en el que habita el personaje principal de nuestro cuento, el lector de la novela. En este primer contexto, conocemos cómo es el estudio del protagonista, hacia dónde mira el sillón de terciopelo verde, y la necesidad de sumergirse en la lectura para olvidarse, probablemente, de sus preocupaciones cotidianas. Entra, casi mágicamente y sin proponérselo, en el mundo de ficción de la novela que está leyendo: «Palabra a palabra, absorbido por la sórdida disyuntiva de los héroes, dejándose ir hacia las imágenes que se concertaban y adquirirían color y movimiento, fue testigo del último encuentro en la cabaña del monte» (Cortázar, 1996, p. 291).

Esa expresión funciona como una suerte de bisagra, marcando la transición del primer al segundo momento. A continuación, los sucesos se desarrollan en la cabaña del monte. Aquí conocemos a los amantes, sus efusivos encuentros y la perplejidad de ambos al reconocer la figura de ese cuerpo intrusivo.

Esta intromisión del lector se torna no sólo molesta sino peligrosa para los amantes que elaborarán, finalmente, un plan para aniquilarlo:

Primero una sala azul, después una galería, una escalera alfombrada. En lo alto, dos puertas. Nadie en la primera habitación, nadie en la segunda. La puerta del salón; y entonces, el puñal en la mano. La luz de los ventanales, el alto respaldo de un sillón de terciopelo verde, la cabeza del hombre en el sillón leyendo una novela. (Cortázar, 1996, p. 292)

4 El fenómeno descrito guarda relación con la definición de *mise en abyme* (puesta en abismo) de Dällenbach (1991). En «Continuidad de los Parques» el relato especular se caracteriza por un reflejo intertextual (que refleja un relato dentro de otro).

En consecuencia, no sólo el lector será capaz de trascender en tiempo y espacio, sino también uno de los protagonistas de su novela —aquel que cometerá el asesinato. Los amantes se separan y corren a través del bosque; la mujer, hacia el norte. En dirección opuesta, el hombre. Finalmente, el amante distingue la arboleda que lo llevaría a la finca del lector, para cumplir con el mentado objetivo.

La oración «Los perros no debían ladrar, y no ladraron» (Cortázar, 1996, p. 292) marca el inicio de un tercer tiempo del relato, cuyo anclaje locativo coincide con el del primero (el estudio del lector).

GENERALIDADES SOBRE EL SISTEMA DE TRANSITIVIDAD

Halliday (1982) presenta tres dimensiones que nos permiten comprender cómo se configura el contexto de situación en el que se genera algún tipo de intercambio entre los participantes. Estas tres variables del contexto —campo, tenor y modo— determinan el registro, definido como el espectro en donde se seleccionan los significados⁵ y las formas que se utilizan para su expresión.

El tenor define tanto el contexto cultural como el de situación (aquel más específico, que se encuentra embebido en el primero). Brinda información acerca del «significado interpersonal»: quiénes participan y cómo estos se ven afectados por su nivel de familiaridad, poder, afecto (como variables posibles). Estas formas de relación se verán materializadas en el modo, que describe el «significado textual» (las funciones del lenguaje realizadas a través de las opciones léxico-gramaticales, en parte determinadas por el medio y el canal). El campo indica qué está sucediendo, de qué se está hablando o escribiendo; en otras

5 A estos significados también se los conocen como «metafunciones».

palabras, el evento, el tema/tópico de la interacción. Como parte de sus significados, hallamos el de tipo experiencial, que configura una posible representación o construcción de la realidad percibida por los interactuantes. A esta construcción la denominamos «experiencia», que se traduce a través del «sistema de la transitividad».

Según Eggins (2002), la lingüística sistémico-funcional comprende que el significado experiencial de la cláusula se realiza de manera simultánea con el significado interpersonal y la descripción del modo. Agrega que las opciones del sistema de transitividad (participantes, tipo de procesos y circunstancias) guardarán relación con las dimensiones del campo, la selección de los procesos y los papeles de los participantes, que se interpretan como realizaciones de la codificación de la experiencia que los interlocutores tienen de la realidad, comprendida como el mundo de las acciones, las relaciones, los participantes y las circunstancias que dan contenido a su discurso.

En lo que respecta al tipo de procesos, contamos con seis categorías básicas: *material, mental, verbal, conductual, existencial y relacional*.

Los *procesos materiales* presuponen la existencia de un actor, «la entidad que ejecuta algo, o se encarga de una determinada acción» (Eggins, 2002, p. 339). En algunos casos hay un solo participante involucrado y, en otras instancias, pueden ser más, lo que depende del tipo de proceso en cuestión, si son medios (o intransitivos) o efectivos (o transitivos)⁶.

6 Los participantes pueden ser explícitos o nulos de acuerdo con las características del sistema de desinencias de cada lengua. En inglés la flexión verbal es débil, por lo que exige la presencia explícita del sujeto. El español, en cambio, suele optar por el sujeto tácito dado que la desinencia del verbo propicia el reconocimiento de la identidad del sujeto nulo.

Los participantes más comunes en los procesos de las cláusulas materiales son el *actor* y el *objetivo*:

- (1) (Ellos) dejaron *su cena*.

En la oración (1), *su cena* es el objetivo. En lugar del objetivo, el participante a la derecha del proceso puede ser el *rango*, como es *la carrera* en el siguiente ejemplo:

- (2) (Ellos) corrieron *la carrera*.

El hablar de una «carrera» alude a la acción de correr; no existe una carrera donde no se corra. El rango, entonces, estaría implicado en el contenido semántico del proceso que lo selecciona como participante.

Además del actor y de los papeles ya mencionados, los procesos materiales pueden tener un participante beneficiario, como en (3), donde el sintagma preposicional a *mi hija* recibe el beneficio de la donación:

- (3) Le dieron sangre a *mi hija*.

Eggins (2002) agrega que los beneficiarios se dividen a su vez en *receptores* (aquellos a los que se les da algo) y *clientes* (aquellos para los cuales se hace algo).

Los *procesos mentales* expresan lo que se piensa, se siente, o se sabe. Entre estos procesos se encuentran los verbos de cognición, de afecto y percepción. En (4) los participantes involucrados son el *perceptor* (Ron) y el objeto denominado *fenómeno* (que debía volver):

- (4) Ron pensó que *debía volver*.

Los *verbales* son verbos de locución y permiten distinguir tres participantes: el *orador*, el *receptor*, y lo *dicho*. En (5) el orador es *Ron*; *la historia* es lo dicho; el receptor, a *su padre*:

(5) Ron le contó [*la historia*][*a su padre*]⁷.

Los *conductuales*, según Halliday (2014), son configuraciones intermedias entre los procesos materiales y los mentales. Si bien se expresan a través de acciones, como los procesos materiales, son siempre experimentados por un *ser consciente*. Son ejemplos de estos procesos los siguientes verbos: mirar, examinar, inspeccionar, sorber, reír, fruncir el ceño, sonreír, soñar, etc. Generalmente, tienen un solo participante (el que realiza la acción) llamado *conductualizador*. No obstante, hay casos en los que puede haber un segundo participante, que se denomina *fenómeno*, como en la oración (6), siendo *un café* el fenómeno en cuestión:

(6) Ron probó *el café*.

Cuando el segundo participante reafirma el proceso conductual, se le llama *conducta*; en (7) la conducta es *lágrimas de cocodrilo* (siempre se lloran lágrimas):

(7) Lloró *lágrimas de cocodrilo*.

Por último, existen los procesos *existenciales y relacionales*, que no denotan ningún tipo de acción, sino que están relacionados con la existencia de algo o con una forma de ser. Entre los primeros, contamos con las estructuras *there is/are* en lengua inglesa y con *haber*, su verbo impersonal equivalente en español, lengua que también puede utilizar el verbo *estar* para expresar el mismo significado, como en:

(8) There was a manuscript over there.

(9) Allí había un manuscrito tuyo. / Allí estaba tu manuscrito.

7 Si el segundo participante es una cláusula proyectada, se lo denomina «proyección».

En este tipo de procesos contamos con los participantes *existencial*, *existente* y comúnmente con una circunstancia que puede ser la locación. En (8) (*there*) *was* es el existencial, *a manuscript* es el existente y *over there*, la locación. En (9) *Allí* es la locación, *había* el existencial, y *un manuscrito*, el existente. En la segunda versión de (9), reemplazamos el existencial *había* por *estaba*, y mantenemos la locación y el existente.

Los relacionales distinguen dos categorías, los *atributivos* y los *identificativos*, que se subdividen a su vez en tres categorías cada una. A grandes rasgos, el primero le asigna un atributo a un participante, conocido como *portador*. En (10), nuestro portador es el sujeto tácito *Vos/Tú* y el atributo, *muy delgada*:

(10) (*Vos/Tú*) Estás *muy delgada*.

Los identificativos no clasifican, sino que definen la identidad del participante, que se conoce como *muestra*. En nuestro ejemplo, el segundo participante (*Ella*) es la muestra, y lo que la define, es el *valor* (mi hermana):

(11) *Ella* es mi *hermana*.

Por último, en la representación de la cláusula, además de los procesos y de los roles, se encuentran los circunstanciales, que se realizan por sintagmas preposicionales o por grupos adverbiales. Hay circunstanciales de extensión (relacionados con la duración de un evento o suceso y la distancia espacial implicada), locación (temporal y espacial), modo/manera, causa, contingencia (en qué circunstancias, condición y concesión), compañía, rol, materia (tópico tratado), manera, perspectiva/punto de vista⁸. Estos circunstanciales dejan visualizar características particulares

8 La traducción de las categorías es mía. Matthiessen et al. (1997, p. 104) las denominan *extent*, *location*, *manner*, *cause*, *contingency*, *accompaniment*, *role*, *matter* y *angle*.

de la realidad representada y cómo los distintos participantes la perciben.

ACERCA DE LOS GRUPOS VERBALES COMPLEJOS: IMPACTO SOBRE LA TRANSITIVIDAD

En este caso nos referiremos a aquellos grupos verbales complejos, donde se identifican al menos dos procesos. De acuerdo con Thompson (2014), es necesario evaluar qué función cumple cada uno de los procesos que conforman el grupo verbal.

El lingüista proporciona los siguientes ejemplos:

- a. This *tends to be* the mark of a rather literary style.
- b. Immediately, she *began to scream*.
- c. *Try turning* it the other way.

Posibles equivalentes en español⁹:

- a. (Esto) *tiende a ser* la marca de un estilo bastante literario.
- b. Inmediatamente, (ella) *comenzó a gritar*.
- c. *Intenta girarlo* al revés.

En los tres casos el verbo no finito es el que se clasifica como proceso («be» es relacional; «scream» es material y «turning» es material). La función del primer verbo es la de modificar el proceso, puesto que «tends to» ofrece información sobre la modalidad implicada (grado de frecuencia), «began» es un verbo aspectual, que indica el comienzo del proceso material, y «try» está relacionado con el posible resultado del proceso (intentar, triunfar, fracasar). Según Thompson (2014) puede resultar raro que el verbo estructuralmente dominante (por ser finito) sea, en realidad, subordinado semánticamente.

9 La traducción es mía.

Ahora bien, cuando el primer verbo acarrea una carga léxica mayor, se pueden contemplar dos cláusulas separadas. Esto sucede cuando el primer verbo es un proceso mental:

- d. I didn't *like* (to ask).
- e. He *decided* (to read history).
- f. He *wanted* (us to know)¹⁰.

Equivalentes en español:

- d. (Yo) No quise preguntar.
- e. (Él) *decidió* leer Historia.
- f. (Él) *quiso* que (nosotros) sepamos.

En estos casos, la diferencia es por demás clara cuando ambos procesos no seleccionan el mismo participante. Tal es el que de f) donde varía el perceptor seleccionado por cada proceso mental: «wanted» selecciona a «He» y «know» a «us». En los otros dos casos, el participante nulo seleccionado por «quise» y «decidió» está controlado por el participante que ocupa la posición canónica de sujeto (expreso o tácito).

Una perífrasis verbal es la unión de dos o más verbos que conforman un solo «núcleo» del predicado. El primer verbo, llamado «auxiliar», comporta las informaciones morfológicas de número y persona, y se conjuga en todas (o en parte de) las formas o tiempos de la conjugación. El segundo verbo, llamado «principal» o «auxiliado», debe aparecer en infinitivo, gerundio o participio, es decir, en una forma no personal. (Gómez Torrego, 2000, p. 3325)

¹⁰ Utilizo en el artículo la palabra «coindexado» como sinónimo de «controlado».

No son segmentables, por lo que las oraciones que las contienen no se definen como complejas, sino como simples. Los ejemplos de Gómez Torrego (2000) comparten las características de los de Thompson (2014). Contamos con perífrasis modales («deber de + infinitivo», «deber + infinitivo», «poder + infinitivo», etc.), aspectuales (algunos ejemplos, «empezar/comenzar a + infinitivo», «estar a punto de + infinitivo», «soler/acostumbrar + infinitivo», «dejar de + infinitivo», «para/cesar de + infinitivo», etc.), además de otras como «venir a + infinitivo», «llegar a + infinitivo», «acertar a + infinitivo», «tardar en + infinitivo», etc.

En cuanto a las oraciones en español d-f, al igual que en los ejemplos en inglés, también merecerían un análisis diferenciado. Para empezar, nótese que en el ejemplo f) el verbo «quiso» selecciona como complemento una cláusula subordinada, por lo tanto, ésta se analizaría por separado. En los dos casos anteriores, tampoco se observan perífrasis verbales sino complementos verbales realizados a través de cláusulas subordinadas de infinitivo completivas.

M. LLuisa Hernanz (2000) sostiene que el verbo que selecciona este tipo de complemento verbal es de carácter transitivo y selecciona un complemento único: aceptar, adorar, anhelar, ansiar, creer, decidir, desear, evitar, odiar, pretender, procurar, querer, sentir, soportar, temer, etc. Desde el punto de vista semántico, poseen como denominador común el referirse a actividades mentales y el participante nulo seleccionado está controlado por aquel correspondiente al primer proceso, como en «El presidente no soporta viajar en avión.» Aquí, «viajar en avión» es el complemento cuyo participante nulo está controlado por la expresión nominal «el presidente». Vale aclarar que los papeles de participación pueden variar. La expresión nominal es un perceptor y el participante nulo se caracteriza como actor («viajar» es un proceso material).

ANÁLISIS DE LOS FRAGMENTOS SELECCIONADOS: LA TRANSITIVIDAD EN EL PRIMER MOMENTO DEL RELATO

Fragmentos seleccionados

Fragmento original de Cortázar

Había empezado a leer la novela unos días antes. La abandonó por negocios urgentes, volvió a abrirla cuando regresaba en tren a la finca; se dejaba interesar lentamente por la trama, por el dibujo de los personajes. Esa tarde, después de escribir una carta a su apoderado y discutir con el mayordomo una cuestión de aparcerías volvió al libro en la tranquilidad del estudio que miraba hacia el parque de los robles. Arrellanado en su sillón favorito de espaldas a la puerta que lo hubiera molestado como una irritante posibilidad de intrusiones, dejó que su mano izquierda acariciara una y otra vez el terciopelo verde y se puso a leer los últimos capítulos. Su memoria retenía sin esfuerzo los nombres y las imágenes de los protagonistas; la ilusión novelesca lo ganó casi en seguida. Gozaba del placer casi perverso de irse desgajando línea a línea de lo que lo rodeaba, y sentir a la vez que su cabeza descansaba cómodamente en el terciopelo del alto respaldo, que los cigarrillos seguían al alcance de la mano, que más allá de los ventanales danzaba el aire del atardecer bajo los robles. Palabra a palabra, absorbido por la sórdida disyuntiva de los héroes, dejándose ir hacia las imágenes que se concertaban y adquirirían color y movimiento, fue testigo del último encuentro en la cabaña del monte. (Cortázar, 1996, p. 291)

Traducción de Paul Blackburn

He had begun to read the novel a few days before. He had put it down because of some urgent business conferences, opened it again on his way back to the estate by train; he

permitted himself a slowly growing interest in the plot, in the characterizations. That afternoon, after writing a letter giving his power of attorney and discussing a matter of joint ownership with the manager of the estate, he returned to the book in the tranquillity of his study which looked out upon the park with its oaks. Sprawled in his favorite armchair, its back toward the door—even the possibility of an intrusion would have irritated him, had he thought of it—he let his left hand caress repeatedly the green velvet upholstery and set to reading the final chapters. He remembered effortlessly the names and his mental image of the characters; the novel spread its glamour over him almost at once. He tasted the almost perverse pleasure of disengaging himself line by line from the things around him, and at the same time feeling his head rest comfortably on the green velvet of the chair with its high back, sensing that the cigarettes rested within reach of his hand, that beyond the great windows the air of afternoon danced under the oak trees in the park. Word by word, licked up by the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine, letting himself be absorbed to the point where the images settled down and took on color and movement, he was witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin. (Cortázar, 1967, p. 63)

Análisis contrastivo de la configuración de la transitividad

A continuación, en las Figuras 1-16, se comparte el análisis de transitividad en cada cláusula de ambos fragmentos¹¹.

¹¹ «P» significa «proceso»; «Circ», circunstancia.

Figura 1. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 1 en español.

(Él)	Había empezado a leer	la novela	unos días antes.
Actor	Grupo verbal complejo. P: leer (material)	Rango	Circ: Locación (temporal)

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 2. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 1 en inglés.*

He	had begun to read	the novel	a few days before.
Actor	Grupo verbal complejo. P: read (material)	Rango	Circ: Locación (temporal)

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 3. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 2, 3 y 4 en español.*

(Él)	La	abandonó	por negocios urgentes,
Actor	Objetivo	P: material	Circ: Causa
,			
(Él)	volvió a abrirla	cuando regresaba en tren a la finca;	
Actor	grupo verbal complejo. P: abrir (material) La: objetivo	Circ: Locación (temporal) P: regresaba (material). (él): actor Circ (manera): en tren Circ (locación, espacial): a la finca.	

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 4. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 2 y 3 en inglés.*

He	had put it down	because of some urgent business conferences	
Actor	P: put...down (material) It: objetivo	Circ: causa	
,			
(He)	opened	it	again
Actor	P: opened (material)	Objetivo	Circ: Extensión Circ: Extensión

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 5. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 5 y 6 en español.

(...)	se	dejaba	interesar	lentamente	por la trama, por el dibujo de los personajes.
(él)					
Actor	Beneficiario (receptor)	P: dejaba (material)	P: interesar (mental) (Participante nulo, coindexado con «se»: Perceptor)	Circ: manera	Circ: materia

Fuente: elaboración propia.

En este caso considero que «dejaba» es un proceso material porque significa «permitir» (si bien el sentido figurado expresa un proceso cognitivo, éste se construye a través de un proceso material, por lo que se constituye, según Thompson (2014, p.121) como una «metáfora muerta»). Por lo tanto, al poseer contenido léxico, «se dejaba interesar» no se considera un grupo verbal complejo (o perífrasis de infinitivo) sino un proceso que es seguido por una subordinada de infinitivo completiva.

Figura 6. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 4 en inglés.

(...)	permitted	himself	a slowly growing interest in the plot, in the characterizations.
he			
Actor	P: material	Beneficiario (receptor)	Objetivo

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 7. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 7 y 8 en español.

Esa tarde, después de ¹² escribir una carta a su apoderado y discutir con el mayordomo una cuestión de aparcerías.			
Circ: Locación (temporal).			
P: Escribir (material). Participante nulo coindexado con «(él)»: actor. Una carta: objetivo. A su apoderado: Beneficiario (receptor).			
P: Discutir (verbal). Participante nulo coindexado con «(él)»: orador.			
Con el mayordomo: Circ (compañía).			
Una cuestión de aparcerías: Dicho.			
(Él)	volvió	al libro	en la tranquilidad del
Actor	P: Volver	Circ: Locación	estudio que miraba hacia
	(material)	(espacial)	el parque de los robles
			Circ: Manera

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Aquí también nos encontramos con una cláusula subordinada que representa la circunstancia en la que se desarrolla la acción expresada por el proceso principal.

En la versión que sigue en inglés se analizan las formas no finitas aunque no conformen un grupo verbal complejo¹³ (para poder confrontarlas con sus equivalentes en español).

- 12 «Después» toma un valor conjuncional cuando está seguido de la preposición «de» o de la conjunción «que». La primera exige como régimen un nombre o un infinitivo, mientras que la segunda se emplea con régimen de verbo. Por lo expuesto, se analiza el infinitivo como proceso, que seleccionaría un primer participante nulo. Para más información, leer Martínez Amador, E. (1974, pp. 488-489).
- 13 De acuerdo con lo propuesto por Thompson (2014), expuesto aquí en la sección 3.

Figura 8. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 5 y 6 en inglés.

That afternoon, after writing a letter giving his power of attorney and discussing a matter of joint ownership with the manager of the estate, Circ: Locación (temporal) Configuración de la transitividad: P: Writing (material). Participante nulo coindexado con «(él)»: actor. A letter giving his power of attorney (objetivo). P: Discussing (verbal). Participante nulo coindexado con «(él)»: orador. A matter of joint ownership: Dicho. With the manager of the estate: Circ (compañía).			
he Actor	returned P: returned (material)	to the book Circ: locación especial)	in the tranquillity of his study which looked out upon the park with its oaks. Circ: Manera

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 9. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 9, 10 y 11 en español.

Arrellanado en su sillón favorito de espaldas a la puerta que lo hubiera molestado como una irritante posibilidad de intrusiones, Circ: Manera. Configuración de la transitividad: P: hubiera molestado (material). Que (antecedente; la puerta): Actor. lo: Objetivo. Como una irritante posibilidad de intrusiones: Circ (manera).					
(él) Actor	dejó P: material	Objetivo que su mano izquierda	acariciara	una y otra vez	el terciopelo verde
		Actor	P: material	Circ: extensión	Objetivo.
y					
(él) Actor.	se puso a leer Grupo verbal complejo) P: Leer (material).	los últimos capítulos. Objetivo			

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 10. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 7, 8 y 9 en inglés.

Sprawled in his favorite armchair, its back toward the door —even the possibility of an intrusion would have irritated him, had he thought of it—					
Circ: Manera.					
<u>Configuración de la transitividad:</u>					
P: had thought of (mental).					
He: preceptor.					
It: objetivo (hace alusión a «even the possibility of an intrusion would have irritated him»).					
P: irritated (material).					
The possibility of an intrusion: Actor.					
Him: Objetivo.					
he	let	Objetivo			
Actor	P: material	his left hand	caress	repeatedly	the green velvet uphstery
		Actor	P: material	Circ: Manera	Objetivo
and					
(he)	set to reading	the final chapters.			
Actor	Grupo verbal complejo	Objetivo			
	P: Reading (material)				

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 11. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 12 y 13 en español.*

Su memoria	retenía	sin esfuerzo	los nombres y las imágenes de	
Actor	P: material	Circ: manera	los protagonistas	
Objetivo				
;				
la ilusión novelesca	lo	ganó	casi en seguida.	
Actor	Objetivo	P: material	C: locación (temporal)	

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 12. Análisis de la transitividad de las cláusulas 10 y 11 en inglés.

He	remembered	effortlessly	the names and his mental image of the characters	
Perceptor	P: Mental	Circ: Manera	Objetivo	
;				
the novel	spread	its glamour	over him	almost at once.
Actor	P: material	Objetivo	Circ: Locación (espacial)	Circ: Manner

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 13. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 14 en español.*

(Él)	Gozaba	del placer casi perverso de irse desgajando línea a línea de lo que lo rodeaba, y sentir a la vez que su cabeza descansaba cómodamente en el terciopelo del alto respaldo, que los cigarrillos seguían al alcance de la mano, que más allá de los ventanales danzaba el aire del atardecer bajo los robles.
Perceptor	P: mental	Fenómeno

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 14. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 12 en inglés.*

He	tasted	the almost perverse pleasure of disengaging himself line by line from the things around him, and feeling at the same time feeling his head rest comfortably on the green velvet of the chair with its high back, sensing that the cigarettes rested within reach of his hand, that beyond the great windows the air of afternoon danced under the oak trees in the park.
Conductualizador	P: conductual	Fenómeno

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figura 15. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 15 en español.

Palabra a palabra, absorbido por la sórdida disyuntiva de los héroes, dejándose ir hacia las imágenes que se concertaban y adquirirían color y movimiento,	(él)	fue	testigo del último encuentro en la cabaña del bosque.
Circ: Manera	Muestra	P: relacional (Identificativo)	Valor

Fuente: elaboración propia.*Figura 16. Análisis de la transitividad de la cláusula 13 en inglés.*

Word by word, licked up by the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine, letting himself be absorbed to the point where the images settled down and took on color and movement	he	was	witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin.
Circ: Manera	Muestra	P: relacional (Identificativo)	Valor

Fuente: elaboración propia.

RESULTADOS

El análisis de la transitividad permite visualizar con claridad los tipos de procesos en ambas configuraciones textuales: la representación de cada cláusula, sus procesos y los papeles que tienen cada uno de los participantes tanto en el cuento original, como en su traducción, lo que permite comparar la representación de los mismos, además de circunstancias de este primer momento narrativo.

Como se muestra en la Tabla 1, el texto de Cortázar consta de quince cláusulas, con un total de diecisiete procesos: catorce materiales, dos mentales y un proceso relacional:

TABLA 1. Listado de procesos en «Continuidad de los parques».

Número de cláusula	Proceso	Clasificación
Cláusula 1	Leer	Material
Cláusula 2	Abandonó	Material
Cláusula 3	Abrir (en «volvió a abrirla»)	Material
Cláusula 4	Regresaba	Material
Cláusula 5	Dejar (en «se dejaba interesar»)	Material
Cláusula 6	Interesar (en «se dejaba interesar»)	Mental
Cláusula 7	Escribir, discutir	Material, Material
Cláusula 8	Volvió	Material
Cláusula 9	Hubiera molestado	Material
Cláusula 10	Dejó Acariciara	Material Material
Cláusula 11	Se puso a leer	Material
Cláusula 12	Retenía	Material
Cláusula 13	Lo ganó	Material
Cláusula 14	Gozaba	Mental
Cláusula 15	Fue	Relacional

Fuente: elaboración propia.

La Tabla 2 visualiza los datos arrojados sobre la traducción; ésta posee trece cláusulas, con un total de dieciséis procesos: doce materiales, dos mentales, un proceso conductual y otro relacional.

TABLA 2. Listado de procesos en «Continuity of Parks».

Número de cláusula	Proceso	Clasificación
Cláusula 1	Read	Material
Cláusula 2	Put down	Material
Cláusula 3	Opened	Material
Cláusula 4	Permitted	Material
Cláusula 5	Writing, discussing	Material, Material
Cláusula 6	Returned	Material
Cláusula 7	Would have irritated Had Thought	Material Mental
Cláusula 8	Let caress	Material Material
Cláusula 9	Reading (en «set to Reading»)	Material
Cláusula 10	Remembered	Mental
Cláusula 11	Spread	Material
Cláusula 12	Tasted	Conductual
Cláusula 13	Was	Relacional

Fuente: elaboración propia.

El análisis contrastivo arroja algunos cambios respecto de los participantes. De la totalidad de los personajes secundarios de Cortázar, Blackburn incorpora a uno solo en la quinta cláusula, como se muestra en la Figura 8 («the manager of the state»), en lugar de los dos originales («su apoderado y el mayordomo», séptima cláusula, Figura 7). El traductor no menciona al apoderado de manera explícita, aunque su participación se

podría inferir a través del bloque nominal «a letter giving his power of attorney» (quinta cláusula, Figura 8), que significa «carta poder». Esta eliminación, en consecuencia, no modifica sustancialmente el argumento central del cuento.

Otro dato que se observa en la versión original es que el protagonista va perdiendo poder de acción hasta quedar totalmente atrapado en su novela. Esta suerte de catarsis o cambio de estado se advierte a través de la inclusión de dos actores inanimados («su memoria» y «la ilusión novelesca», cláusulas 12 y 13, Figura 11) que actúan como actores: la memoria es un agente que retiene sin esfuerzo cierta información de la novela y la ilusión novelesca hace que el personaje vaya entrando en catarsis. A continuación, nos encontramos con el proceso «gozaba» (cláusula 14, Figura 13). El lector experimenta la sensación placentera de la lectura (en su papel de perceptor). Blackburn, en cambio, descarta el primer participante personificado (en la décima cláusula, Figura 12) pero mantiene (en cierta medida) el segundo cuando opta por la palabra «novel» (cláusula 11, Figura 12), nombre común concreto que reemplaza «la ilusión novelesca» (cláusula 13, Figura 11). En comparación con la primera disonancia, este cambio parece ser significativo; la frase nominal elegida por Cortázar contribuye a comprender el estado anímico del lector de la novela, sometido a la magia que la trama le genera, que lo ha hecho prisionero en un nuevo mundo. Estrictamente, no es la novela (o la trama) lo que hace que el lector trascienda, sino la ilusión que ésta le genera.

En lo que respecta a las circunstancias, en la versión inglesa la circunstancia inicial de la séptima cláusula (Figura 10) presenta una diferencia: la posibilidad de una intrusión es lo que lo hubiese molestado al lector. En el cuento original, la puerta ejerce el rol de actor (cláusula 9, Figura 9), por lo que ésta tiene un papel asignado al posibilitar la libre transición del intruso, quien

primero se desplaza por la continuidad de los parques (el bosque, la alameda) hasta encontrarse con la luz de los ventanales, para luego traspasar dicha puerta y situarse finalmente por detrás del sillón de terciopelo verde. El cambio propuesto por Blackburn, elimina, por consiguiente, una pista concreta sobre el retorno al anclaje locativo del primer momento (esa puerta conduce al estudio del lector, donde se cometería el asesinato). Sin embargo, esto no genera un impedimento para comprender esa vuelta al lugar de origen, pues no hay otro sillón de terciopelo verde además de aquel ubicado en el estudio.

Por último, en cuanto a los procesos de ambos extractos, las tablas muestran la preferencia por el mismo tipo de procesos. Cuando esto no sucede, la opción de Blackburn se basa en la selección de otro proceso cuya carga semántica está íntimamente emparentada con la del tipo de proceso primeramente elegido por Cortázar. Tal es el caso de «gozaba» (cláusula 14, Figura 13) y «tasted» (cláusula 12, Figura 14). Si bien el proceso en inglés se define como «conductual», esta etiqueta implica un proceso psíquico, una experimentación sensorial. Tal implicancia se encuentra manifiesta en el proceso elegido por Cortázar, definido como «mental».

CONCLUSIÓN

Partiendo de los resultados y de las conclusiones preliminares, es dable destacar que, pese a las posibles divergencias señaladas, la configuración de la transitividad en la traducción materializa la catarsis del protagonista (o sea, la pérdida de su capacidad de acción), tal como sucede en el fragmento del cuento de Cortázar.

A su vez, la traducción retrata cabalmente la configuración de los dos momentos narrativos (el primero, que sucede en el estudio del lector; el segundo, el contexto ficcional de los amantes que se sitúa en la cabaña del bosque) y cómo estos

dos mundos pueden articularse y fundirse a través del estilo cortazariano. Y más aún, cómo el protagonista se «traslada» a la cabaña del bosque.

Por otro lado, el análisis contrastivo también confirma otra cuestión de carácter general, que se plantea en el marco teórico: cómo la exploración del sistema de la transitividad, procedimiento que implica la identificación y el desglose de cada componente de la cláusula, se constituye como una herramienta útil para el análisis del discurso narrativo ya que permite visualizar en detalle cómo se materializan y articulan los significados experienciales de acuerdo con determinadas variables contextuales. En otras palabras, la selección de las opciones léxico-gramaticales del sistema de la transitividad nunca es azarosa (tal como se registró en nuestro corpus), pues siempre guarda relación con la forma en la que cada participante construye su propia realidad (o experiencia), en función de su relación con el otro. Esto permitiría señalar cómo las tres variables del registro (campo, tenor y modo) se interrelacionan, aun cuando el análisis se centre en una sola metafunción (como en nuestro caso).

En la misma línea, el análisis de la transitividad propicia la reflexión sobre la importancia de su uso en otros campos, como el de la traductología (donde el proceso de traducción se establece como el eje articulador de disciplinas varias, como la lingüística textual, la terminología, la pragmática, el análisis crítico del discurso, etc.) —e incluso más si éste se complementa con el análisis interpersonal y textual, ofrecidos por el enfoque tripartito de la gramática sistémico-funcional. Asimismo, se valora su relevancia en la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras como una herramienta fiable para desarrollar una mirada crítica en la posible selección de cuentos traducidos como material didáctico.

Por último, en cuanto a las limitaciones del presente estudio, se podrían proponer investigaciones de un alcance más amplio, partiendo de la comparación de la totalidad del cuento «Continuidad de los Parques» y de su traducción al inglés, como otras donde se comparen obras de un mismo autor con el fin de obtener datos significativos respecto de su estilo (por nombrar posibles ejemplos).

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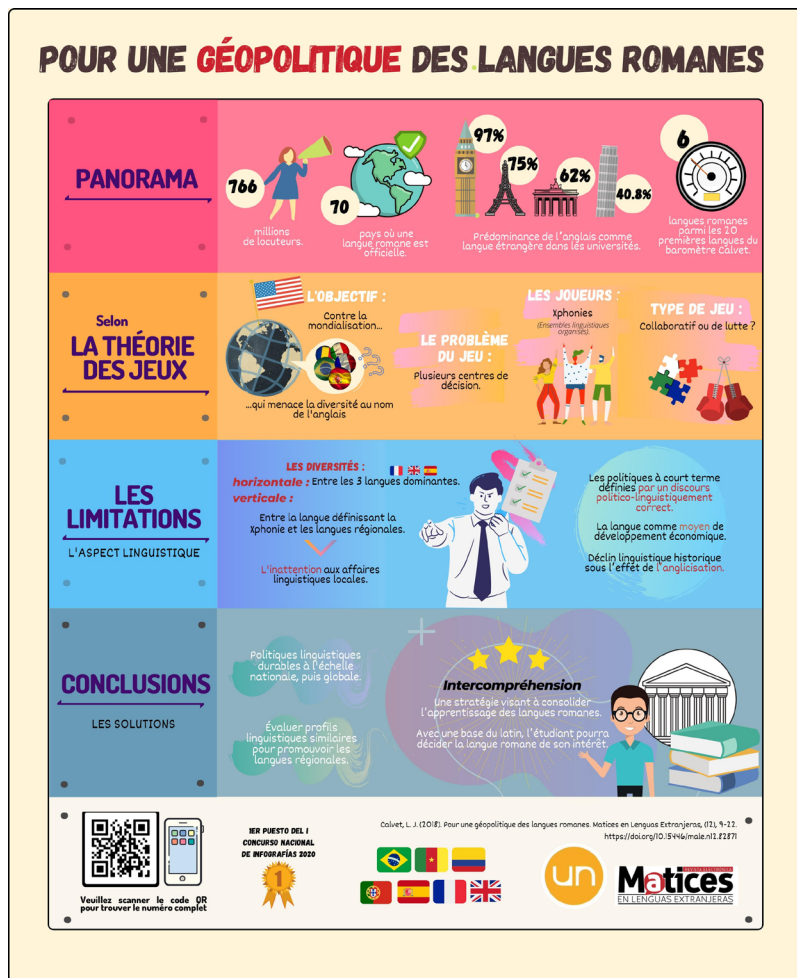
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- Trasfondo político y económico explicado por la teoría del juego tras el momento en que toda persona decide qué lengua romance estudiar.



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- Reflexión integral sobre el imprescindible cambio de mentalidad que se necesita tanto en docentes como en estudiantes de inglés en Colombia al no adaptar métodos y materiales extranjeros a las necesidades e intereses locales.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN COLOMBIA: A NECESSARY PARADIGM SHIFT

Le Gal (2018) presents an extensive analysis of the current situation of ELT in Colombia and a reflection on the foreign influence and dependency conditions in different aspects of the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

IMPORTED TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

British Council, the main evaluator of ELT competences in Colombia.



Programs designed by private companies.



Promoting the "native speaker fallacy" (Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999b).

Teacher Certification

Methodologies

Different approaches, applied without any contextualization.

Teacher Training

IMPORTED

Linguistic Policies

Implementation of foreign frameworks and theories.

Teachers

Materials

Global textbooks which neglect students' needs and cross-linguistic differences.

HOW TO TRIGGER A PARADIGM SHIFT?

- Incorporating a context-based English Language Teaching (ELT) in Colombia through a Sociocritical Approach.
- Integrating the sociolinguistic, socioeconomic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions to the ELT practices (Cortier & Puren, 2008, p.76)

READ THE FULL ARTICLE IN MATICES EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS JOURNAL

Le Gal, D. (2018). English Language Teaching in Colombia: A Necessary Paradigm Shift. *Matrices en Lenguas Extranjeras*, (12), 154-187. <https://doi.org/10.15446/male.n12.73267>

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2do puesto del Concurso Nacional de Infografías 2020

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- Estrategia segura y sistemática con el fin de mejorar la escritura en una lengua extranjera en solo 4 pasos y para superar las dificultades frecuentes y habituales.

The Influence of ICT in the Development of Writing Skills through an Online Platform

Writing must be one of the most complex language components in an EFL classroom, however through an action research aimed at promoting bilingualism, López Henao (2017) stated that by applying ICTs and other strategies, 12 students from the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira improved their writing skills.

"QUIA" An educational platform



This e-learning platform allowed them to be more aware about grammar, vocabulary and language. Participants completed activities, such as: hangman, jumbled words.

The findings showed:



The importance of ICTs in the EFL classroom



Confidence towards the writing process



Improvement in written performance

Writing Process Wheel



Harmer's (2011) strategy helped them overcome their reading and writing problems while giving them the exact steps to improve their written performance.

Now it's your turn! Cheer up! Research!

At researching, we read, analyze and learn!



Do not forget to read Matices' papers!



3er puesto del I Concurso Nacional de Infografías 2020.

Source: Design and icons provided by Pictochart.com

López Henao, J. A. (2017). The Influence of ICT in the Development of Writing Skills through an Online Platform. *Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras*, (11), 19-44. <https://doi.org/10.15446/male.n11.71852>

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