

Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, a refereed journal, encourages the dissemination of classroom research projects and innovations by teachers of English, and is published twice a year (in January and July). It is currently registered in Scopus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Latindex, EBSCO, Informe Académico, Academic OneFile, Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico - REDIB, the Directory of Open Access Journals - DOAJ, and Dialnet. It is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Educational Research Abstracts online - ERA, The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), The Emerging Sources Citation Index (Clarivate Analytics), The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS), IRESIE, LatAm Plus, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database - LLBA, Redalyc, SCIELO Citation Index (Web of Science), CLASE - Citas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Publindex - Minciencias (classified in category A2), and SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) 2020: Quartile 1 (Linguistics and Language), Quartile 3 (Education).

EDITOR

Melba Libia Cárdenas

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

DIRECTOR

María Claudia Nieto C.

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Gary Barkhuizen

University of Auckland, New Zealand

Anne Burns

Aston University, UK & University of New South Wales, Australia

Ruth Marcela del Campo

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos

Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Brazil

Paula Golombek

University of Florida, USA

Adriana González M.

Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia

Carmen Helena Guerrero Nieto

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia

Alex Poole

Western Kentucky University, USA

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR

Edwin Martínez Pulido

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Maria Cristina Arancibia Aguilera, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Nora M. Basurto Santos, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico

Marina Bondi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

Carmen Cáceda Córdova, Western Oregon University, USA

Doris Correa, Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia

Gabriel Díaz Maggioli, Universidad Católica del Uruguay

John Elliott, University of East Anglia, UK

Cristina Frodden, Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia

Sue Garton, Aston University, UK

Deepti Gupta, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

Nilton Hitotuzi, Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará, Brazil

Terence Lamb, University of Westminster, UK

Martha Lengeling, Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico

Daniel Madrid, Universidad de Granada, Spain

Gerrard Mugford, Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico

José Luis Ortega Martín, Universidad de Granada, Spain

Álvaro Quintero Polo, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia

Isobel Rainey, GESE/ISE Panel for Trinity College London, UK

Juana Mahissa Reyes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

Yvonne Marcelle Saulny, Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador - Maracay Campus, Venezuela

Flávia Vieira, Universidade do Minho, Portugal

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Agnes Albert, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Maria Alfredo Moreira, Universidade do Minho, Portugal

Flávio Almeida dos Anjos, Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia, Brazil

José Aldemar Álvarez Valencia, Universidad del Valle, Colombia

Androulla Athanasiou, Cyprus University of Technology

Amanda Baker, University of Wollongong, Australia

Dario Luis Banegas, University of Strathclyde, UK

Maria Amor Barros del Rio, Universidad de Burgos, Spain

Jesús Alirio Bastidas, Universidad de Nariño, Colombia

Sara Ann Beach, University of Oklahoma, USA

Carmen D. Benítez Correa, Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, Ecuador

Jill Burton, University of South Australia

Rosalba Cárdenas, Universidad del Valle, Colombia

Kevin S. Carroll, The University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras

Amparo Clavijo, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia

Liliana Cuesta Medina, Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia



Samantha M. Curle, The University of Bath, UK
Kristin J. Davin, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA
Ester Johanna de Jong, University of Florida, USA
Jennifer E. Eidum, Elon University, USA
Irina Elgort, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Miguel Farias, Universidad de Santiago de Chile
Anca Daniela Frumuseanu, Universitat de Lleida, Spain
Jesús García Laborda, Universidad de Alcalá, Spain
Soraya García Sánchez, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain
Greta Gorsuch, Texas Tech University, USA
Juan Ramón Guijarro-Ojeda, Universidad de Granada, Spain
Camila Höfling, Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil
Hanna Komorowska, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland
Maggie Kubanyiova, University of Birmingham, UK
Shu-Wen Lan, National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan
Icy Lee, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Li Li, University of Exeter, UK
Shaofeng Li, Florida State University, USA
Anthony J. Liddicoat, University of Warwick, UK
Phoebe Lin, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Juliana Patricia Llanes Sánchez, Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia
Margaret M. Lo, The University of Hong Kong
Suzi Marques Spatti Cavalari, São Paulo State University, Brazil
Faezeh Mehrang, Massey University, New Zealand
Hassan Mohebbi, University of Tehran, Iran
Ian Moodie, Mokpo National University, South Korea
Pilar Mur-Dueñas, Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
Jackie Nenchin, Molloy College, Division of Education, USA
Jonathan Newton, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Musa Nushi, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

Claudia Lucía Ordóñez Ordóñez, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá
Juliana Othman, University of Malaya, Malaysia
Jean Parkinson, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Robert Poole, University of Alabama, USA
Franca Poppi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy
Melina Porto, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, Argentina
Gladys Quevedo-Camargo, Universidade de Brasília, Brazil
Muhammad Rahimi, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Paula Rebolledo Cortés, RICEIT, Chile
Dudley Reynolds, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar
Rosane Rocha Pessoa, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brazil
Maritza Rosas Maldonado, Universidad Andrés Bello, Chile
Ruth Roux, Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Mexico
Ana Cristina B. Salomão, São Paulo State University, Brazil
Maria Jesús Sánchez Manzano, Universidad de Salamanca, Spain
Susan Sheehan, University of Huddersfield, UK
Anna Siyanova, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Neomy Storch, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Zia Tajeddin, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran
Rebeca Elena Tapia Carlin, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico
Constanza Tolosa, The University of Auckland, New Zealand
Juliana Tonelli, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Brazil
John Jairo Viáfara, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia
Izaskun Villarreal, Universidad Pública de Navarra, Spain
Ana C. Villarreal Ballesteros, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, Mexico
Mai Trang Vu, Umeå University, Sweden
Stuart Webb, University of Western Ontario, Canada
Anne Westmacott, Universidad Chileno-Británica de Cultura, Chile
Danuta Wiśniewska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Please send all correspondence to the journal editor:
 Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras, Grupo de Investigación PROFILE
 Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
 Ciudad Universitaria.
 Carrera 30 No. 45-03, Bogotá, Colombia

Website: www.profile.unal.edu.co
 Phone: 57(1) 3165000 ext. 16780
 Email: rprofile_fchbog@unal.edu.co

.....

RECTOR

Dolly Montoya Castaño

DEAN OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES FACULTY

Carlos Guillermo Páramo Bonilla

ACADEMIC VICE-DEAN OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES FACULTY

Víctor Raúl Viviescas

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION VICE-DEAN OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES FACULTY

Nubia Yaneth Ruiz Ruiz

HEAD OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

Rodolfo Suárez Ortega

DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL PUBLISHING CENTER

Rubén Darío Flórez Arcila

SALES AND MARKETING

UN La Librería, Bogotá

Plazoleta de Las Nieves

Calle 20 No. 7-15

Tel. 3165000 ext. 29490

Ciudad Universitaria

Auditorio León de Greiff, piso 1.

Tel. 3165000 ext. 20040

<http://www.uneditorial.com/>

La Librería de la U

www.lalibreriadelaun.com

.....

CENTRO EDITORIAL

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS

www.humanas.unal.edu.co

Ciudad Universitaria, Carrera 30 # 45-03, Edificio de Posgrados de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas (225), sótano.

Bogotá, D. C., Colombia

Copy-editing: Randall Barfield

Coordinator of the School Periodicals: Catalina Arias Fernández

Design Coordinator: Carlos Andrés Contreras Solano

Cover design: Yully Cortés

Printed in Colombia by Xpress Estudio Gráfico y Digital sas

200 copies

PROFILE IS REGISTERED IN

Scopus[®]

Scopus

<https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21100886398>



Ulrich's Periodicals Directory

<http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/>



Latindex

<http://www.latindex.org/latindex/ficha?folio=13868>



EBSCO

<https://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/eue-coverage.htm>



Informe Académico

<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/informe-academico>



Academic OneFile

<https://www.gale.com/intl/databases/gale-onefile>



Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico - REDIB

<https://www.redib.org/>



DOAJ - the Directory of Open Access Journals

<https://doaj.org/toc/1657-0790>



Scielo Citation Index (Web of Science)

http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/scielo/



Dialnet

<http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/revista?codigo=22417>

IT IS INDEXED IN



MLA - the Directory of Periodicals & International bibliography

<http://www.mla.org/bibliography>



ERA - Educational Research Abstracts online

<https://bit.ly/2XlroMs>



The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)

<http://eric.ed.gov/>



The Emerging Sources Citation Index

http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/esci/



The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS)

<https://bit.ly/2X2ZshM>



IRESIE (Índice de Revistas de Educación Superior e Investigación Educativa)

<http://iresie.unam.mx/>



LLBA - Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database

<https://www.proquest.com/products-services/llba-set-c.html>



Redalyc - Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal

<http://www.redalyc.org/revista.oa?id=1692>



SciELO Colombia

<https://bit.ly/3bZMN3d>



CLASE - Citas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

<https://bit.ly/2B0h5pO>



Publindex (Categoría A2)

<https://bit.ly/2LYebnC>



LatAm Plus

<http://www.latamplus.com/>

SJR

Scimago Journal Rank 2020: Linguistics and Language (Q1), Education (Q3)

<https://bit.ly/3e5zmAG>

PROFILE

Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

Vol. 23, N°. 2, July-December 2021 | ISSN 1657-0790 (printed) 2256-5760 (online)

Contents

9 Editorial: Profile in Quartile 1 of the SCImago Journal Rank

Melba Libia Cárdenas & María Claudia Nieto-Cruz ~ Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Sede Bogotá

Issues from Teacher Researchers

17 Expressive Writing to Relieve Academic Stress at University Level

Juanita Argudo ~ Universidad de Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador and Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina

35 Critical Reading With Undergraduate EFL Students in Colombia: Gains and Challenges

Juan David Castaño-Roldán & Doris Correa ~ Universidad Nacional de Colombia & Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

51 English for Academic Purposes Related to Dentistry: Analyzing the Reading Comprehension Process

Patricia Carabelli ~ Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay

67 Self- and Peer-Assessment of Student-Generated Podcasts to Improve Comprehensibility in Undergraduate EFL Students

Alfredo Cadena-Aguilar & Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure ~ Universidad de La Sabana, Chía, Colombia

87 Cross-Disciplinary Lessons in an Elementary Public Institution

Josefina Quintero, Diana Yurany Álvarez, & Andrea Arcila ~ Universidad de Caldas & Centro Colombo Americano, Manizales, Colombia

103 Fostering Citizenship and English Language Competences in Teenagers Through Task-Based Instruction

Yanilis Romero & Adriana Pérez ~ Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

121 Language Teachers' Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences During the COVID-19 Confinement

Catalina Juárez-Díaz & Moisés Perales ~ Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla & Universidad de Quintana Roo, Chetumal, Mexico

137 Configuration of Racial Identities of Learners of English

Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina, Karen Vanessa Varela, & Katherine García ~ Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

151 Exploring the Reasons Behind Iranian TEFL Graduate Students' Academic Failure

Minoo Alemi, Atefeh Rezanejad, & Bijan Marefat ~ Islamic Azad University & Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

167 Tutors' and Tutees' Behaviors, Attitudes, and Perspectives Regarding EFL Peer Tutoring in Higher Education in Mexico

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar ~ Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

183 Pedagogical Practicum and Student-Teachers Discursively Conceived in an ELT Undergraduate Program

Edgar Lucero & Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez ~ Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia

199 Language Pedagogy and Teacher Identity: A Decolonial Lens to English Language Teaching From a Teacher Educator's Experience

Diego Ubaque-Casallas ~ Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

215 The Socio-Emotional Influence of Past Teachers on Novice English Teachers' Beliefs

Maritza Rosas-Maldonado, Macarena Durán-Castro, & Annjeanette Martin ~ Universidad Andres Bello & Universidad de los Andes, Santiago, Chile

231 Approaching Teaching as a Complex Emotional Experience: The Teacher Professional Development Stages Revisited

Perla Villegas-Torres & M. Martha Lengeling ~ Universidad de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico

Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers

- 245** English as a Foreign Language Students' Emotional Intelligence Management When Taking Speaking Exams
Sara Bata & Cristal Castro ~ Universidad de Pamplona, Pamplona, Colombia

Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations

- 265** Language Assessment Literacy and Teachers' Professional Development: A Review of the Literature
Frank Giraldo ~ Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia
- 281** Embracing Conceptualizations of English Language Teacher Education From a Complexity Perspective
Martha Garcia-Chamorro & Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta ~ Universidad del Norte & Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla, Colombia
- 297** Accumulative index of published articles in *Profile* Vol. 23 (2021)
- 301** Guidelines for Contributors
- 307** Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

PROFILE

Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

Vol. 23, N°. 2, julio-diciembre 2021 | ISSN 1657-0790 (printed) 2256-5760 (online)

Contenido

9 Editorial: Profile en el cuartil 1 del SCImago Journal Rank

Melba Libia Cárdenas y María Claudia Nieto-Cruz ~ Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Sede Bogotá

Temas de docentes investigadores

17 Escritura expresiva para aliviar el estrés académico a nivel universitario

Juanita Argudo ~ Universidad de Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador y Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina

35 Lectura crítica con estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como lengua extranjera en Colombia: logros y desafíos

Juan David Castaño-Roldán y Doris Correa ~ Universidad Nacional de Colombia y Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

51 Inglés con fines académicos vinculado a la odontología: análisis del proceso de comprensión lectora

Patricia Carabelli ~ Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay

67 Autoevaluación y evaluación por pares de podcasts generados por alumnos para mejorar la comprensibilidad de estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como lengua extranjera

Alfredo Cadena-Aguilar y Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure ~ Universidad de La Sabana, Chía, Colombia

87 Lecciones interdisciplinarias en una institución pública de básica primaria

Josefina Quintero, Diana Yurany Álvarez y Andrea Arcila ~ Universidad de Caldas y Centro Colombo Americano, Manizales, Colombia

103 Fomento de la ciudadanía y las competencias del idioma inglés en adolescentes mediante la instrucción basada en tareas

Yanilis Romero y Adriana Pérez ~ Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

121 Experiencias con la enseñanza remota de emergencia de docentes de lenguas durante el confinamiento por COVID-19

Catalina Juárez-Díaz y Moisés Perales ~ Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla y Universidad de Quintana Roo, Chetumal; México

137 Configuración de identidades raciales de aprendientes de inglés

Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina, Karen Vanessa Varela y Katherine García ~ Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

151 Explorando las razones detrás del fracaso académico de los estudiantes iraníes de posgrado en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera

Minoo Alemi, Atefeh Rezanejad y Bijan Marefat ~ Islamic Azad University y Allameh Tabataba'i University, Teherán, Irán

167 Comportamientos, actitudes y perspectivas de tutores y tutorados hacia la tutoría entre pares en un contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera en educación superior en México

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar ~ Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, México

183 Práctica pedagógica y docentes en formación concebidos discursivamente en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés

Edgar Lucero y Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez ~ Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia

199 Pedagogía de la lengua e identidad docente: una lente decolonial para la enseñanza del idioma inglés desde la experiencia de un formador de maestros

Diego Ubaque-Casallas ~ Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

- 215** La influencia socioemocional de los docentes anteriores en las creencias de profesores noveles de inglés
Maritza Rosas-Maldonado, Macarena Durán-Castro y Annjeanette Martin ~ Universidad Andrés Bello y Universidad de los Andes, Santiago, Chile
- 231** Abordando la enseñanza como una experiencia emocional compleja: las etapas de desarrollo profesional del maestro revisitadas
Perla Villegas-Torres y M. Martha Lengeling ~ Universidad de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, México

Temas de nuevos docentes investigadores

- 245** El manejo de la inteligencia emocional en los estudiantes de lengua extranjera mientras presentan sus exámenes orales de inglés
Sara Bata y Cristal Castro ~ Universidad de Pamplona, Pamplona, Colombia

Temas basados en reflexiones e innovaciones

- 265** La literacidad en evaluación de lenguas y el desarrollo profesional docente: una revisión de la literatura
Frank Giraldo ~ Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia
- 281** Acoger conceptualizaciones de la formación del docente de inglés desde una perspectiva compleja
Martha Garcia-Chamorro y Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta ~ Universidad del Norte y Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla, Colombia
- 297** Accumulative index of published articles in *Profile* Vol. 23 (2021)
- 301** Guidelines for Contributors
- 307** Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

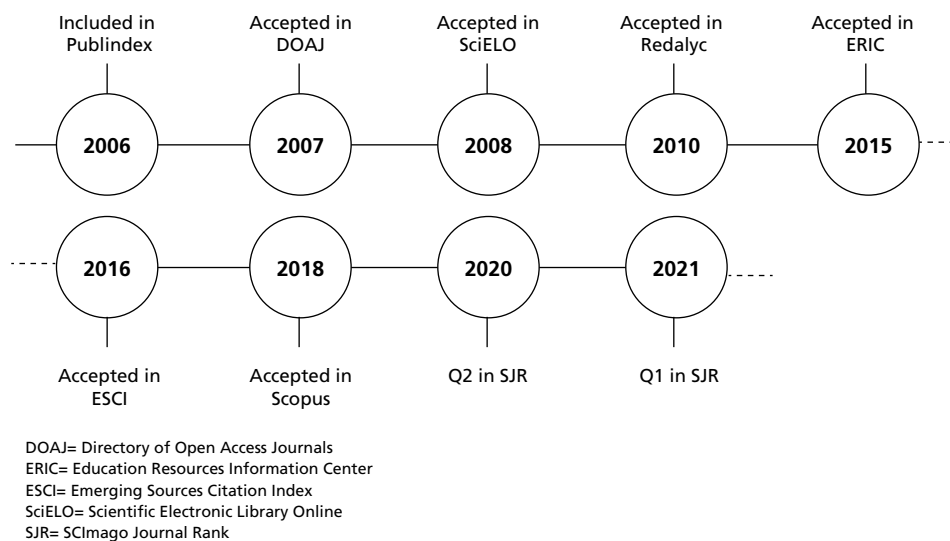
Editorial

Profile in Quartile 1 of the SCImago Journal Rank

In previous editorials we have mentioned the role indexing and ranking systems play in academic journals nowadays. They acknowledge the compliance of national and international standards for publication in terms of editorial processes and, in turn, have an impact on the evaluation of scholars' and institutions' productivity. The results of such evaluations do also count for the accreditation of pre- and postgraduate programmes as well as the accreditation of universities, among others.

Profile has worked steadily to incorporate such standards and thus, has been accepted in several ranks, as shown in Figure 1, where we depict the journal's timeline in its inclusion in databases and indexing systems.

Figure 1. Profile's Timeline in Databases and Indexing Systems



It took us six years to be included in the Colombian rank and another one to be accepted in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The inclusion of *Profile* in the Scientific

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Cárdenas, M. L., & Nieto-Cruz, M. C. (2021). Editorial: Profile in quartile 1 of the scimago Journal Rank. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 9–14. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.96647>

This Editorial was received on May 26, 2021 and accepted on June 4, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Electronic Library Online (SciELO) in 2008 and in Redalyc, in 2010, together with the change in its periodicity, from annual to biannual, marked a turning point in the advancement towards higher visibility thanks to the open access policies that characterize both digital repositories. In 2016, the journal was included in the Emerging Sources Citation Index and, at the same time, submitted to Scopus for a two-year observation period. This paid off and, after a positive evaluation, the journal was included in Scopus for the first time in 2018. That achievement was an important step to become part of the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), which classified *Profile* in Quartile 2, in the report for the year 2019.²

In the 2020 report of the SJR (published in May 2021), the *Profile* journal moved from Quartile 2 to Quartile 1 in the category of linguistics and language. Within this area the journal is now Number 229 of the 997 journals classified worldwide, Number 2 in Latin America, and Number 1 in Colombia. The fact that the journal moved up one quartile in one year tells us that it is consistently gaining a space among the most prestigious publications in the area, regionally and around the world. It also evidences the interest it has generated in the international arena and the role it is playing as a reference source for scholars in the field of education, in general, and in the areas of English language teaching, teacher education, linguistics, and language, in particular.

According to the SCImago website (<https://www.scimagojr.com/aboutus.php>), the SJR represents an attempt to visualize the current behaviour and dynamics of published scientific knowledge in 27 major thematic areas (which are further subdivided into 313 subject categories). The report is issued annually and classifies the titles that are part of the Scopus database according to their citational impact. Thus, the more the contents of a publication are cited by the scientific community, the higher the ranking that publication can achieve. The idea here is that those contents that are part of an active discussion are also the ones which are effectively impacting the way new knowledge is constructed.

There is no lack of controversy surrounding this kind of ranking, and two issues can be mentioned in this regard. First, data are drawn from a selected group of publications (those in the Scopus database) with the exclusion of a substantially greater number of publications outside the database. Second, the impact of a title is almost exclusively measured in received citations without consideration for any other kind of impact that is not directly determined by citations. For instance, in our field, practitioners may resort to the contents of a publication to shape their daily practice or use those contents for class activities, among other alternatives. This may take place in English language classrooms or in teacher education programmes. In the former, the publication can have an impact on the incorporation of new teaching practices. The latter can embrace the examination of articles to update teachers' pedagogical knowledge, the familiarization with new trends or further development of given issues, or a means to foster research and academic writing.

² The report is launched annually, around May or June, and relies on citation data from the previous year to get a complete picture of a journal's impact, instead of a partial one. Thus, the report released in 2020, for instance, was based on data up to December 2019.

Despite the controversy behind metrics that are too quantitatively oriented, the SJR can be used as an additional tool to assess the characteristics of a scientific publication and thus allow editorial teams to take more informed editorial decisions (in terms, for instance, of international collaboration or relevant topics) or authors to decide which venues are more attuned to the findings in their studies (the report offers a series of similar publications which can be contrasted). In brief, as in many other cases, it is the good use we give to such information that helps strengthen any publication endeavour.

In this issue, we are very pleased to share with you 17 articles. Fourteen correspond to the section *Issues from Teacher Researchers*, one to the section *Issues from Novice Teacher-Researchers* and two to the section *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations*. The contributions come from six countries, Colombia with 10 articles, Mexico with three articles, and Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Iran with one article each.

The topics discussed by researchers in the current issue concern English language teaching, foreign language teacher education and teacher professional development, the development of skills from different perspectives and actors, as well as English in content areas, identities, remote teaching, emotional intelligence and tutoring as the main topics. These topics occur at different levels: in elementary education, in secondary education, but mainly at the tertiary level with undergraduate preservice teachers, in-service teachers, and English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

Juanita Argudo, from Universidad de Cuenca (Ecuador), opens the first section with an article dealing with expressive writing to relieve academic stress at university level. The paper sheds light on the need to study the impact of academic stress on university students and looks for different strategies that can alleviate it. Expressive writing has a positive effect on helping to ease academic stress and overcome some difficulties caused by this issue. This article is followed by a paper dealing with the gains and challenges experienced by an interdisciplinary group of EFL students who participated in the implementation of a critical reading unit taught within a reading comprehension course at a university in Medellín, Colombia. The article is a joint effort between Juan David Castaño-Roldán, from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Medellín, and Doris Correa, representing the Universidad de Antioquia (Colombia). The authors found that students experienced several gains but also had some challenges related to aligning with the author's position, seeing positionality in factual texts, and taking middle positions. The authors concluded that there are some specific areas in which these students need additional support. The next article is a contribution from Patricia Carabelli, professor at the Universidad de la República in Montevideo, Uruguay. The paper deals with the hypothesis that the greater the vocabulary that dentistry students possess, the better they will be able to understand written dentistry texts. The results reveal that not only does a good vocabulary bank contribute to the understanding of an academic text but that multiple reading comprehension skills are involved in the process.

The fourth article of this section is a contribution from Albedro Cadena-Aguilar and Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure from the Universidad de La Sabana (Colombia). The researchers wanted

to improve comprehensibility in undergraduate EFL students via self- and peer-assessment of student-generated podcasts with special attention to the use of suprasegmentals. Results unveiled the exhibition of self-regulated behaviours and gains in comprehensibility. This study highlights the importance of helping learners look critically and reflectively at their own oral production and of incorporating training in suprasegmentals within EFL courses to help learners communicate more effectively within a globalised context. Josefina Quintero and Diana Yurany Álvarez from the Universidad de Caldas (Colombia) and Andrea Arcila from the Centro Colombo Americano in Manizales (Colombia), contributed the next article. It deals with the integration of the teaching of English and the natural sciences through cross-disciplinary lessons that followed the principles of content-based instruction. Results revealed that the cross-disciplinary lessons were appropriate and useful to connect the foreign language learning with other school subjects. The topic of the next paper is the fostering of citizenship and English language competences in teenagers through task-based instruction by Yanilis Romero and Adriana Pérez from the Universidad del Norte (Colombia). This paper proposes the design of a unit with social components as the main meaningful task for the teaching of the English language and for fostering citizenship competencies for A2 level learners. Findings report that tasks might foster English language use if those are designed taking into account students' context and interests and if they are authentic.

The following article is a contribution from Catalina Juárez-Díaz, who is a teacher at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (Mexico), and Moisés Perales from the Universidad de Quintana Roo (Mexico). They discuss a topic that has changed the way we do things in the present: remote teaching from the perspective of English language teaching faculty and preservice EFL teachers. Both groups reported negative feelings, which were connected with some faculty's focus on delivering content without interaction and with insufficient Internet access. Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina, Karen Vanessa Varela, and Katherine García from the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia) in the next article developed a study in which they discuss the relationship between racial identity and language learning. This article addresses the connection in an attempt to shed light specifically on English language learning and teaching. The results relate language learners' racial experiences as a crucial factor in the configuration of their identity as well as the economic, social, and cultural factors involved. Iranian researchers Mino Alemi, Atefeh Rezanejad, and Bijan Marefat, from the Islamic Azad University and the Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran, Iran, explored the reasons behind academic failure among Iranian students of the teaching of EFL. Results indicated that four main factors led to the academic failure of the students, namely, (a) the student, (b) the professor, (c) the university, and (d) the source materials. As an end product, a number of guidelines to prevent academic failure in this context are presented.

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar from the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (Mexico) studied tutors' and tutees' behaviours, attitudes, and perspectives regarding EFL peer tutoring in higher education in Mexico. Results indicate that the participants were positive about the experience, the sessions, their peers, and the influence in their learning. Edgar Lucero and

Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez from the Universidad de La Salle (Colombia) researched the pedagogical practicum in an ELT undergraduate program. The pedagogical practicum contains several academic, professional, and experiential aspects that configure this space with established (pre-)requisites, tasks, and roles for student-teachers; these aspects in turn help these individuals in their construction with particular manners of must-be and must-do.

A second article on identity is presented now. It is connected to teacher identity and language pedagogy from the perspective of a teacher educator's experience. The researcher Diego Ubaque-Casallas from the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia) locates the intersections between English language pedagogy and the identities of English language teachers. Findings suggest that although there are still colonial roots that repress other ways of being and doing, English language pedagogy goes beyond the instrumental sense of teaching. In this way, English language pedagogy is about transformation as it is never static because it is an extension of identity. In order of appearance now we count on our Chilean colleagues Maritza Rosas-Maldonado and Macarena Durán-Castro, from Universidad Andres Bello, and Annjeanette Martin from Universidad de los Andes, in Santiago, Chile, who reveal the socio-emotional influence of past teachers on novice English teachers' beliefs. They assert that teachers' past learning experiences, also referred to as "apprenticeship of observation," can affect their beliefs and, in turn, their teaching practice. Results showed that the teachers' apprenticeship of observation influenced their socio-emotional and affective views on teaching with a main concern on teacher-student relationships.

Our last article from this section, comes from Mexico. Perla Villegas-Torres and M. Martha Lengeling from the Universidad de Guanajuato (Mexico) approach teaching as a complex emotional experience as our previous contributors have also commented on. This article presents the study of a Mexican English teacher and examines the professional-developmental stages based on Huberman's (1993) career cycle model. The article shows the realities a teacher faces by exploring the concepts of emotions, identity, socialization, and agency. It questions the belief that teachers achieve expertise through accumulating years of practice.

Our Section 2, *Issues from Novice Teacher-Researchers*, includes one article. In it, Sara Bata and Cristal Castro from the Universidad de Pamplona (Colombia) examine how a group of six elementary students that study EFL manage their emotional intelligence while taking their speaking exams. The results provide further insight into the students' emotional intelligence and the coping mechanisms/strategies used to manage their emotional intelligence while taking two different speaking exams.

Our issue closes with the section *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations*. In this opportunity we welcome two articles from two different contexts in Colombia. In the first article Frank Giraldo from the Universidad de Caldas (Colombia) presents a review of the literature on the topic of language assessment literacy and teachers' professional development. The author analysed the features and impacts of 14 programmes which promoted teachers' language assessment literacy. Findings suggest that the programmes

were geared towards practical tasks in which teachers used theory critically. Also, the studies show that teachers expanded their conception of language assessment, became aware of how to design professional instruments, and considered wider constructs for assessment. Finally, we rest on the article provided by Martha Garcia-Chamorro and Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta from Universidad del Atlántico and Universidad del Norte (Colombia). The authors argue that current conceptualizations of foreign language teacher education fail to represent the complexity of teacher education. They suggest that efforts in this direction may better prepare prospective English teachers to face challenging realities in educational settings and will eventually improve students' learning.

As you see, the contents in this issue include a series of diverse and complex topics, and we hope the selection of articles presented here will provide readers with valuable insights into some relevant aspects related to the teaching and learning of English. Thank you for all your support!

Melba Libia Cárdenas
Journal Editor

María Claudia Nieto-Cruz
Journal Director

P R O
F I
L E

*Issues from Teacher
Researchers*

Expressive Writing to Relieve Academic Stress at University Level

Escritura expresiva para aliviar el estrés académico a nivel universitario

Juanita Argudo


Universidad de Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador and Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina

This paper reports on a descriptive mixed-method study that aimed to identify the impact of expressive writing on relieving the academic stress of 157 undergraduate students at an Ecuadorian university. Data were gathered through two questionnaires and from focus groups. Results showed enduring relief of academic stress. Furthermore, they help to shed light on the need to study the impact of academic stress on university students and to look for different strategies that can alleviate it. These findings could help to understand students' needs, as they have essential implications in teachers' practices and, consequently, in students' performance. In conclusion, expressive writing has a positive effect on helping to ease academic stress and overcome some difficulties caused by this issue.

Keywords: academic stress, expressive writing, students' perceptions

Este artículo informa sobre un estudio descriptivo de métodos mixtos que tuvo como objetivo identificar el impacto de la escritura expresiva para aliviar el estrés académico en 157 estudiantes de pregrado de una universidad ecuatoriana. Los datos se obtuvieron por medio de dos cuestionarios y de grupos de estudio. Los resultados mostraron un alivio permanente del estrés académico. Además, se evidencia la necesidad de estudiar el impacto del estrés académico en los estudiantes universitarios y buscar diferentes estrategias para aliviarlo. Estos hallazgos podrían ayudar a comprender las necesidades de los estudiantes, las mismas que tienen implicaciones esenciales en las prácticas de los docentes y, en consecuencia, en el desempeño de los estudiantes. En conclusión, la escritura expresiva tiene un efecto positivo ya que ayuda a aliviar el estrés académico y a superar algunas dificultades que este genera.

Palabras clave: estrés académico, escritura expresiva, percepción de los estudiantes

Juanita Argudo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3337-7803> · Email: juanita.argudo@ucuenca.edu.ec

This article is based on the doctoral dissertation completed by Argudo (2019).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Argudo, J. (2021). Expressive writing to relieve academic stress at university level. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 17–33. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90448>

This article was received on September 9, 2020 and accepted on March 22, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Studying at the university level can be a very stressful and anxiety-inducing experience which can affect many aspects of students' lives. Evidence indicates that English as a foreign language (EFL) students face this problem in the language learning process, due to knowledge deficits and linguistic difficulties in the use of the target language (Hashemi, 2011). One of the requirements to earn a university degree in Ecuador is achieving a B1 level in English of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (SEMPLEDES, personal communication, September 2011). Research shows that EFL students focus intently on this university requirement because they know that English proficiency can help them in their professional lives after graduation. However, the possibility of failure in this subject can change feelings about English study from excitement to pain and anxiety (Hashemi, 2011). Academic outcomes arising from being unable to understand and use the target language or from not having enough resources to meet university language requirements are concerns that need to be addressed. Considering the difficulties this situation causes for students, it is necessary to find and employ stress management strategies and alleviate these negative feelings in EFL students because, as stated by Pennebaker (2018), "concealing or holding back powerful emotions, thoughts, and behaviors is itself stressful" (p. 226). In this regard, expressive writing has emerged in recent years as an interesting and effective alternative for stress reduction (Bockarov, 2015; Pennebaker, 2018). This expressive writing strategy to release academic stress calls for more research to gain additional insight in this realm.

The aim of this study is to describe the impact expressive writing has on EFL university students' and preservice EFL teachers' perceptions of how it helps to relieve stress. This paper is organized as follows: First, an account is given of some aspects of teaching English in the Ecuadorian context and of different issues that have affected this process at the university level in recent

years. Next, this paper considers English as a graduation requirement in the Ecuadorian context in order to examine some important student characteristics and needs regarding this subject. Finally, a discussion is held of evidence regarding the impact of using expressive writing to relieve academic stress.

English as a Graduation Requirement in Ecuadorian Universities

The Ecuadorian Constitution declares that all Ecuadorians have a right to education, making it a priority in public policy (MINEDUC, 2011). At the same time, the Constitution states that learning English is indispensable not only to communicate but also to be able to find and use technological and scientific information (MINEDUC, 2011). Because of this constitutional mandate, university education in Ecuador took action to address this concern. Consequently, the Academic Regime Regulation approved by the Council of Higher Education established proficiency in a foreign language at a B1 level, according to the Common European Reference Framework, as a graduation requirement for all students at university level (Resolution 111, 2019). At present, each university can decide whether or not to include the subject of English language learning in the university curriculum. Consequently, students can take English language classes within or outside the university. It is mandatory that students take a proficiency test in this language at the end of their studies. If they do not pass the test, they will not be eligible for graduation in any major (Resolution 111, 2019).

Teaching English at University Level

In relation to teaching English, the current debate has focused on whether English as a lingua franca (ELF) should replace EFL programs, since it has become an instrumental language. In other words, it fulfills specific purposes. Therefore, English is learned and used with

particular communication purposes (Rojas-Caruci, 2012). “EFL is defined as a means of communication between speakers who do not share the same mother tongue and who use English for certain purposes” (Ur, 2010, p. 85). Although ELF is also used for communicative purposes, the level of intelligibility is the key here: as long as the message is understood, everything is acceptable, based on the “let it pass” principle (Nagy, 2016).

Notwithstanding, teaching English in a formal context does not allow for variation and is based on the principle that to learn a language, it must be learned correctly, since, in most cases, those who learn it will not only use it in ELF contexts, but also to communicate with English speakers who handle not only the language’s phonetic properties but also correct morpho-syntax. Therefore, it is essential for college students to learn and use English appropriately, which means that until a practical model that integrates these two uses of English is found, ELF cannot replace EFL (Nagy, 2016). In this regard, according to Lightbown and Spada (2016), proficiency in a language helps to develop mental flexibility, as well as some cognitive functions such as attention and communication. These two approaches to English use are important to consider since Ecuadorian universities teach EFL; then, learning English in this context might cause more stress than learning it in an ELF one; as mentioned by Hashemi (2011), students may experience linguistic difficulties in learning and using the target language in a formal context.

In addition to the aforementioned situation, Ecuadorian universities are working to ensure that their students achieve the desired proficiency level in a foreign language. However, university students are under a great deal of pressure and stress because they know that years of effort and study can be erased by the results of an English exam. These exams generate several negative emotional reactions since the results students obtain determines their future (Álvarez-Hernández et al., 2013). When this fear is accompanied by high levels of anxiety, it might interfere not only with their academic

performance but also with their personal life. In this way, it can be said that while it is important and necessary for university students to acquire proficiency in a foreign language, it is also necessary to consider how the stress of taking an exam of this nature affects their physical and emotional health.

Thus, it is imperative to look for strategies to manage and counteract this type of stress, because by acquiring proficiency in a foreign language, students are acquiring an indispensable tool for their professional and personal future.

Expressive Writing

The use of personal and emotional writing skills as an alternative strategy to relieve stress is known as *expressive writing* (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). This strategy has shown positive results in different fields, affecting people in several areas (Pennebaker, 2004). According to Pennebaker and Evans (2014), expressive writing is a strategy that uses words in a healing way. The author indicates that writing can often be useful, especially when it comes to negative experiences. In expressive writing the emotional content of the written text becomes a factor in its appeal, which ends up being a relief strategy (Pennebaker & Evans, 2014).

According to Pennebaker and Graybeal (2001), it is possible to identify and evaluate people’s behavior and mood in relation to several characteristics of their writing, since the choice of words can also reveal a lot about an individual. Through writing, people express not only their thoughts and desires, but also who they are; consequently, through writing, a better understanding of related language, emotions, and thoughts is possible.

Academic Stress and Expressive Writing

Students usually experience moments that make them vulnerable to stress. They must face the pressure to succeed in both their personal and academic lives; they are also affected by various social, emotional, family,

or physical problems that might impact their academic performance as well as their regular learning process (Jeronimus et al., 2014). Several studies show positive results when using the expressive writing strategy with stressed students. Pennebaker and Beall (1986) carried out a study with undergraduate students with the aim of verifying whether writing about traumatic moments in the past would help them improve their physical health in the long term and improve their mood in the short term. These authors found that writing about disturbing experiences and mentioning their emotions and feelings reduced health problems and helped students to feel emotionally better.

Regarding the effects of expressive writing on students, there is evidence that this strategy helps increase the availability of working memory. Klein and Boals (2001) worked with university students who, after using expressive writing, felt less stressed when undergoing a formal evaluation. Ramírez and Beilock (2011) concluded that after practicing the expressive writing strategy before a test, students show a calmer attitude during an exam and perform better. In this same vein, studies have shown that anxiety about mathematics can negatively affect students' problem-solving abilities in this area; though after using expressive writing, students experienced improved test performance (Park et al., 2014).

Also, there is evidence of similar results in Japan, the Netherlands, Mexico, and France with monolingual and bilingual students showing significant positive results (Domínguez et al., 1995; Rimé, 1995; Schoutrop et al., 2002; Yogo & Fujihara, 2008).

Expressive Writing in the Participants' Mother Tongue

Educational EFL and English as a second language (ESL) research has shown that, when gleaning information from participants, they express themselves in a free and more expressive way when using their mother tongue (Ganuza & Hedman, 2019). In this respect, Bockarov (2015) has studied the effects of expressive

writing on ESL students, combining their mother tongue and the target language. She concluded that writing in the mother tongue can be a stronger stimulant of emotional responses; however, it helps students improve their performance whether using their mother tongue or the target language for the writing exercises.

There is also evidence that expressive writing in the participants' mother tongue helped tertiary second language (L2) students not only to feel engaged in writing tasks but also to develop and analyze ideas (Pfeiffer & van der Walt, 2017). Similarly, Gains and Graham (2011) reported positive results in three workshops with teachers when using expressive writing in the participants' mother tongue to improve their writing pedagogy competence which also resulted in better learners' writing. It is to be mentioned that not many studies were found with EFL students using expressive writing in their mother tongue to relieve academic stress.

Therefore, this study will examine how expressive writing in the mother tongue favors two specific groups of students (EFL undergraduate students, and preservice EFL program teachers) at the Universidad de Cuenca to reduce academic stress. In this way, the intention is to explore and describe various participants' perceptions of how the act of expressive writing affects their academic behavior. For the purpose of this research, expressive writing is defined as a personal and emotional hand-written piece of writing about stressful academic experiences, in the participants' mother tongue without taking into account punctuation, grammar accuracy, or any other mechanical feature of writing.

In an effort to investigate university students' academic stress and their perceptions of the effects of using expressive writing in the mother tongue as a strategy to reduce it, the following research question has arisen: What perceptions have been forged by EFL undergraduate students and EFL preservice teachers at the Universidad de Cuenca (Ecuador) on the impact of the expressive writing strategy in the mother tongue to reduce their academic stress?

Method

This is a mixed method descriptive study (Mertens, 2015). Data were collected for both quantitative and qualitative analyses as indicated by Dörnyei (2007). This approach, as suggested by some authors (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2015), allows the researcher to select, analyze, and integrate the most specific techniques from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective in order to obtain a more precise triangulation. The results and conclusions can then be rounded out, clarified, and expanded with greater precision, while increasing the credibility range (Mertens, 2015).

The objective of this research was to describe the effects the expressive writing strategy in the mother tongue has on students who are taking EFL classes or studying in the preservice EFL program at Universidad de Cuenca to relieve academic stress.

Participants and Context

This study took place at the Universidad de Cuenca, a public university in the southern part of Ecuador. It has around 16,000 students. Teachers and their intact classes in the preservice EFL program and in the Language Department of the University were invited to participate; two classes from the preservice EFL program and four from the Language Department accepted this invitation. It is necessary to mention the proposal to work with these two groups because even though they study English, they do it with a different purpose and in a different way. The EFL learners from this research study belong to different academic majors and they attend English classes as a graduation requirement. They take their English classes without regard to their progress or current status in their majors. However, preservice EFL program students take English classes in the early years of their program, including subjects such as reading and writing, grammar, conversation, and so on, to get prepared in the language domain. In their advanced courses, preservice EFL students also take classes in content areas that are taught in English

(Argudo et al., 2018). As mentioned before, though these two groups study English, they do it differently and for different reasons. This is an important factor to be analyzed, as results in the use of the expressive writing strategy to heal academic stress in these two groups might have some important similarities and differences.

For the quantitative phase of the study, intact classes, as suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005), were studied since these classes were previously established and research in the area of teaching does not always allow selecting samples at random. A non-probabilistic and intentional-type selection was made, since the classes were selected arbitrarily (Creswell, 2014). One hundred and fifty-seven students participated in this phase of the study, 63 from the preservice EFL program, and 94 from the University Language Department. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years. They completed two questionnaires: a profile one (Appendix A) and a survey (Appendix B) to inquire about their perceptions on the use of expressive writing.

For the qualitative phase of the study, all the students wrote in journals (Appendix C) and some of them also participated in focus groups. To select focus group participants, students were classified by course into three groups: (a) Those who reported that expressive writing had positively influenced them to relieve their academic stress before the formal assessments took place, (b) those who reported that expressive writing had not always helped them with their academic stress, and (c) those who reported that this strategy had not helped them. Random sampling was then carried out and six participants per course were chosen, two from each group. Then, the focus groups were conducted to allow an in-depth investigation of students' perceptions of the influence of expressive writing on their academic stress, and to determine whether they would choose to use this strategy in the future. Self-reported data were gathered from both the expressive writing acts and the focus groups. In this sense, Pennebaker's (2018) operational definition of *perceptions* was considered, since he defined

it as the meaning attached to the expressive writing experience expressed by the participants and the way these experiences make sense on their lives.

To maintain the confidentiality and anonymity rights of the participants as suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005), real names were not used; instead, a pseudonym was given to every person.

Data Collection Instruments

A profile questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to gather student information such as age, gender, academic major, and marital status, as well as questions such as how many times they had visited health centers or private physicians because of academic stress since the beginning of the semester; also, whether they felt ill, or if these had made them stop their academic activities. Pennebaker and Beall (1986) suggested asking these questions before starting the expressive writing sessions.

Before every formal evaluation took place, students from the two groups (EFL and preservice EFL program students) wrote about a situation in the past when they experienced academic stress (see Appendix C). Right after they finish this expressive writing act, they were formally evaluated. Then, a survey of people's perceptions of using the expressive writing strategy developed by Pennebaker and Beall (1986) was used (Appendix B). It is important to include in this survey data related to students' perceptions and feelings regarding the use of expressive writing. Importantly, this instrument is a self-report that accounts for the emotional state of individuals (Watson et al., 1987); consequently, students' perceptions and evaluation are highly subjective. The consistency of this instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, obtaining 0.913. Finally, the focus groups were also organized. All the instruments (profile questionnaire, survey about perceptions, and the focus groups) were in Spanish, the students' native language, as recommended by Filep (2009). Whenever students are invited to reflect on different types of information and to assertively comprehend and express their feel-

ings and perceptions, it is better to use their native language. In the case of the information gathered from the focus groups, it is important to mention that it was transcribed and translated into English; however, to ensure internal validity, the member checking strategy was used as suggested by Creswell (2014).

For the quantitative analysis the IBM SPSS 22 software was used to evaluate data and uncover important information that could help to elucidate the effects of expressive writing on students' stress management. Analogies to measure stress reduction in each expressive writing session were used with the Wilcoxon nonparametric statistics test. Regarding the qualitative analysis, the ATLAS.ti 8v software was used to create codes and categories.

Findings

Quantitative Results

Data were collected in two stages. In the first stage, information about students' profiles and their academic stress experience was collected. In the second stage, students were asked about their perceptions of the use of the expressive writing strategy. It is necessary to mention that this strategy was used in four different instances with every group of students during one semester.

For this study, in the preservice EFL program, the second and fourth of ninth class levels participated in the study, these courses had 31 and 32 students respectively ($n = 63$). On the other hand, 94 students from the Language Department program participated: two first-level groups, with 26 and 28 students respectively, one second-level group with 21 students, and one third-level group with 19 students (see Table 1).

The group of students in the Language Department comprised various majors at the University. In this group, 17.8% of the students were studying Business Administration, 12.8% were studying Architecture, 10.1% were studying Psychology. The rest of the students were students of Law, Engineering, Educational Sciences, and Journalism (see Table 2).

Table 1. Academic Profiles of the Participating Groups

Group	Semester/Level	<i>n</i>	%
Preservice EFL program	2 nd semester of the preservice EFL program	31	19.6
	4 th semester of the preservice EFL program	32	20.3
Language Department	1 st Level A	26	17.1
	1 st Level B	28	17.6
	2 nd Level	21	13.3
	3 rd Level	19	12.1
	Total	157	100.0

Table 2. Students' Majors

Group	Major	<i>n</i>	%
Preservice EFL program	Preservice EFL program	63	40.3
Language Department	Business Administration	28	17.8
	Architecture	20	12.8
	Psychology	16	10.1
	Law	12	7.7
	Engineering	10	6.3
	Educational Science	5	3.1
	Journalism	3	1.9
	Total	157	100.0

Table 3. Students Who Have Visited a Health Specialist Because of Stress in the Previous Six Months

Group Visited the doctor because of stress	Preservice EFL program		Language Department		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	30	47.8	32	34.0	62	39.5
No	33	52.2	62	66.0	95	60.5
Total	63	100.0	94	100.0	157	100.0

Table 4. Students Who Felt Sick Because of Stress in the Previous Six Months

Group Felt ill because of stress	Preservice EFL program		Language Department		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	46	73.0	67	71.3	113	72.2
No	17	27.0	27	28.7	44	27.8
Total	63	100.0	94	100.0	157	100.0

During the last semester a higher number of students in the preservice EFL program (47.8%) mentioned visiting the doctor because of stress than did the Language Department students (34%). On average, 39.5% of students reported having visited the doctor due to stress in the previous six months (see Table 3).

There is no great difference between one group and the other; 73% of the students in the preservice EFL program felt ill because of stress, and 71.3% in the Language Department also felt ill for the same reason. On average, the majority (72.2%) stated that they had felt ill because of stress in the previous six months, an alarming situation since it means that a high percentage of English language students at the Universidad de Cuenca feel stressed, but have not necessarily visited the doctor (see Table 4).

There is no major statistical difference separating students who stopped their academic activities because of stress in one group or the other. The percentage of preservice EFL program students who stopped their activities is 39.1% and in the Language Department 37.2%. Thus, on average, nearly four out of ten (38.3%) students from both groups said they had stopped their academic activities (skipping classes or not doing homework) because of stress in the previous six months (see Table 5).

Table 5. Students Who Stopped Their Academic Activities Because of Stress

Stopped academic activities because of stress	Group	Preservice EFL program		Language Department		Total	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Yes		25	39.1	35	37.2	60	38.3
No		38	60.9	59	62.8	97	61.7
Total		63	100.0	94	100.0	157	100.0

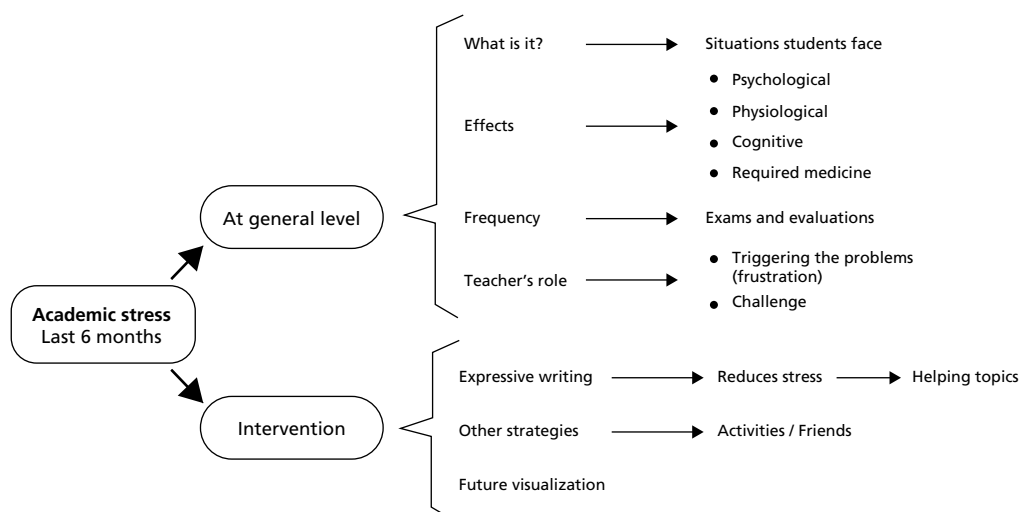
Table 6. Perceptions on Stress Reduction Comparing the Four Expressive Writing Instances

<i>N</i> = 157		Median	Standard deviation	Sig.
Session 1 Median = 0.54 Deviation = 0.50	Session 2	0.62	0.49	0.080
	Session 3	0.61	0.49	0.159
	Session 4	0.64	0.48	0.039*
Session 2 Median = 0.62 Deviation = 0.49	Session 1	0.54	0.50	0.080
	Session 3	0.61	0.49	0.768
	Session 4	0.64	0.48	0.662
Session 3 Median = 0.61 Deviation = 0.49	Session 1	0.54	0.50	0.159
	Session 2	0.62	0.49	0.768
	Session 4	0.64	0.48	0.500
Session 4 Median = 0.64 Deviation = 0.48	Session 1	0.54	0.50	0.039*
	Session 2	0.62	0.49	0.662
	Session 3	0.61	0.49	0.500

The students' perceptions, in both groups, were measured in four instances right after they used the expressive writing strategy and were evaluated (Session 1, Session 2, Session 3, and Session 4). These do not show great variation in the three first instances of using expressive writing, since positive effects are in evidence in more than half of the students in a similar way ($p > 0.05$). However, in the fourth session, some significant differences with respect to the first measurement are noted ($p < 0.05$). This implies that the level of stress reduction is maintained in a similar way in each evaluation experience until the third intervention, and in the fourth intervention, a significant increase in the favorable effects of expressive writing is noted (see Table 6), a situation that needs to be highlighted.

Qualitative Analysis

It is important to mention that for the qualitative analysis, as the results in the quantitative phase of the study did not show a significant difference between the two studied groups, it was unnecessary to have separated results for each group. In this respect, academic stress was conceptualized from two fundamental angles: The first looks at students' general conceptions of academic stress, that is, looking at its effects, its frequency, and the teacher's role. The second angle corresponds to the ideas expressed about the practice of expressive writing over the most recent six months. Figure 1 shows the code and code-family interweaving.

Figure 1. Code and Code-Family Interweaving

About the specific events that occurred during the six months of this expressive writing process, students in the preservice EFL program and in the Language Department offered various testimonies that are addressed in this study. Regarding their conceptions of what academic stress is and how they feel about it, students reported that it is a situation they face in their academic life; when planning evaluations teachers should consider some of these aspects, as these situations can significantly influence not only students' performances but also their daily life. Concerning academic stress effects, multiple symptomatic manifestations were observed:

Maria: My voice breaks and sometimes words don't come out.

Susana: My hands sweat, and they start to get cold, I feel so bad that I can't even write, even knowing the answers.

Joaquin: The tension of that moment caused my blood pressure to drop excessively and I fainted.

Students mentioned that in some occasions they can't cope with the academic stress they feel; consequently, when experiencing these situations, natural medicine, pills, or even substances as energizers or tranquilizers are needed; in this way, they seek to improve their

academic performances and feel better. However, the effect may be contrary to expectations, as well as being an unhealthy practice.

Fernanda: In that moment I used energizers to stay awake to study.

Jaime: During exams, to feel calm, sometimes I need to go to the doctor and take some pills.

Susana: During exams week I usually drink some herbal teas to keep calm and concentrated.

With regard to the situations in which academic stress occurs, most students recognized that it happens at the time of evaluations such as tests, exams, or assignments that usually occur at the same time during the semester, a situation that must be considered. Therefore, teachers should organize the semester in order to give students enough time for assignments and presentations and time for exams without overloading them with tasks that could be done during the whole semester and not during exams week, which is already stressful for them.

Jaime: The week of the exams is the worst one, we are always overloaded with tests, and assignments, teachers should organize them better and spread them during the whole semester and not just all in one week.

Carmen: I feel a lot of pressure when I have to take exams.

Juan: I experience academic stress, particularly during the week of exams.

Pedro: That in certain academic events such as exams and assignments there is always a lot of stress.

Students also mentioned that, sometimes, teachers cause the problem; being this a challenge students need to overcome in order to succeed. In this sense, it is to be mentioned that teachers need to be facilitators in the learning process, that is, they need to help students to acquire the necessary knowledge and to overcome learning difficulties and not to be the reason for students to feel stressed and anxious, which will make this process more complicated.

Rebeca: I did not understand the teacher's methodology, and because of this, I had bad grades and felt stressed.

Jose: The teacher, with all those pop quizzes and oral presentation assignments, caused a lot of stress for me.

Enrique: I feel that with some teachers . . . I have to prepare for tests and exams more than with other teachers, they try to make our life difficult.

Pedro: Sometimes teachers come to class without planning, and they want us to do more than they do. That stresses me a lot.

Regarding the second angle of analysis, several participants in this study agreed that writing about past stressful academic situations helped them to release this bad feeling. Furthermore, they felt more confident to express themselves by writing rather than talking, and it helped to release stress. This could happen because, when giving words to our emotions and feelings, the parts of the brain that deal with language and meaning activate (Lindquist et al., 2015). This is a way to become less reactive and more mindfully aware.

Maria: I think it can be a bit similar to a narrative, because it is about the fact of having an experience, but at the same time being sincere when I write about it. I felt . . . that it is an event I experienced, something very personal.

Fernando: I think expressive writing helps me to explore some deep feelings or situations that happened and that are somehow in our minds, . . . and being able to get them out only is possible by the use of the expressive writing strategy.

Ana: It helped me because it relieves stress. It is a very personal piece of writing, a situation I don't like to talk about very often. I feel somewhat relieved because I was able to write about how I feel.

Pedro: I think it worked as a relief to describe my experiences, it was a personal experience, I really needed to write about that experience.

Other alternative activities to reduce academic stress were also mentioned such as doing what they like, especially sharing time with friends, reading, and practicing exercises, among others. As the participants of the study mentioned, changing activities and doing things to clear their mind and recharge energy to keep studying are good ways to release stress.

Martin: Practicing exercises can also help to release stress.

Juan: To lower stress I usually go out with my friends.

Maria: Reading books or listening to music usually help me to feel relaxed.

Finally, when asked about the different strategies they will use in the future to relieve academic stress, several students responded they will use expressive writing, since it is a good alternative that helps to deal with stress and to know themselves better to face difficult circumstances of the learning process.

Cristian: I would use it, but it would be in certain circumstances, on certain occasions, because sometimes I am focused on something and I cannot do any other thing.

Daniela: It should be applied in subjects that are taught by strict teachers (laughs) . . . I mean, some of us already fear the teacher.

Lorena: I think that I will use it, because it helps us to internalize ourselves and to face the situation.

Roberto: I would use it, but, as I said before, before studying, to relax and study feeling a bit more relaxed, and yes it can also be before a test so I won't feel nervous the moment I take it.

Discussion

As Salend (2011) observed, sometimes a great deal of stress is reflected not only in the affective side of a person, but also in the behavioral and physical side. Students can experience sweating, headaches, stomach aches, nausea, tachycardia, insomnia, and so on. Among the behavioral symptoms, forgetfulness of the studied contents can be observed, which can even cause a mental block that does not allow people to remember what was studied, to feel overwhelmed, along with a lack of concentration, attention, and memory. All these symptoms cause difficulties for students both when studying and preparing for the assessment, and during the exam, when they may not feel able to read or understand the questions. Students of both groups in this study mentioned they experience some of these problems, and it should be noted that significant differences were not found in the results of the two groups. Therefore, it is evident that today's students are burdened with a great load of stress produced by academic life.

Smith et al. (2000) demonstrated that in higher education students must complete their assignments before certain deadlines, and it pressures them to perform well on tests or exams; additionally, as mentioned by Hashemi (2011), EFL learning increases the stress load. Findings of this research show a similar situation at the Universidad de Cuenca where stress is perceived among the preservice EFL program and the Language Department students in a similar way, since they mentioned that, especially when taking exams, they have assignments, tests, and expositions in the different subjects they are taking for the same deadlines. As demonstrated in this study, writing about past feel-

ings and emotions before formal evaluations might be a means of relieving stress; as Pennebaker (2018) has declared, keeping back these feeling and emotions is stressful. This might be the reason why some students mentioned that the expressive writing act is a way to externalize feelings and emotions.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of studies that claim to have found positive results when using expressive writing to relieve stress (Bockarov, 2015; Mattina, 2011; Pennebaker, 2018). In this study, the use of expressive writing in the mother tongue as a strategy led to a significant improvement after the fourth session. These students mentioned that the level of academic stress was reduced after having experienced an expressive writing process. It was observed that the expressive writing act works progressively; moreover, they reported that they felt comfortable and would continue using this strategy to feel relieved. These data are similar to other studies (Bockarov, 2015; Mattina, 2011) in which the participants reported improvements not only in their physical health, but also in their ability to regulate and accept their emotions. Along these same lines, Pennebaker and Beall (1986) stated that the act of writing about traumatic events directly affects topics related to catharsis, self-disclosure, and the psychosomatic theory related to behavioral inhibition (Park et al., 2014).

In this regard, negative stress tendencies relate to tension felt at different, seemingly unrelated times, and to occasional lack of control (Álvarez-Hernández et al., 2013). It has been proven that people who report a large number of physical symptoms tend to visit doctors more times; this suggests that their health is being compromised. However, many people with a considerable number of these signs are objectively as healthy as the people who suffer from them to a lesser degree. Several studies (Pennebaker, 2004; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker & Evans, 2014; Pennebaker & Graybeal, 2001) have found "that having people write about traumas can result in healthy improvements in social, psychological,

behavioral, and biological measures” (Pennebaker & Evans, 2014). Physical symptoms reflect people’s psychology almost as much as their biology (Pennebaker & Evans, 2014).

For the students who participated in this study, expressive writing was also associated with personal and subjective writing, with writing that reveals their inner feelings, experiences, thoughts, and memories. According to Pennebaker (2004), writing about stressful and distressing situations can give rise to positive physical and emotional sensations. This was apparent in the present study, since students experienced significant improvement, especially in the fourth and final session. Expressive writing can be a way to transform emotions and feelings and can lead to positive effects for people who, as the participants in this study expressed, become more able to vent and self-analyze, as Pennebaker and Beall (1986) and Park et al. (2014) found in their studies. Being emotionally disinhibited can be compared to a form of relief or catharsis, as indicated by Pennebaker and Beall (1986). Certainly, the students from both groups expressed having felt free, relieved of pressure, having gained a clear mind by facing their fears, and externalizing personal experiences.

By feeling better and more able to self-regulate their stress, it could be said that motivation in students increases, as Mattina (2011) mentions. In the present study, students externalized their emotions about a situation that caused them to feel stressed through expressive writing.

Conclusions

After analyzing the different findings in this study, it might be concluded that expressive writing in the mother tongue before a formal evaluation helped the participants to lower their academic stress level caused by undergoing formal evaluations. In addition, this research helps demonstrate that college students experience anxiety and stress to significant degrees before undergoing an assessment. The reasons for

that anxiety are the same whether students are taking English as a graduation requirement or are preparing to be future EFL teachers. Therefore, the results suggest that using an alternative strategy such as expressive writing, aimed at alleviating specific causes of anxiety and stress, could lead to a significant decrease in academic stress.

Likewise, it might be concluded that students perceived expressive writing as a positive strategy that eased their stress. It can be said that this strategy acts gradually, since significant results are noted after using this strategy over a period of time. Furthermore, it can be asserted that using expressive writing is an effective strategy that can be applied at university level. Finally, it is important to mention that students and the overload of tasks that they must fulfill cannot be ignored, especially because they mentioned that teachers trigger the problem and cause feelings of stress and frustration, a situation which undoubtedly influences their performance. Thus, stressed students and teachers who cause it might not be able to develop an adequate or ideal teaching and learning process.

References

- Álvarez-Hernández, J., Aguilar-Parra, J. M., Fernández-Campoy, J. M., Salguero-García, D., & Pérez-Gallardo, E. R. (2013). El estrés ante los exámenes en los estudiantes universitarios: propuesta de intervención [Exam stress in university students: Intervention proposal]. *International Journal of Developmental and Educational Psychology*, 2(1), 179–188.
- Argudo, J. (2019). *La escritura expresiva en la lengua materna como estrategia para aliviar el estrés antes de la evaluación formal en una lengua extranjera: desafíos y percepciones* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina.
- Argudo, J., Abad, M., Fajardo-Dack, T., & Cabrera, P. (2018). Analyzing a pre-service EFL program through the lenses of the CLIL approach at the University of Cuenca-Ecuador. *Latin American Journal of Content*

- & *Language Integrated Learning*, 11(1), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.5294/laclil.2018.11.1.4>
- Bockarov, M. (2015). *Narrative medicine in the native tongue: The effect of the L1 as a moderating variable of exam performance in experimental disclosure therapy* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. TSpace Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/1807/77740>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Domínguez, B., Valderrama, P., Meza, M. A., Pérez, S. L., Silva, A., Martínez, G., Méndez, V. M., & Olvera, Y. (1995). The roles of disclosure and emotional reversal in clinical practice. In J. W. Pennebaker (Ed.), *Emotion, disclosure, and health*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10182-012>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Filep, B. (2009). Interview and translation strategies: Coping with multilingual settings and data. *Social Geography*, 4(1), 59–70. <https://doi.org/10.5194/sg-4-59-2009>
- Gains, P., & Graham, B. (2011). Making space for expressive and creative writing in African primary schools: A two-site action research study in Kenya and South Africa. *Reading and Writing*, 2(1), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v2i1.14>
- Ganuza, N., & Hedman, C. (2019). The impact of mother tongue instruction on the development of biliteracy: Evidence from Somali–Swedish bilinguals. *Applied Linguistics*, 40(1), 108–131. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx010>
- Hashemi, M. (2011). Language stress and anxiety among the English language learners. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 1811–1816. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.349>
- Jerominus, B. F., Riese, H., Sanderman, R., & Ormel, J. (2014). Mutual reinforcement between neuroticism and life experiences: A five-wave, 16-year study to test reciprocal causation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107(4), 751–764. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037009>
- Klein, K., & Boals, A. (2001). Expressive writing can increase working memory capacity. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 130(3), 520–533. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.130.3.520>
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2016). *How languages are learned*. Oxford University Press.
- Lindquist, K. A., MacCormack, J. K., & Shablack, H. (2015). The role of language in emotion: Predictions from psychological constructionism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00444>
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Laurence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mattina, J. (2011). *The role of emotion regulation in the expressive writing intervention*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. TSpace Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/1807/31858>
- Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. Sage.
- Ministerio de Educación. (2011). *Ecuador mejoró su sistema educativo en los últimos 7 años* [Ecuador improved its educational system in the last 7 years]. <https://bit.ly/34HscQn>
- Nagy, T. (2016). English as a lingua franca and its implications for teaching English as a foreign language. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, 8(2), 155–166. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ausp-2016-0024>
- Park, D., Ramirez, G., & Beilock, S. L. (2014). The role of expressive writing in math anxiety. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 20(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000013>
- Pennebaker, J. W. (2004). *Writing to heal: A guided journal for recovering from trauma and emotional upheaval*. New Harbinger Publication.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (2018). Expressive writing in psychological science. *Association for Psychological Science*, 13(2), 226–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617707315>
- Pennebaker, J. W., & Beall, S. K. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 95(3), 274–281. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.95.3.274>

- Pennebaker, J. W., & Evans, J. F. (2014). *Expressive writing: Words that heal*. Udyll Arbor.
- Pennebaker, J. W., & Graybeal, A. (2001). Patterns of natural language use: Disclosure personality, and social integration. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(3), 90–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00123>
- Pfeiffer, V., & van der Walt, C. (2017). Improving academic writing through expressive writing. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 50(2), 57–77. <https://doi.org/10.4314/jlt.v50i2.3>
- Ramírez, G., & Beilock, S. L. (2011). Writing about testing worries boosts exam performance in the classroom. *Science*, 331(6014), 211–213. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1199427>
- Resolution RPC-SO-08-No.111-2019, Consejo de Educación Superior (2019). <https://bit.ly/3aCFgdz>
- Rimé, B. (1995). Mental rumination, social sharing, and the recovery from emotional exposure. In J. W. Pennebaker (Ed.), *Emotion, disclosure, and health*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10182-013>
- Rojas-Caruci, M. (2012). Inglés instrumental y representaciones docentes hacia una visión de pedagogía creativa [Instrumental English and teaching representations towards a vision of creative pedagogy]. *Salud, Arte y Cuidado*, (5), 88–100.
- Salend, S. J. (2011). Addressing test anxiety. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 44(2), 58–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991104400206>
- Schoutrop, M. J. A., Lange, A., Hanewald, G., Davidovich, U., & Salomon, H. (2002). Structured writing and processing major stressful events: A controlled trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 71, 151–157. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000056282>
- Smith, A., Johal, S., Wadsworth, E., Smith, G. D., & Peters, T. (2000). *The scale of occupational stress: The Bristol stress and health at work study*. HSE Books.
- Ur, P. (2010). English as a lingua franca: A teacher's perspective. *Cuadernos de Letras*, 27, 85–91.
- Watson, D., Pennebaker, J. W., & Folger, R. (1987). Beyond negative affectivity: Measuring stress and satisfaction in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 8(2), 141–158. https://doi.org/10.1300/J075v08n02_09
- Yogo, M., & Fujihara, S. (2008). Working memory capacity can be improved by expressive writing: A randomized experiment in a Japanese sample. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 13(1), 77–80. <https://doi.org/10.1348/135910707X252440>

About the Author

Juanita Argudo holds a bachelor's degree in English teaching from Universidad del Azuay and a master's degree in English language and applied linguistics from Universidad de Cuenca (both in Ecuador). She holds a PhD in education from Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina). She is a professor in the teacher-training program and in the Languages Department at Universidad de Cuenca.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Silvana Barboni for her expert advice and encouragement during the process of writing the doctoral dissertation on which the paper is based.

Appendix A: Students' Profile Interview

Name: _____ Age: _____
Gender: _____ Marital Status: _____
Major: _____ Subject: _____
EFL level or semester: _____
Since the beginning of the semester:
Have you visited a health center or a specialist because of stress?
Have you felt sick because of stress?
Have you stopped your regular activities due to stress?

Appendix B: Survey on Students' Perceptions

After writing about an experience caused by academic stress, and having taken a formal evaluation, do you consider this strategy helped you relieve stress?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Explain:

How personal was the essay you wrote?

How often do you talk to other people about what you wrote today?

How much do you reveal your emotions in what you wrote today?

Briefly describe how you feel about what you wrote today:

Appendix C: Topics for the Expressive Writing Act

Text 1

Write a short text, **IN SPANISH**, of one of your past experiences caused by academic stress.

Text 2

Write a short text, **IN SPANISH**, of an experience in which you prepared very well to take a test or exam and at the time of it you were memory-blocked and did not remember what you had studied. Detail some of your feelings and emotions at the time.

Text 3

Most people are afraid before an exam; however, this feeling is irrational and does not help during the exam. Sometimes it is expressed as fear or phobia in phrases such as “if I don’t pass this test, my life won’t be worth it.” Write a short text **IN SPANISH**, indicating if you ever had these kinds of feelings before an exam.

Text 4

Most people are scared of tests to some degree. Write a short text, **IN SPANISH**, in which you express your emotions and feelings regarding the exam or test you are about to take.

Critical Reading With Undergraduate EFL Students in Colombia: Gains and Challenges

Lectura crítica con estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como
lengua extranjera en Colombia: logros y desafíos

Juan David Castaño-Roldán

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín, Colombia

Doris Correa


Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia


This qualitative study explored the gains and challenges experienced by an interdisciplinary group of English as a foreign language students who participated in the implementation of a critical reading unit taught within a reading comprehension course at a university in Medellín, Colombia. To do this, video-recordings of all lessons, samples of students' work, and students' reflections were collected. Results show that students experienced several gains but also had some challenges related to aligning with the author's position, seeing positionality in factual texts, and taking middle positions. These results suggest that even though it is not only possible but beneficial to do critical reading with undergraduate English as a foreign language students, there are some specific areas in which these students need additional support.

Keywords: critical reading, English as a foreign language, English instruction, reading comprehension, undergraduate students

Este estudio cualitativo exploró los aprendizajes y los retos experimentados por un grupo interdisciplinar de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera que participaron en la implementación de una unidad de lectura crítica en un curso de comprensión lectora en una universidad colombiana. Para hacer esto, se recogieron las grabaciones de las sesiones de clase, así como las muestras de los trabajos y las reflexiones de los estudiantes. Los resultados muestran que los estudiantes tuvieron varias ganancias, pero también experimentaron ciertos retos relacionados con su alineamiento con la posición del autor, y el no poder ver la posicionalidad en los textos fácticos, o tomar posiciones intermedias. Estos resultados sugieren que, aunque es posible y beneficioso hacer este tipo de lectura con estos estudiantes de este pregrado, existen áreas específicas en las que éstos necesitan un apoyo adicional.

Palabras clave: comprensión lectora, enseñanza del inglés, inglés como lengua extranjera, estudiantes de pregrado, lectura crítica

Juan David Castaño-Roldán  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4060-5149> · Email: david.castano@udea.edu.co

Doris Correa  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2714-2493> · Email: doris.correa@udea.edu.co

This article is based on the master's thesis completed by Castaño-Roldán (2019).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Castaño-Roldán, J. D., & Correa, D. (2021). Critical reading with undergraduate EFL students in Colombia: Gains and challenges. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.89034>

This article was received on July 10, 2020 and accepted on March 12, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

In the last few years, the number of texts available in different languages, especially English, has increased considerably as a result of the development of technology around the world (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). To critical literacy scholars, even though these texts can increase and expand our knowledge of the world, they also have the power to deceive, delude (Haromi, 2014; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) and misrepresent reality (Luke et al., 1994; Wallace, 2003). Moreover, they can contribute to the reproduction of stereotypes, unequal social structures and power relations (Janks, 2010; Wallace, 2003), discriminatory race relations, restrictive versions of gender identities, and one-dimensional versions of culture (Luke et al., 1994).

But how do texts do this? Critical literacy scholars believe they do it through the use of different lexical (e.g., choice of certain words), grammatical (e.g., choice of active instead of passive voice), and textual choices (e.g., fronting some information and putting the other at the end; Butt et al., 2000). These choices are situated in the authors' worlds and reflect their ideological biases (Wallace, 2003). For example, if authors privilege a certain way of seeing the world, they will represent it in a positive way by using positively charged words, putting it in the theme position (or at the beginning of the clause), supporting it with other views, and so on. On the other hand, if authors despise this way of seeing the world, they will use negatively charged words, put it in the rheme position (or at the end of the clause), and silence those voices that represent it in a positive way. To be able to unravel all these mechanisms used by authors, students need to be taught to read critically.

Reading critically means "questioning, exploring, and challenging the power relationships that exist between authors and readers in terms of gender, race, and social class, among others" (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2008, p. 54). It also means "understanding why the author wrote about a particular topic from a

particular perspective, or why they chose to leave some ideas in and others out of the text, among other things" (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p. 12).

Students who can read this way have a broader understanding of what is happening in texts (Janks, 2010). Besides, they are better equipped to do the following: (a) reflect on issues they face from different angles and develop a more accurate image of what these issues might be (Iyer, 2007), (b) avoid the passive reproduction of the ideas found in the texts they read (Comber, 2001), (c) question normalized, unfair representations of certain groups of people in texts (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2008), and (d) create counter-texts that represent these groups of people in a more just way and "to seek out the voices of those who have been silenced or marginalized" (Janks, 2010, p. 383).

On the other hand, students who are not able to do this type of critical reading (CR) can more easily fall prey to authors' manipulation and may inadvertently end up perpetuating unequal power relationships related to social issues such as race, class, and gender both in texts and society (Luke, 2000). They may also find themselves normalizing and reproducing stereotypes and ideologies embedded in these texts (Luke, 2012).

Aware of the importance of having students do a CR of texts, many universities across the globe have started to offer English as a foreign language (EFL) reading comprehension courses in which students are taught CR as described above (Giraldo, 2018; Gómez-Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Haromi, 2014). Unfortunately, a review of studies published in the five main EFL Colombian journals reveals that, in the country, these courses have focused on the development of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and exploiting transparent words, among others (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2009; Bautista-Barón, 2013; Camargo & Orbegoza-Navarro, 2010; Gómez-Torres & Ávila-Constain, 2009; Lopera-Medina, 2012; López-Medina, 2001; Perdomo, 2001; Posada-Ortiz, 2004; Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2017; Ruiz & Arias-Rodríguez, 2009), not on the development of CR.

Given this gap, scholars from a university in Medellín, Colombia, designed and taught a CR unit to students taking a reading comprehension course at this university. As they did this, they conducted a qualitative study guided by the following research question: What are the gains and challenges experienced by undergraduate students during the implementation of this unit?

Theoretical Framework

The study described here drew on critical literacy theories, particularly those focused on CR, and used McLaughlin and DeVoogd's (2004) Strategy Instructional Framework to help students read community texts critically. These texts, as defined by Luke et al. (1994), are those that circulate in everyday life and are important in the wider cultural climate. Examples of these are newspaper reports, comic strips, memes, and magazine articles. Although they seem to be neutral, these texts document and shape social life and impose ideological agendas (Luke et al., 1994; Wallace, 2003).

Critical Reading

CR is a complex phenomenon that comprises at least four main principles, all of which were used in the CR unit presented here:

1. CR allows readers to identify the author's position in texts and how it influences readers: This involves recognizing how the linguistic and textual choices made by authors are helping them both establish their position and influence the readers' position (Cervetti et al., 2001; Janks, 2010; Luke, 2000).
2. CR helps readers think about texts from different perspectives: This means acknowledging that other representations of the world, apart from those of the author, are possible and valid (Iyer, 2007; Lewison et al., 2002; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).
3. CR permits readers to uncover hidden messages in texts: This implies identifying other messages in texts, beyond the obvious, and the ideologies

behind these messages (Begoray et al., 2013; Kellner & Share, 2007; Luke, 2000; Molden, 2007).

4. CR facilitates the recognition of silenced and marginalized voices in texts: This refers to being able to pinpoint whose voices are being left out of the conversation by authors and the intentions that authors have with this (Luke, 2000; McDaniel, 2004; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

Although there are many definitions of CR, there are few studies showing how it can be done at the undergraduate level. These studies focus mainly on the following: (a) the results of teaching CR in English reading comprehension courses for undergraduate students with varied proficiency levels (Giraldo, 2018; Haromi, 2014; Huang, 2011; Liu, 2017), (b) undergraduate students' responses to CR instruction in English courses (Esteban-Núñez, 2014; Gómez-Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Kuo, 2014), and (c) EFL teachers' perceptions and difficulties when implementing CR (Belet & Dal, 2010; Gómez-Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Rahimi & Askari-Bigdeli, 2015). They do not focus on the gains and challenges experienced by students with this pedagogy.

The few studies that have focused on these two issues have reported four main challenges: (a) inability to see authors' bias when stereotypes in texts apply to more than one social group (Giraldo, 2018), (b) problems to see textual organization as a tool for authors to position readers (Haromi, 2014), (c) difficulties to see stereotypes when these are rooted and tied to students' cultural identities (Gómez-Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019), and (d) trouble to discuss political issues and challenge the status quo (Rahimi & Askari-Bigdeli, 2015).

As for gains, the studies have identified at least another four: (a) students' realization that all texts reflect authors' positions and, therefore, they always try to influence readers (Huang, 2011); (b) improvement of students' language proficiency level by increasing their motivation (Liu, 2017); (c) broadening of students' understanding

of issues such as racism (Esteban-Núñez, 2014); and (d) students' development of multiple perspectives on issues (Belet & Dal, 2010).

The Strategy Instructional Framework

This framework, as described by McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), involves five stages: explaining, demonstrating, guiding, practicing, and reflecting. In the first stage, the instructor "explains what a critical literacy strategy is and how it works" (p. 38). Two strategies proposed by these authors are "mind and alternative mind portraits" and "theme switch" (p. 47). However, instructors can use others such as analysis of appraisal devices used in the text (e.g., nouns, adjectives, adverbs; Butt et al., 2000, p. 120).

In "mind and alternative mind portraits," students examine a text from two points of view which may or may not be present in the text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p. 51). In "theme switch," after students read a text, they respond to selected questions, such as "what gender is represented in the text?" or "what race is represented in the text." Then, they imagine how the message would change after switching the race or gender of characters in certain texts (p. 48). In the analysis of appraisal devices, students examine linguistics elements, chosen by authors to represent reality (Butt et al., 2000, p. 120).

In the second stage, demonstrating, the instructor "demonstrates the strategy by using a think-aloud, a read-aloud, and an overhead projector or chalkboard" (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p. 38). In the third stage, guiding, the instructor "guides students to work in small groups or with partners to create responses" (p. 38). In the fourth stage, practicing, the instructor has students "practice by having students work with partners or independently to apply the critical literacy strategy" (p. 38). Finally, in the last stage, reflecting, the instructor encourages students to "reflect on how the strategy helps read critically" (p. 38).

Method

This is a qualitative study as it takes "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, . . . studying things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection resources included video-recordings of all classes, samples of students' work, and students' written reflection tasks. To collect these data, consent forms were procured from both the program coordinator and the students, and pseudonyms were assigned to all participants. Samples of students' work were collected at two different moments: (a) in the guiding stage and (b) in the practice stage of each cycle, which included text analyses done by students. Reflections took place at the reflection stage of each cycle and were carried out in Spanish so that students would feel more comfortable expressing themselves. In them, students reported what they had learned about the principle and if the strategies provided had helped them read more critically. Table 1 shows a summary of all data collected.

Data were analyzed using a deductive-inductive approach (Richards, 2003). That is, researchers used some preestablished categories (the four CR principles) and subcategories (gains and challenges). However, new categories (e.g., lack of cultural background, understanding the role of language in positionality, lack of grammatical knowledge) were allowed to emerge.

Context and Participants

The setting for this study was an English reading comprehension Level II course taught to undergraduate students in a public university in Medellín, Colombia. The original program sought to develop students' reading comprehension skills in English through the teaching of morpho-syntactic structures, vocabulary, general terminology as well as reading strategies (English reading comprehension program, I & II).

Table 1. Data Collected

Instrument	Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4	Total per instrument
Video recordings	4	4	4	4	16
Samples of students' work	17	17	15	15	64
Reflection tasks	21	21	19	20	81
Total per principle	42	42	38	39	

Nonetheless, the authors obtained permission from the program Coordination to reconfigure the course syllabus and make it more in line with these theories.

The students taking this course were a group of 21 undergraduates, 10 male and 11 female, coming mostly from low socio-economic backgrounds whose ages ranged from 17 to 24. They were pursuing different professional programs and class observations suggest their English proficiency level ranged from A2 to B1. In regard to their reading comprehension, students claimed not to have any experience with CR, as their previous reading comprehension course had mainly focused on grammar aspects, how to use dictionaries, and how to identify main ideas.

The Pedagogical Unit

The pedagogical unit comprised 16 classes, taught in the course of four weeks. To organize the unit, McLaughlin and DeVoogd's (2004) Strategy Instructional Framework was used in a cyclic manner (one cycle per CR principle) until all four CR principles were covered. Since students belonged to different fields of knowledge, we decided to use community instead of disciplinary texts. As for topics, we decided to include those that seemed appealing to a wide range of Colombians: Pablo Escobar, alcohol, use of guns, the ceasefire. We also used memes that displayed gender and race issues due to their currency in Colombian WhatsApp messages, and an article on vegetarianism, due to the explosion of vegetarian restaurants in the city.

Table 2 shows both the strategies and the texts that were selected to teach each principle.

For example, to familiarize students with the first principle, during the first class, the instructor explained how identifying authors' positions in texts could help them read critically (explanation stage). Then, the news report "Press Hails Uribe's Victory" retrieved from the BBC site was used to demonstrate the analysis of appraisal devices strategy, which consisted of looking at the adjectives and nouns used by the author to represent the characters and situations in this text (demonstration stage).

Next, during the second class, students were guided, in pairs to analyze another news report "Drug Boss Pablo Escobar Still Divides Colombia" retrieved from the BBC site. They wrote down the analysis they made using the strategy and presented it to the rest of the class orally for their feedback (guiding stage). Then, in the same pairs, and as homework for the third class, students were asked to find a similar text to practice the modeled strategy and to show their understanding of the CR principle that was being discussed. Once in class, they shared their analysis with the whole class and received feedback from both the instructor and their classmates (practice stage).

Finally, during the fourth class, students answered some questions posed by the instructor to help them reflect on the gains and challenges they experienced while working with the principle (reflection stage). Once this cycle was over, a new cycle with a new principle would begin. Each cycle lasted about four classes.

Table 2. Principles, Strategies and Texts Used to Develop Critical Reading (CR)

CR principles: CR is being able to:	1. Identify the author's position in texts and how it influences readers.	2. Think about texts from different perspectives.	3. Uncover hidden messages in texts.	4. Recognize silenced and marginalized voices in texts.
CR strategies	Appraisal strategy	Mind and alternative mind portraits strategy	Theme switch strategy	Mind and alternative mind portraits strategy
Texts used	“Press Hails Uribe's Victory” (BBC) ^a “Drug Boss Pablo Escobar Still Divides Colombia” (BBC) ^b	“Can Alcohol Help You Live Longer?” (Time Magazine) ^c “How a Vegetarian Diet Could Help Save the Planet” (Time Magazine) ^d	Memes and comic strips from the internet dealing with gender and race issues	“Father Challenges Marco Rubio on Guns” (CNN News) ^e “Colombia and FARC Sign Historic Ceasefire Deal” (Al Jazeera English News Channel) ^f

^a (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5026808.stm>). ^b (<https://bbc.in/38ylrCe>). ^c (<https://bit.ly/3vfkPLI>). ^d (<https://bit.ly/38woZCo>).

^e (<https://bit.ly/3bFWUuj>). ^f (<https://bit.ly/3lighje>).

Findings

Findings suggest that during the CR unit, students experienced both gains and challenges. The following paragraphs describe what these were and present evidence from the unit.

Gains

In regard to gains, the analysis suggests students were not only able to understand the four CR principles but also went beyond them by understanding the following: (a) the role of knowledge and language in positionality, (b) the importance of multiple perspectives in unveiling both authors' positionality and hidden messages, and (c) the reasons why authors give voice to certain characters and silence others.

Understanding the Role of Knowledge and Language in Positionality

This gain refers to students' realization that readers are less easily influenced by authors when they have knowledge about the topic, character, or situation being presented and when they are aware of the language being used. Nine students showed understanding of the first

part. An example of these students is Valeria. As practice for the first principle—CR is about identifying the author's position in texts and how it influences readers—students had been asked to look for a text and analyze it using the appraisal strategy taught in class. Valeria brought a text about crash diets. When discussing this and other texts that students had brought, Valeria said,¹

Since I did not know about the topic, it was hard for me, to a certain extent, to identify the author's position because I did not have a reference point to know if I could believe what I was reading or not. So, I assumed it was true in a way.

As can be seen, Valeria realizes that when readers do not have knowledge about the topic, it is not only hard to identify the author's position but also to adopt one themselves, which makes them more easily assume that what the author says is true.

Valeria's realization was confirmed in the reflection task for the first principle where, in response to Question 1 (“What did you learn about the author's position and how it influences readers?”), she wrote,

¹ Excerpts have been translated from Spanish.

Authors use certain linguistic elements to give readers clues about their position on the topic of the text. However, *if the reader does not know much about the topic, the author can make them change their opinion or interest in the topic in a negative or positive way.*

In this reflection, Valeria expands on what she had stated in class by explaining that knowing little about the topic is also dangerous as the author can make readers change their position very easily.

As for the role of language in positionality, 16 students showed understanding of this aspect. An example of these students is Tomás. For the guiding stage of the same principle, the instructor provided students with the article about Escobar from *BBC News*. In this article, the author takes a negative position against Escobar by describing him as “infamous drug lord,” “drug boss,” and “crime boss.” He also takes a negative position against the fact that some people still affectionately refer to Pablo as “Pablito.” To show students how authors influence readers positively or negatively through the linguistic choices they make, the instructor asked students to read the article and complete a table with questions about how the author was positioning Escobar. Table 3 shows how Tomás responded.

Tomás’s answers show that he was able to understand how the author was using specific linguistic resources, such as adverbs, adjectives, and nouns to “persuade

readers to believe that Pablo was a bad person.” During the reflection stage for the first principle, Tomás commented on this new understanding. He said,

Teacher, when I was...looking at the example that you gave us about Pablo and the one that I did, I realized *that the language that the author uses either adjectives or whatever makes you believe because it causes emotions in you that make you agree or disagree and mainly when you read in a hurry which is like you read the news. [sic]*

As is evident from this intervention, Tomás did not only understand the role of language in positioning readers but also how it achieved this positioning. Besides, he was also able to identify that readers are more susceptible to this positioning when they do not read carefully.

Realizing the Importance of Multiple Perspectives in Identifying Author's Position and Unveiling Hidden Messages

As the lessons progressed, students were able to not only adopt multiple perspectives but also realize how these could help them both understand what is going on in a text and unveil hidden messages. One of the nine students who was able to use multiple perspectives to identify the author’s position was Anibal. In one of the activities carried out to help students understand the second principle—CR is about analyzing texts

Table 3. Tomás’s Analysis of a News Article

Article: “Drug Boss Pablo Escobar Still Divides Colombia.” Principle 1		
How is the author positioning Escobar?	What linguistic elements is he using to do that?	What image of Escobar is he trying to imprint on readers?
The author positions Escobar as someone for whom he feels disdain. He also positions him as a cruel and ruthless criminal.	Adverbs: sadly, shockingly Adjectives: infamous, criminal, richest Nouns: greatest outlaw, ruthlessness, crime boss Verbs: terrorised, bribed, attacked, killed	<u>The author tries to persuade readers to believe that Pablo was a bad person</u> who does not deserve to be admired in the Colombian culture. I can say that because of the way that he describes everything related to Pablo.

from different perspectives—the instructor asked students to read the article about vegetarianism from *Time Magazine*. In this article, the author takes a position in favor of vegetarianism by portraying it as the possible solution to environmental and health problems. Students had to select one of the author's statements related to the topic and then apply the “mind and alternative mind portraits” strategy, which meant analyzing the statement based on what people like scientists, housewives, and activists would think. By the end of the exercise, Anibal was able to think about the topic of the text from several perspectives that were both in favor and against the author's position. Table 4 shows his responses.

Table 4. Anibal's Response to a Magazine Article

Article: “How a Vegetarian Diet Could Help Save the Planet.” Principle 2	
Alternative perspective	
Author's statement	Reducing meat consumption improves human health.
What other people say about this statement?	<p>In favor: Nutritionist: Reducing meat consumption helps avoid a lot of heart problems. I can help you design a diet plan to reduce meat consumption. Scientist: This is scientifically proven. With more studies, we can tell you more information about it.</p> <p>Against: Mother: Meat cannot be reduced. It has a good amount of protein and it is easy to prepare. Butcher: Humans have always eaten meat and if we stop eating it, it will <u>affect many people's economy.</u></p>

As can be gathered from Table 4, Anibal was able to think about the arguments other people would provide against or in favor of this statement and the interests that these arguments would support. In the reflection stage for the second principle, he confirmed that he saw

how important being able to identify these positions was in identifying the author's positionality:

Teacher, you generally think that *the information that you have is the truth just because, and that it is not an opinion like everyone else's*. When you start considering what different people can think about a certain topic in a text, you can even realize the way that the author believes things should be concerning the topic in the text.

This statement shows Anibal's realization that it was easier for readers to identify the author's position when they considered other perspectives about the topic of the text.

As for being able to use multiple perspectives to unveil hidden messages, one of the six students who presented this gain was Catalina. To help students understand the third principle—uncovering hidden messages in texts—the instructor explained the “theme switch” strategy, which basically asked students to look at the issue from the perspective of a person from a different gender or race. To practice this strategy, students were asked to bring random memes or comic strips to be analyzed in class. Once these were gathered, each student was assigned two. Catalina got the ones shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Once assigned, students were instructed to apply the switching strategy taught in class and then answer a question about stereotypes (Table 5).

Table 5. Catalina's Analysis of Memes and Comic Strips (Principle 3)

What is the stereotype?
<u>Men are unfaithful and irresponsible.</u> <u>Black people are thieves.</u>

Table 5 shows how by using “gender switch,” or putting herself in the position of a man, Catalina was able to unveil the stereotype about men being portrayed in Figure 1. Similarly, by using race switch, she was able to clearly see the stereotype about black people shown

in Figure 2. During the reflection stage for the third principle, when asked, “have your views of memes changed after analyzing them with these strategies, how?” Catalina said,

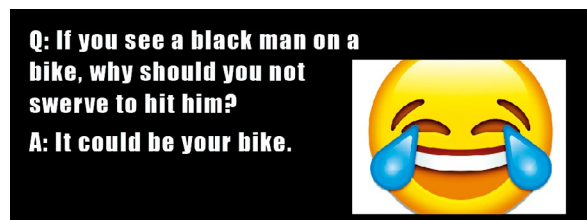
Now, I am more aware of the fact that *many memes reproduce stereotypes and when we laugh because of them, we are not aware of that and this can be due to the fact that we are used to looking at everything from a single perspective. To unveil the hidden messages, it was necessary to think like other people and adopt other perspectives that had different beliefs concerning men and black people.*

Figure 1. Comic Strip on Gender Stereotypes



Note. From ME.ME (<https://me.me/>)

Figure 2. Comic Strip on Racial Prejudice



As can be seen, Catalina sees how dangerous it is “to look at things from a single perspective” and the need “to think like other people and [take] other perspectives” to unveil hidden messages.

Discerning Why Authors Give Voice to Certain Characters and Silence Others

One of the most notable gains, shown by 14 students, was the realization that authors give voice to certain characters and silence others based on their intentions. One of these students was Juliana. During one of the activities prepared to explain the fourth principle—CR is about identifying silenced and marginalized voices in texts—the instructor asked students to read the news report about the peace agreement in Colombia from *Al Jazeera English news channel*. In this news report, the author takes a position in favor of the peace agreement and tries to align readers with his position by giving voice to those who agree and marginalizing those who disagree. To analyze the voices in this text, students were asked to complete a table with questions about them. Table 6 shows the answers Juliana provided.

Table 6 shows how Juliana was not only able to identify marginalized voices in the news report (ex-President Uribe’s followers and the victims of the conflict) but to see the intentions behind the omission of those voices (“not to change the objective of the text” and “to keep his argument valid”).

Juliana’s realization that authors give voice to certain characters and silence others based on their intentions was captured again in the reflection task for the fourth principle where, in response to Question 1 (“What did you learn about marginalized voices in texts?”), she wrote,

Table 6. Juliana's Analysis of a News Report

News Report: "Colombia and FARC Sign Historic Ceasefire Deal." Principle 4		
Who is included and excluded?	What would these marginalized voices say?	Why did the author decide to exclude these voices?
Included: Colombians who agree with the peace agreement. Excluded: <u>Victims of the conflict, FARC rebels, people who disagree with the peace agreement.</u>	Ex-president Uribe's followers: It is not possible that these people can reach the Congress after harming this society so much. Victims of the conflict: There are no guarantees. They must tell us where our beloved ones are to bury them. It is not fair that they are being rewarded after all they did.	He omitted them not to change the objective of the text. The author saw the sign [<i>sic</i>] of the peace agreement as something positive and omitted those disagreeing voices in order to keep his argument valid.

I learned that *according to the author's intentions and what you want to transmit, voices are marginalized because the author wants to transmit a specific image of the topic and some voices would not favor this image.* I also learned that *the author includes or excludes voices based on his/her intentions.*

In this excerpt, Juliana realizes that authors do not just leave voices out for a purpose, they also include them for a purpose.

Challenges

Data analysis suggests that during the course of the unit students experienced three main challenges: (a) aligning with the author's position, (b) seeing positionality in factual texts, and (c) taking middle positions.

Aligning With the Author's Position

This challenge refers to the fact that some students were not able to see positionality on the part of the author or themselves (three students) or to identify marginalized voices in texts (six students) due to their alignment with the author's position.

One of the three students who presented this challenge was Ana. In the activity referred to before, which intended to raise students' awareness about the first

principle—CR is about identifying the author's position in texts and how it influences readers—and had students analyze Escobar's news article during the guide stage, Ana showed that she was able to identify the linguistic elements that the author used to position Escobar as a drug lord and a violent person. However, she had problems recognizing that these elements positioned both the author and herself. When she was asked, "What image of Escobar is he trying to imprint on readers?" she answered,

A commercial image as one of the biggest *drug-traffickers, murderers, and terrorists*. . . However, I already knew this and therefore, *this text doesn't influence me that much because what it says is not an opinion but the truth.* Since it is written in English, *it is possibly for foreign people that could be influenced.* [*sic*]

As is obvious from this excerpt, the fact that Ana coincided with the author in his representations of Pablo Escobar, stopped her from seeing that: (a) it was an opinion and therefore a position, and (b) regardless of her response, the author was still trying to position her.

As time progressed, Ana remained in the same position that she expressed before, as the reflection task for the first principle confirms. Indeed, when she was asked, "What did you learn about author's position and how it influences readers?" Ana answered,

I believe that *authors do not always influence readers, it does not matter if they use praising or aggressive language. Things are as they are, and authors cannot express their opinions there.* For example, in the case of scientific articles and Pablo's text, *I did not feel I was being positioned because I know that all they say there is true.* [sic]

As is evident in this answer, Ana continued to maintain that what is "true" cannot be seen as a position and that regardless of whether or not they accomplish it, authors do not try to position readers.

One of the six students who struggled to recognize marginalized voices due to their alignment with the author's position was Tatiana. During the guide stage for the fourth principle—CR is about identifying silenced and marginalized voices in texts—while doing the analysis of the news report from *Al Jazeera English news channel*, Tatiana was able to identify marginalized voices in the news report. However, she did not recognize them as such due to her alignment with the author's position. Table 7 shows the analysis she provided for the news report.

Even though Tatiana can identify that the voices of *Uribe and his followers* have been marginalized and exactly what those voices would say when it comes to explaining why the author marginalized these voices, she responds in a way which shows that her alignment with the author's position is preventing her from recognizing the fact that the author did purposefully exclude some voices.

As time progressed, Tatiana remained in the same position. This is confirmed in the reflection task for the fourth principle, where, in response to Question 3 ("Have your views of voices in texts changed after performing this analysis, how?"), she wrote,

In a way, they have, because I know that in some controversial topics, authors can marginalize and silence voices because these voices would *tell a truth* that they [the authors] are trying to hide. But in some other cases, authors do not include someone's voice because *they have nothing that is true to contribute to the topic that authors are trying to develop.* I mean, certain voices are *unnecessary.* As in the case of the news report about the peace agreement, *Uribe's followers would tell lies to try to convince people.*

In this excerpt, Tatiana is still struggling with what voices to consider as marginalized. She seems to have developed a theory that if the voices are "telling the truth," that is, they are aligning with her position, they are marginalized. Contrarily, if they are "telling lies," they are not marginalized, they are just "unnecessary."

Seeing Positionality in Factual Texts

Another interesting challenge that, although not very prevalent, was still very salient was that concerning students' difficulty to see positionality when texts appear to be factual. One of the two students who presented this challenge was Andrea. During

Table 7. Tatiana's Analysis of a News Report

News Report: "Colombia and FARC Sign Historic Ceasefire Deal." Principle 4		
Who is included and excluded?	What would these marginalized voices say?	Why did the author decide to exclude these voices?
Included: Colombians who agree with the peace process. Excluded: Followers of Uribe and Álvaro Uribe.	Álvaro Uribe: There are too many concessions for these murderers. They must pay and we must declare war on them. Uribe's followers: Uribe is right. FARC rebels do not deserve to be forgiven. They are terrorists.	<i>The author did not marginalize them, he already knew what those voices thought, and he knew that Uribe and his followers <u>would say or do anything to stop the peace agreement because all they want is war.</u></i>

Lesson 4, when students were sharing their answers to the reflection task for the first principle, Andrea said the following about authors of scientific texts taking a position: “Teacher, but in certain texts, I think it is hard to do this kind of analysis. For example, I would not question scientific texts, I do not think authors can take a position in them.”

Andrea’s intervention shows she thinks positionality is only present in other kinds of texts, not in scientific ones, which are supposed to be objective, and to present unquestionable truths.

As time progressed, Andrea stayed in the same position and the reflection task for the first principle confirms this. Indeed, when she was asked, “Have your views of authors’ and readers’ positionality changed after analyzing them with these strategies? How?” She answered: “In certain texts such as scientific texts, *I do not think that [an] author’s position can be identified because authors are describing something objectively and there is no room for describing it subjectively.*”

Her statement demonstrates that, by the end of the cycle, she still equated positionality with opinion and had not realized that even factual scientific texts position readers and include biases.

Taking Middle Positions

Another main challenge that, even though not too prevalent, was still very salient was that of students’ difficulty in taking middle positions. That is, six students could only think of either pros or cons, or of agreement or disagreement with the author’s position.

An example of these students was Pedro. During the guide stage for the second principle—thinking about texts from different perspectives—when students were asked to take a statement from *Time Magazine* about vegetarianism and try to take other perspectives, Pedro could only take perspectives that were either in favor or against the statement. Table 8 shows the perspectives that he provided and how he classified them.

Table 8. Pedro’s Response to a Magazine Article

Article: “How a Vegetarian Diet Could Help Save the Planet.” Principle 2	
Alternative perspective	
Author’s statement	Reducing meat consumption improves human health.
What would other people say?	In favor: Vegetarian person: <u>Since I have stopped eating meat, I feel healthier and energetic.</u>
	Hinduist: Meat is disgusting and is not natural to eat it. Why would we eat it?
	Against: Carnivorous person: <u>Meat is delicious and life is to be enjoyed. We will end up dying anyway.</u>
	Butcher: Human beings have always eaten meat. People can do many other things that are also healthy. They do not have to quit eating meat.

In this exercise, Pedro could think about the author’s statement from different perspectives. However, these perspectives reflected extreme positions: either completely agree or disagree. He did not provide any middle positions such as ovo-lactovegetarians or lacto-vegetarians. Then, when presenting his perspectives to the class, he expressed,

I believe there are topics without middle points. For example, in vegetarianism, there are always those saying that you must always eat meat because of the proteins. Or, there are those saying that you must not eat meat because animals suffer or because it is bad for your health.

The statements show that Pedro had problems thinking about middle positions or positions that consider arguments both in favor and against the author’s position. To him, “there are topics in which there are not middle points.” [*sic*]

As time progressed, Pedro continued to show the same difficulty. The reflection task for the second principle confirms this. In response to Question 2

(“To what extent did the strategy help you understand the topic of the text from different perspectives?”) he answered,

This strategy has helped me put myself in the shoes of others. However, *there are topics that can only be seen from one or two positions and not from so many*. For example, the text about vegetarianism that we analyzed, I could not think about perspectives that were different to those that agreed or disagreed.

His assertion that certain topics “can only be seen from one or two positions and not from so many” demonstrates that he remained unable to see middle positions. Nonetheless, as he himself suggests in the quote, the question remains whether or not he would have had this difficulty had he been confronted with another topic for which he had more background knowledge or interest.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results above show that EFL students in this reading comprehension course experienced various gains and challenges during the CR unit. These findings are important for several reasons: First, they demonstrate that it is possible to do CR with undergraduate EFL students who are not very proficient in the language if instructors provide students with proper instruction and scaffolding before they approach texts (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Wallace, 2003). In a country where many EFL reading comprehension instructors focus on grammar rules and reading comprehension strategies (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2009; Bautista-Barón, 2013; Gómez-Torres & Ávila-Constain, 2009; Lopera-Medina, 2012), it is important to show how reading instruction can be done differently and that EFL students have the potential to become active users of the information they read in English texts, to avoid being passive reproducers of the ideas in them (Luke, 2000; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004), and to even go further in their analyses than expected.

Second, the results of this study complement or expand on those reported by other EFL scholars (e.g., Esteban-Núñez, 2014; Giraldo, 2018; Gómez-Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Haromi, 2014; Huang, 2011; & Liu, 2017) in the sense that they provide information on other possible gains and challenges of CR. For example, the studies by Huang (2011), Liu (2017), and Esteban-Núñez (2014) found that undergraduate EFL students taking reading comprehension courses experienced some gains, such as realizing different types of discrimination, using multiple perspectives to gain a wider perspective of what is going on in texts, and improving their language proficiency thanks to an increase in their motivation. However, they did not find gains such as those reported here.

Similarly, the studies by Giraldo (2018), Haromi (2014), and Gómez-Jiménez and Gutierrez (2019) showed that EFL students can experience some challenges while reading, such as failing to see authors’ biases when stereotypes apply for more than one social group, being unable to contradict stereotypes when they are deeply tied to their cultural identities, and difficulty in reading critically due to the lack of identification with the topic in texts. Nonetheless, they did not find the challenges observed in this study.

Third, these findings point to specific aspects of CR which might be easy or troublesome for EFL students. This is important because, once alerted about these aspects, EFL instructors can prepare more effective units and activities. For example, to help their students see positionality when texts appear to be factual, instructors may consider providing them with scaffolding on how they could identify the author’s position in different types of texts other than news reports. Similarly, to assist students with the identification of marginalized voices in texts, when these align with the author’s position, EFL instructors can bring more texts that have different positions towards the same topic in order to show students that there are indeed many positions about the topic and many voices that are excluded from each

text. Finally, to support students with the challenge of taking middle positions, EFL instructors may consider bringing texts based on topics that are more related to students' ages, backgrounds, and so on, or allowing students to bring their own texts based on their interests. This way, they will not have to analyze texts chosen based on the instructors' opinions of what could be engaging to students, as was the case with this study.

Finally, the study opens new possibilities for further research. Such research could explore, for example, how this methodology would work with other types of EFL students, such as teenagers or even children with different levels of proficiency in English, since both age and level of proficiency may have an impact on the success of the unit. Also, it could investigate how the methodology would work with other texts, such as disciplinary texts, since, as this study shows, students tend to have the belief that these are completely objective. Additionally, it could explore how the methodology employed here would work with topics that are found to be of interest to students beforehand, so that topic selection does not become a possible source of difficulty.

References

- Aguirre-Morales, J., & Ramos-Holguín, B. (2009). Guidance in reading strategies: A first step towards autonomous learning in a semi-distance education program. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), 41–56.
- Bautista-Barón, M. J. (2013). Building ESP content-based materials to promote strategic reading. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 139–169.
- Begoray, D., Higgins, J. W., Harrison, J., & Collins-Emery, A. (2013). Adolescent reading/viewing of advertisements: Understandings from transactional and positioning theory. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(2), 121–130. <https://doi.org/10.1002/JAAL.202>
- Belet, Ş. D., & Dal, S. (2010). The use of storytelling to develop the primary school students' CR skill: The primary education pre-service teachers' opinions. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 1830–1834. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.409>
- Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2000). *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide*. Macquarie University.
- Camargo, J., & Orbegozo-Navarro, J. C. (2010). Exploring EFL students' reading comprehension process through their life experiences and the sight word strategy. *HOW Journal*, 17(1), 57–72.
- Castaño-Roldán, J. D. (2019). *Gains and challenges experienced by undergraduate students during the implementation of a critical reading unit at a public university in Medellín Colombia* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Universidad de Antioquia.
- Cervetti, G., Pardales, M. J., & Damico, J. S. (2001). A tale of differences: Comparing the traditions, perspectives, and educational goals of critical reading and critical literacy. *Reading Online*, 4(9).
- Comber, B. (2001). Critical literacies and local action: Teacher knowledge and a "new" research agenda. In B. Comber & A. Simpson (Eds.), *Negotiating critical literacies in classrooms* (pp. 272–282). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410600288-26>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2008). *The landscape of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Esteban-Núñez, M. (2014). Exploring critical literacy skills in a literature and culture class. *Enletawa Journal*, (7), 23–40.
- Giraldo, F. (2018). Implementing critical literacy in A1 undergraduate students. *GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal*, (16), 100–116. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.399>
- Gómez-Jiménez, M. C., & Gutierrez, C. P. (2019). Engaging English as a foreign language students in critical literacy practices: The case of a teacher at a private university. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 21(1), 91–105. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v21n1.71378>
- Gómez-Torres, N., & Ávila-Constain, J. J. (2009). Improving reading comprehension skills through reading strategies used by a group of foreign language learners. *HOW Journal*, 16(1), 55–70.

- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading* (1st ed.). Pearson Education.
- Haromi, F. A. (2014). Teaching through appraisal: Developing critical reading in Iranian EFL learners. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 127–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.398>
- Huang, S.-Y. (2011). “Critical literacy helps wipe away the dirt on our glasses”: Towards an understanding of reading as ideological practice. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 10(1), 140–164.
- Iyer, R. (2007). Negotiating critical, postcritical literacy: The problematic of text analysis. *Literacy*, 41(3), 161–168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9345.2007.00451.x>
- Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869956>
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy is not an option. *Learning Inquiry*, 1, 59–69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11519-007-0004-2>
- Kuo, J.-M. (2014). Critical literacy in the EFL classroom: Evolving multiple perspectives through learning tasks. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 11(4), 109–138.
- Lewison, M., Flynt, A. S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382–392.
- Liu, Y. (2017). Critical literacy practices in EFL reading classroom: An experimental study towards Chinese university students. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 133–138. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p133>
- Lopera-Medina, S. (2012). Effects of strategy instruction in an EFL reading comprehension course: A case study. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 14(1), 79–89.
- López-Medina, C. (2001). Understanding texts in English! A challenge for future professionals. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 2(1), 42–43.
- Luke, A. (2000). Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 448–461.
- Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory into Practice*, 51(1), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.636324>
- Luke, A., O'Brien, J., & Comber, B. (1994). Making community texts objects of study. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 17(2), 139–149.
- McDaniel, C. (2004). Critical literacy: A questioning stance and the possibility for change. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(5), 472–481.
- McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2004). *Critical literacy: Enhancing students' comprehension of text*. Scholastic.
- McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2008). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader's response. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(1), 52–56. <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.48.1.5>
- Molden, K. (2007). Critical literacy, the right answer for the reading classroom: Strategies to move beyond comprehension for reading improvement. *Reading Improvement*, 44(1), 50–56.
- Perdomo, M. E. (2001). An approach to making students autonomous readers of the English language. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 2(1), 57–58.
- Posada-Ortiz, J. Z. (2004). Affirming diversity through reading. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, (6), 92–105. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.109>
- Rahimi, A., & Askari-Bigdeli, R. (2015). Why does critical literacy hit a snag in the Iranian EFL setting? *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 17(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2015.1.a04>
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230505056>
- Rodríguez-Sánchez, A. (2017). Reading comprehension course through a genre-oriented approach at a school in Colombia. *How Journal*, 24(2), 35–62. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.24.2.331>
- Ruiz, N. Y., & Arias-Rodríguez, G. L. (2009). Reading beyond the classroom: The effects of extensive reading at USTA. *How Journal*, 16(1), 71–91.
- Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical reading in language education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230514447>

About the Authors

Juan David Castaño-Roldán holds a master's degree in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning from Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. He works as an English instructor at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín, and at the School of Languages, Universidad de Antioquia. His research interests include the use and application of critical literacy theories in English language classrooms.

Doris Correa holds a doctorate in Language, Literacy, and Culture from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. She works as a full-time professor at the School of Languages, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Her research interests include the use of systemic functional linguistics, genre-based, multimodal, and multimedia theories to promote EFL teachers and students' critical literacy development.

English for Academic Purposes Related to Dentistry: Analyzing the Reading Comprehension Process

Inglés con fines académicos vinculado a la odontología: análisis del proceso de comprensión lectora

Patricia Carabelli


Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay

The Universidad de la República, in Uruguay, offers reading comprehension in English courses within the career of dentistry for students to access information in this language. The study sought to analyze the fulfilment of the course's aims and to test the hypothesis that the greater the vocabulary that dentistry students possess, the better they will be able to understand written dentistry texts. A mixed approach, based on interviews and a class survey, was used. Data showed that the course's objectives were achieved. Participants stated that the course is highly meaningful, and they believed that the previously mentioned correlation exists. However, this could not be statistically verified, which indicates that multiple reading comprehension skills are involved when trying to understand academic texts.

Keywords: Dentistry, English for academic purposes, lexical acquisition, reading comprehension

La Universidad de la República, en Uruguay, brinda cursos de comprensión lectora en inglés durante la carrera de Odontología para que sus estudiantes accedan a información en esta lengua. En la investigación se analizó el cumplimiento de los objetivos del curso y la hipótesis de que entre más vocabulario poseen los estudiantes de odontología, mejor comprenden los textos académicos sobre odontología. Se utilizó una metodología mixta basada en entrevistas y una encuesta. Con la información recabada se verificó el cumplimiento de los objetivos del curso. Los participantes manifestaron que el curso es muy significativo y que existe la correlación analizada. Sin embargo, esto no pudo ser verificado estadísticamente, lo que indica que para comprender textos académicos son necesarias múltiples habilidades.

Palabras clave: adquisición de léxico, comprensión lectora, inglés con fines académicos, odontología

Patricia Carabelli  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4702-8257> · Email: pcarabelli@fhuce.edu.uy

This article is based on the master's thesis completed by Carabelli (2018).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Carabelli, P. (2021). English for academic purposes related to dentistry: Analyzing the reading comprehension process. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 51-66. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.86965>

This article was received on May 5, 2020 and accepted on March 12, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

The international growth of English in academic areas has increased the number of English for academic purposes (EAP) courses at universities worldwide (de Chazal, 2014; McCarter & Jakes, 2009). Following this trend, different universities in Uruguay provide EAP courses as students will need English to access information in their field, carry out research, and participate in different academic events. The present research was carried out in 2017–2018 within the MA in English language teaching program at Southampton University (UK); and it took place at the Dental School of the Universidad de la República, in Uruguay, where a reading comprehension in English course was developed for students in the career of dentistry. This course had two main aims: (a) developing academic reading comprehension strategies that allowed students with basic levels of English to read academic books and research papers within their field; and (b) promoting acquisition of both general academic lexis and specific vocabulary related to the field of dentistry. I analyzed whether these two aims had been accomplished and the extent to which dentistry students with a basic or pre-intermediate level of English could understand academic articles while they started acquiring basic lexis from the field of dentistry. I also tried to fill a knowledge gap regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) within the specific academic field of dentistry as, although there are studies in this field (Basturkmen, 2012), these are not focused on the understanding of academic texts in relation to the acquisition of dental terminology.

By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research tools, data were collected and triangulated to determine what may help students understand academic texts in such a short period of time. Apart from this, I also analyzed existing knowledge regarding the teaching of reading comprehension of academic texts in ESL/EFL courses.

Literature Review

Relations Among Word Knowledge, Reading Comprehension and Second Language Acquisition

According to Uccelli et al. (2015), reading comprehension is “the product of two main clusters of skills: word recognition and language comprehension skills” (p. 338). Given the elementary levels of English of the Dental School university students who take the course, teaching reading comprehension strategies in English to them is highly challenging. To fully understand the aims of the reading comprehension course and this research, some key concepts must be defined. According to Richards (1976, as cited in Meara, 1996) knowing a word in depth means:

- a) knowing the degree of probability of encountering the word in speech or print; b) knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to function and situation; c) knowing the syntactic behaviour associated with the word; d) knowing the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made of it; e) knowing the associations between the word and other words in the language; f) knowing the semantic value of the word; and g) knowing many of the different meanings associated with the word. (p. 46)

Based on this, discourse analysis strategies (McCarthy, 2011) also become fundamental as meaning must be derived from the context in which words appear. Narrow reading (Kang, 2015), which focuses on one topic or author, is a key concept in this study. Thus, all written texts were thematically related to the field of dentistry, which helped fulfill the course objectives and reduced the amount of new vocabulary the students had to learn.

Regarding research in lexical acquisition, it has been established that there is a relation between the amount of vocabulary known and the understanding of a language (Nation & Waring, 1997). Concerning

vocabulary size in second language learners, Nation and Waring (1997) state that,

for adult learners of EFL, the gap between their vocabulary size and that of native speakers' is usually very large, with many adult foreign learners of English having a vocabulary size of much less than 5,000 word families despite having studied English for several years. (p. 8)

There are two different yet interconnected perspectives regarding vocabulary acquisition in second language learners and, as Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) point out, both positions must be considered during lessons as they complement each other to maximize language learning. One of the positions states that vocabulary is widened through incidental exposure to written texts (Krashen, 1989) and promotes "reading as one route to acquiring a nativelike vocabulary in a target L2" (Reynolds, 2014, p. 112), especially when there are time constraints. However, this perspective is questioned by researchers as Meara (1997) who states that "experimental evidence in support of this claim is weak [and] learners in these experiments typically acquire very few words" (p. 112). This has given place to the other perspective that proclaims that vocabulary must be explicitly taught.

According to Laufer (1992), Nation (1990), Wallace (2007), and Harkio and Pietilä (2016), there is a relationship between the comprehension of a written text and the percentage of known words. In this sense, Schmitt et al. (2011) state that second language learners should learn about 8,000 to 9,000 word families to comprehend texts as they need to know around 98% of the vocabulary in a text to understand it. However, Laufer (1992) and Nation and Waring (1997) suggest that second language learners need around 3,000 high frequency word families to understand a written text. This shows that results differ widely among researchers and that a continuum with different degrees of understanding exists for learners who have a range between 3,000 and 9,000 words. Laufer carried out a

study which compared vocabulary size in L2, general academic ability, and L2 reading, and discovered that:

1) with vocabulary size of fewer than 3,000 word families (5,000 lexical items), no amount of general ability will make the learner read well; 2) with vocabulary size of 5,000 word families (8,000 lexical items), reading in L2 will be satisfactory whatever the general ability; 3) with vocabulary size of 3,000–4,000 word families (about 5,000–6,500 lexical items), L2 reading may or may not be influenced by general ability. (p. 95)

Based on these findings, students with an A1/A2/B1 level of English are likely to have difficulties understanding written academic texts. Despite this, students can learn vocabulary fast, as Reynolds (2014) argues that "only three encounters with unknown words may be needed to encourage acquisition if the reading of a target text is enjoyable or of importance to the reader" (p. 111). Therefore, successful teaching of lexis in a reading comprehension course seems possible and necessary.

Regarding the teaching of lexis, Lewis (2000), Meara (2002), and McCarter and Jakes (2009) criticize the fact that, despite the importance lexical knowledge has, explicit vocabulary teaching approaches are generally neglected during language lessons preventing further improvements regarding language acquisition. This leads to what Caro and Rosado-Mendinueta (2017) highlight in the sense that "limited lexical knowledge can lead EFL learners to frustration and demotivation" (p. 205) as they feel they cannot understand texts. Nevertheless, at present, complex approaches to language teaching, focused on meaning and lexical development, are considered effective and recommended during lessons (Nation, 1990; Read & Chapelle, 2001). Thornbury's (2001) "grammaring" approach to language, Lewis' (2002b) lexical approach, or Carter and McCarthy's (2006) promotion of the use of corpora, highlight the importance of using authentic texts and of analyzing different lexical aspects in them during

teaching. As Carter and McCarthy suggest, apart from teaching specific vocabulary, teachers should regularly highlight word clusters and collocations which appear in authentic texts.

Expanding Lexicon Through Narrow Reading

Krashen (1985) elaborated the “input hypothesis” that states that language learners acquire language when they receive what he calls “comprehensible input.” He highlighted that students learn best when the linguistic input they receive is a little beyond their comprehension. For him, when students face both comprehensible and new input, they learn following a “natural order” that allows them to understand structures beyond their level by using and deriving information from context. He maintains that by providing adequate input, teachers can scaffold and challenge students towards learning; what students already know helps them understand and incorporate new knowledge. Based on this, Krashen (1989) suggests that English language learners acquire vocabulary and spelling through input received during reading, something other researchers corroborated (Horst, 2005; Laufer, 1992; Reynolds, 2014).

Regarding input, Horst (2005) states that it is much richer, more complex, and more varied in written texts than in spoken ones. Based on this, English language learners who want to move to the next language level may move faster by reading and receiving a complex input. According to Horst there are two different perspectives concerning the type of written texts learners must be exposed to during reading courses: (a) the “free voluntary reading,” position which Krashen (1985) promotes, where there are no prescribed texts and input is based on the reading of authentic texts; and (b) the extensive reading perspective which suggests that reading courses must be designed to expose students “to large quantities of material within their linguistic competence” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, as cited in Horst, 2005, p. 357). Whatever the approach to written texts one may prefer (which may

be a combination of both), Küçükoğlu (2013) mentions that students understand written texts better when they are taught how to predict, visualize, make connections, infer, question, and summarize. Lexical inferencing, related to ways of deriving meaning and learning words in context, is also considered a crucial skill for learners to understand the meaning of a text and develop language (de la Garza & Harris, 2017).

In addition, Kang (2015), following Krashen’s (1989) advocacy for narrow reading, provided evidence that L2 vocabulary learning can be maximized through readings concerning a specific topic. Together with Nation (1997, as cited in Kang, 2015), he maintains that as repetition must occur for vocabulary to be acquired, by reading about a specific topic—such as dentistry—the likelihood of reencountering a word or word cluster is increased and, therefore, the possibilities of acquiring vocabulary are increased. Sutarsyah et al. (1994, as cited in Kang, 2015) compared the corpus of randomly selected academic texts with the corpus of texts within a specific subject, and found that the number of words and word families of the latter was much smaller than the ones in the former (which included around 300,000 words). Therefore, according to Kang, “the findings led the researchers to conclude that it would be useful to narrow the theme of reading materials by using texts on related topics rather than making use of a group of unrelated texts” (p. 168). EAP courses are designed based on this principle as they organize knowledge according to specific topics.

Acquisition of Academic Registers While Developing Reading Comprehension Skills

Uccelli et al. (2015) point out that EAP is largely “academic language as academic vocabulary” (p. 338) and that it is based on the fact that academic language registers differ from other registers. In addition, different studies (Cruz & D’Alessandro, 2015; Marshall & Gilmour, 1993) mention that previous knowledge regarding texts’

topics enhances comprehension. These facts show the importance of designing disciplinary-oriented courses where students feel motivated as they have successful experiences. In these courses narrow reading is carried out while vocabulary recognition strategies are taught (Williams, 1985) and techniques, such as the ones that McCarter and Jakes (2009, p. 126) suggest efficient readers use, are discussed and put into practice: reading for gist/skimming; scanning; the ability to predict the content of a reading passage; identifying the main thesis; identifying the author's point of view and tone; distinguishing what information is central; using known vocabulary; establishing relationships between words; understanding grammar; recognizing the organization, functions, and development of a text; analyzing a text by questioning the content, assumption, and inferences.

Method

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected during the research. Regarding quantitative data, language tests and a survey were carried out and data were statistically analyzed (Brown & Rodgers, 2002; McKay, 2006). Apart from two regular course tests, which helped identify whether or not students fulfilled institutional and course requirements, four tests were designed to measure reading skills related to lexical acquisition (Read & Chapelle, 2001). Descriptive and correlational research (Brown & Rodgers, 2002) were used to try to isolate and examine in depth the two variables under investigation: reading comprehension and lexical growth. Regarding descriptive research, the situation and learning outcomes were described by analyzing survey answers and test responses in numerical terms (descriptive statistical analysis). And as for correlational analysis, possible significant correlations between reading comprehension and lexical growth were established by statistically comparing pre- and post-test results using Pearson's r (correlational statistical analysis).

Furthermore, I applied a class questionnaire with open-ended questions and carried out interviews to

collect qualitative data (Dörnyei, 2007; Mason, 1996). I designed research tools to collect information concerning students' perceptions regarding the course's aims and approaches, and to triangulate information regarding the students' learning experiences with data collected from the tests.

Regarding ethical aspects, participants signed consent forms which informed them about issues such as the aims of the study, data handling, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Research Questions

1. Are students able to understand the main ideas in academic articles in English related to the field of dentistry after taking a 60-hour course on reading comprehension strategies?
2. Is there a correlation between lexical knowledge related to dentistry and the understanding of academic texts in the field of dentistry?
3. What approaches and strategies are perceived as effective by participants during the reading comprehension in English course within the field of dentistry?

Reading Comprehension Course: Understanding Academic Articles Related to Dentistry

As students of dentistry need English to study throughout their career, reading comprehension courses were implemented at the School of Dentistry of the Universidad de la República in Uruguay. Students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and with different levels of English regularly attend these courses. The course has been mainly designed for students with a basic or pre-intermediate level of English (A1, A2, or B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFRL) who generally cannot understand academic written texts in English. Despite this, students with more advanced levels sometimes take the course as they want to learn specific lexis related to

dentistry while practicing their English. This research was carried out during a semester in one of these reading comprehension courses.

Regarding the course, twice a week, during a five-month period, students attended two-hour face-to-face classes (60 hours total) focused on fostering successful reading comprehension strategies in English. The reading comprehension course is based on a communicative language teaching approach, and both language and reading strategies are analyzed and put into practice while different topics related to dentistry are discussed. During lessons, abstracts and written academic articles from the field of dentistry are read and debated while discourse, grammatical, or lexical issues are examined in contextualized ways (Carter, 2006; Cullen, 2008; Lewis, 2002a; McCarthy, 2011). From a learner-centered perspective, issues discussed in class may be presented either by students or by the professor to develop students' awareness. Bottom-up and top-down reading comprehension strategies (Hudson, 2007), word analysis, sentence analysis, and global text meaning (Grabe & Stoller, 2014) are also discussed while reading. To promote lexical acquisition, plenty of visual aids are used throughout the course: presentations, diagrams, word webs, flashcards, videos, pictures and drawings.

University students need to understand academic texts in English from their field of study and English courses are being implemented within specific careers; therefore, it is highly relevant to analyze successful ways of teaching academic English in specific knowledge areas. Several studies have focused on academic English in general (Benesch, 2001; Bhatia, 2002; Johns, 1997), and a lot of research has been done in the past 40 years in the field of English for specific purposes (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hyland, 2011) concerning how to teach English while teaching different subjects. This study focused on ways of teaching and acquiring reading comprehension skills to understand academic texts in English within the field of dentistry. The purpose of

the research was to find out if undergraduate dentistry students with a basic or pre-intermediate level of English, who could not read academic texts prior to the reading comprehension course, could start understanding complex academic articles related to dentistry after taking a 60-hour face-to-face-course; and, if so, whether this happened due to the acquisition of basic lexis related to their field of study.

Some language researchers state that there is a relationship between the amount of vocabulary known and the understanding of written texts (Harkio & Pietilä, 2016; Harwood, 2002; Laufer, 1992; Meara, 1996; Qian, 2002); therefore, the bigger the students' lexicon, the more they will probably understand texts, making appropriate connections, and the less they will have to rely on dictionaries and glossaries, a situation which allows them to focus on meaning. Based on this fact, the hypothesis that the bigger the lexis related to dentistry students possess, the better they will understand written texts related to dentistry, was one of the focuses of this study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected trying to verify them while trying to give light to other effective pedagogic approaches related to reading comprehension strategies.

Participants

Random and non-random sampling was used to select participants: undergraduate and postgraduate university students, and a Dental School professor. All participants were Uruguayan Spanish (L1) speakers.

Undergraduate Students of Dentistry

Twenty-one undergraduate students of dentistry (19 women, 2 men; $M = 22.2$ years old; $sd = 6.7$ years; $Mdn = 31.0$ years; $M = 19.0$ years) comprised the main research subjects as they took the reading comprehension in English course. Participants were students in the first, second, and third year of their career of dentistry, with a basic or pre-intermediate level of English (A1, A2, or B1 according to the CEFRL). All students who took

the course participated in the research completing the required tests and class survey. Apart from this, four of them were interviewed by using stratified random sampling as two women and two men were chosen.

Postgraduate Students of Dentistry

Two postgraduate students (Doctors in Dentistry completing postgraduate courses), a woman (42 years old) and a man (34 years old), who took a reading comprehension course like the one the undergraduate students took, were also invited to participate in the research in order to share their opinions and to pilot the tests and course's contents related to dentistry.

University Postgraduate Professor and Doctor in Dentistry

A postgraduate professor of the Dental School (a 55-year-old woman), who had published at least one article in English in an academic journal related to dentistry, was also interviewed. She was a key informant as she provided the perspective of an expert in the field concerning needs related to the acquisition of EAP.

Defining the Research Approach: Identifying Variables That Affect the Problem

Bearing in mind McNamara's (1996) suggestions concerning the elaboration of models to organize

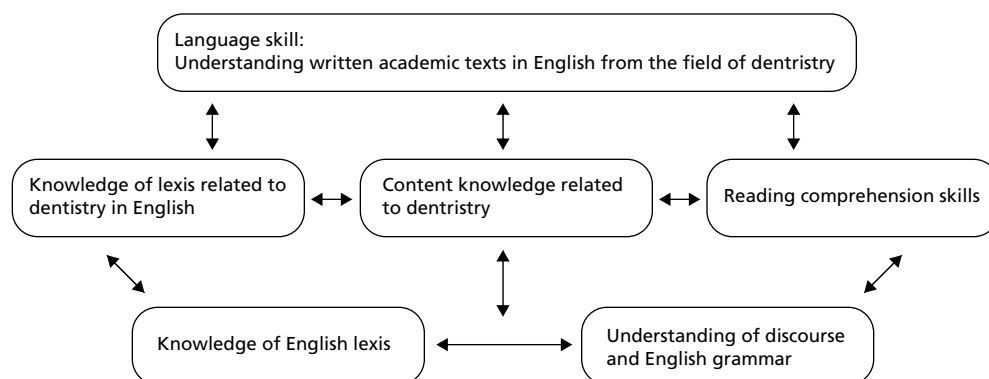
theories and ideas, a model was designed to identify the different variables that affect the understanding of written academic texts in English from the field of dentistry (Figure 1).

Data Collection Instruments

Tests

Lexical knowledge and reading comprehension skills, prior to and after the course, were assessed by using different tests. According to Read (2000, p. 9), there are three dimensions concerning vocabulary assessment. The first dimension concerns the format of the exercises that are used to measure vocabulary knowledge. The exercises may be designed to assess terms that are embedded in a larger text (for example, when terms have to be placed in a text) or they may be built to measure vocabulary in isolated ways through exercises that focus solely on vocabulary (as in the completion of vocabulary lists). The second dimension considers which vocabulary is being measured, whether it is specific vocabulary related to a particular field (for example, terms associated with the field of dentistry) or the assessment of wider knowledge by adopting a more comprehensive approach that considers all the vocabulary that appears in a text (for example by analyzing comprehension in general). And finally, the third dimension is related to the way in which the examinee can produce the expected terms;

Figure 1. Model Identifying Variables That Affect Understanding of Written Academic Texts in the Field of Dentistry



it considers whether the vocabulary can be produced independently, without relying on contextual cues, or if the presence of context is necessary for the test-taker to come up with the vocabulary being assessed.

These dimensions were considered when designing tests related to the field of dentistry and regarding English use in general. Overall, undergraduate students completed ten tests during the course: eight designed for research purposes and two to fulfill the course's requirements. Four tests were completed both before and after the course totaling eight tests; these four pre-course and post-course tests were identical. The set of tests included: (a) a test where participants had to complete a vocabulary list of 100 words related to dentistry (Pre-Test 1 and Post-Test 1, vocabulary list related to dentistry); (b) a test where participants filled a vocabulary list of 100 words concerning general use of English (Pre-Test 3 and Post-Test 3, general English vocabulary list); (c) a reading comprehension test based on a research article from the field of dentistry (Pre-Test 2 and Post-Test 2, reading comprehension related to dentistry); and (d) a reading comprehension test not related to dentistry (Pre-Test 4 and Post-Test 4, lexis and reading comprehension exercises not related to dentistry).

Interviews

Primary data were collected by interviewing four students (chosen by using stratified random sampling), two postgraduate students (selected by using stratified random sampling), and a professor who had published at least one academic paper (selected by using random sampling according to the criteria previously established). Although interviews were semistructured they were based on the following four questions:

1. Which specific aims do you think a reading comprehension course in English should have?
2. Do you think it is important for students to know specific vocabulary related to the field of dentistry? Why?

3. When do you use, or expect to use, English during your professional career?
4. What is your experience when reading books or articles in English?

Surveys

To triangulate data and provide more reliable research results, a class-written questionnaire was designed (McKay, 2006) and piloted by the postgraduate students to collect information concerning students' awareness, opinions, and points of view regarding reading comprehension strategies and lexical acquisition in English in the field of Dentistry after the course had ended. The survey was carried out in an anonymous way and included four close-ended questions (alternative yes/no questions):

1. Do you think you have learnt vocabulary related to the area of dentistry during the course?
2. Now that the course is over, do you think you can read academic articles in English?
3. Considering your experience in the course, do you think that the more vocabulary related to the career of dentistry you know, the more you understand research abstracts from your career?
4. Do you think you would understand research abstracts related to dentistry if the course was not focused on dentistry?

Results and Discussion

Information Collected During Interviews

Participants expressed the importance of learning English during their professional career. They stated that they need it not only to read research articles but also to access different Internet sites, attend congresses, study or live in other countries, learn about the latest discoveries in their field, talk with colleagues from around the world, and treat patients from different countries. The university professor mentioned the following:

Basic literature, to look for evidences, today, is mainly in English . . . [by] publishing in English international visualization is achieved. Publications that are not written in English are rarely seen by the community; with the exception of the neighboring country or countries. But if one wants to make one's work known, or if one wants one's work to become part of systematic literature reviews, or to be part of groups that produce knowledge, it has to be in English.

Concerning the specific aims of the course, undergraduate students agreed with the objectives and the course's approach and highlighted the relevance of having an English course focused on the career of dentistry within their faculty. Student 1 mentioned that the English course at the university was very different from the ones she had had during secondary school as there she had learnt things concerning "life in general," and, in this sense, Student 2 pointed out that he was "more interested because it is related to what we do." Furthermore, Student 3 stated:

Dentistry is a career in constant renovation, and new things are constantly being created, new methods and things to be used to improve people's health; and as English is a language widely used by people to be understood worldwide...then, if we know English we can become more developed with the use of technology; learn faster about new things that people do not know.

When interviewees were asked about the importance of learning specific vocabulary related to dentistry in English, they all stated that it is fundamental for dentists to know as much dental terminology as possible because dental catalogs, materials, technological instruments, instructions, and academic articles are mainly in English. Several students stated that the strategies used in class concerning vocabulary learning and understanding (i.e., use of visual aids; morphological analysis of words; associating words; looking for

cognates, synonyms, and antonyms; analyzing lexical items present in texts such as idioms and collocations) were necessary. They also mentioned that the reading strategies put into practice and discussed during lessons, such as analyzing the use of cohesive devices, looking for main ideas, inferring, associating, and summarizing, helped them understand texts.

In conclusion, all the interviewees understood that they need English to move onwards in their professional careers and the professor highlighted that she keeps herself updated by reading articles in English, and mentioned that one way of being academically recognized by the international dental academic community is by publishing in English.

Data Gathered With Tests

The acquisition of lexis and the development of reading comprehension skills were analyzed by comparing the results of tests taken before attending the course (pre-course tests) and after completing it (post-course tests). As data were normally distributed, descriptive statistics was used to examine tests' results of the group in general. The group's mean, median, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum score were calculated (Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, all test scores' mean values rose significantly throughout the course. Regarding dental terminology, there was an 88% increment in Pre-Test 1's mean as it rose from 35.74 to 67.12 in Post-Test 1; which means that students learnt a lot of new vocabulary related to dentistry during the course as Figures 2 and 3 also show.

Figure 2 evidences that scores were very low before the course because the mean score was 35.74 out of a maximum of 100.00. Most students scored between 26.50 and 41.50, less than 50.00, and nobody scored more than 60. This confirms that most students were not familiarized with dental terminology in English when the course started.

Table 1. Students' Pre-Course and Post-Course Test Results

Test	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum score	Maximum score
Pre-Test 1. Vocabulary dentistry	35.74	33.75	11.78	11.50	56.00
Post-Test 1. Vocabulary dentistry	67.12	57.0	15.44	28.00	87.00
Pre-Test 2. Reading comprehension dentistry	2.52	3.50	2.40	.00	7.00
Post-Test 2. Reading comprehension dentistry	5.38	5.00	1.31	3.00	7.00
Pre-Test 3. General vocabulary	60.62	51.00	20.27	12.00	90.00
Post-Test 3. General vocabulary	67.07	58.5	17.35	26.00	91.00
Pre-Test 4. General lexis	5.67	6.00	3.31	.00	12.00
Post-Test 4. General lexis	8.62	3.25	9.00	4.00	14.00
Course Test 1 (Oct.)	16.05	15.50	1.50	13.00	18.00
Course Test 2 (Dec.)	19.31	17.00	3.89	10.00	24.00

When comparing Figures 2 and 3, it can be seen that test scores were much higher when the course ended (Figure 3) as the mean rose from 35.74 to 67.12, showing acquisition of dental terms. This 88% increment, together with the fact that all students passed the course's regular tests averaging around 60% of the total test marks between Course Test 1 and Course Test 2, evidenced general improvement regarding vocabulary acquisition.

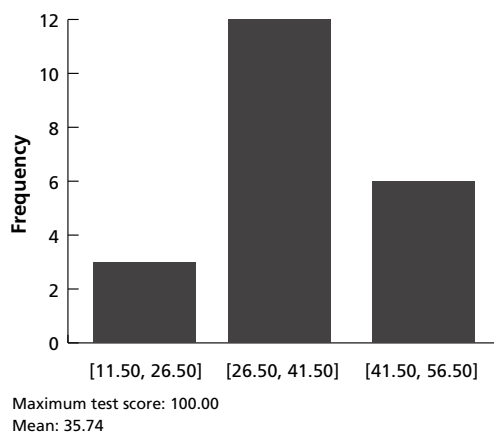
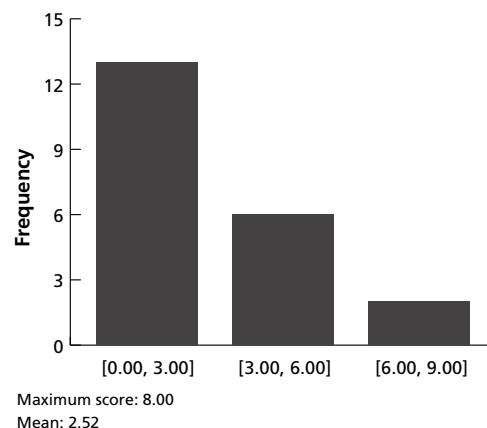
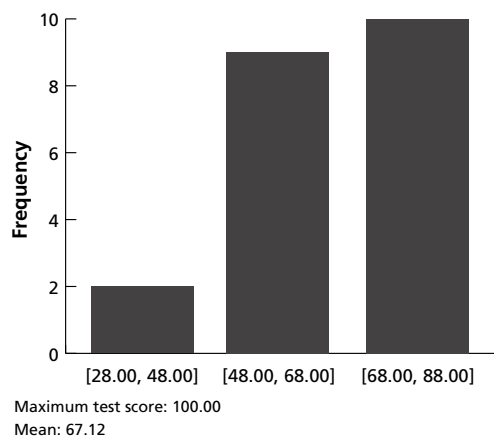
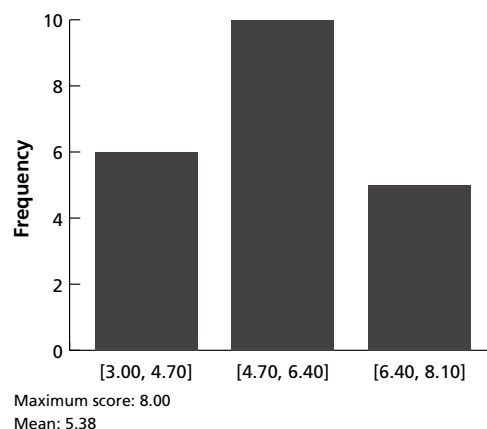
In addition to this, as Figures 4 and 5 show, students were also able to improve their reading comprehension skills as Pre-Test 2's mean was doubled, going from 2.52 in Pre-Test 1 to 5.38 in Post-Test 2. Also, Figure 4 shows the problem students faced before starting the course as six students (out of 21) scored zero out of eight, and seven got a very low score, which meant that 62% of the students could not fully comprehend a research article before taking the course. Only four students scored more than 60%.

Figure 5 reveals that when the course ended there were no zero scores and that 85.7% of the students obtained more than 50% of the answers correct. After the course (Figure 5), 95% of the students got better marks than at the beginning (Figure 4), although three students scored less than 50% of the test's mark when

taking the post-course test. All in all, the test marks show acquisition of vocabulary related to dentistry and improvement of reading comprehension skills in general.

Concerning tests that dealt with aspects not related to dentistry (general vocabulary and general lexis), as data in Table 1 show, a slight improvement in students' performance could be verified because the test's results mean rose (from 60.62 to 67.07 on one test, and from 5.67 to 8.62 on the other one). This probably occurred because, although the course was focused on dentistry, English was always being used, promoting improvement in all areas.

Apart from this, one of the main aims of this research was to explore the hypothesis that the more vocabulary related to dentistry students know/learn, the more a text from this area may be understood. This was studied by analyzing the correlation of the two variables—how much one depends on the other—after the course. For this purpose, the correlation of different variables was analyzed by standardizing data and using Pearson's *r* to measure the relationship between the different test scores with IBM SPSS Statistics Processor (Table 2).

Figure 2. Pre-Test 1 Results: Dental Terminology

Figure 4. Pre-Test 2 Results: Scores of Reading Comprehension Related to Dentistry

Figure 3. Post-Test 1 Results: Dental Terminology

Figure 5. Post-Test 2 Results: Reading Comprehension Related to Dentistry Scores

Table 2. Pearson's r Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson's correlation	p value
Pre-Test 1. Voc. Dent./Pre-Test 2 R.C. Dent.	0.555*	0.009
Pre-Test 2 R.C. Dent./Pre-Test 3 Gral. Voc.	0.608*	0.003
Pre-Test 3 Gral. Voc./Pre-Test 4 Gral. Lexis	0.796*	0.000
Pre-Test 3 Gral. Voc./Pre-Test 1 Voc. Dent.	0.710*	0.000
Pre-Test 1 Voc. Dent./Pre-Test 4 Gral. Lexis	0.811*	0.000
Pre-Test 1 Voc. Dent./Post-Test 1 Voc. Dent.	0.624*	0.003
Pre-Test 1 Voc. Dent./Post-Test 2 R.C. Dent.	0.104	0.654
Pre-Test 2 R.C. Dent./Post-Test 1 Voc. Dent.	0.484*	0.0260
Pre-Test 2 R.C. Dent./Post-Test 2 R.C. Dent.	0.212	0.357
Post-Test 1 Voc. Dent./Post-Test 2 R.C. Dent.	-0.216	0.348
Pre-Test 3 Gral. Voc./Post-Test 3 Gral. Voc.	0.825*	0.000
Pre-Test 4 Gral. Lexis/Pre-Test 4 Gral. Lexis	0.742*	0.000

Note. Voc. Dent. = Vocabulary dentistry, R.C. Dent. = Reading comprehension dentistry, Gral. Voc. = General vocabulary, Gral. Lexis = General lexis.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

As Table 2 shows, correlation between most test results exists. Showing, for example, that the more general vocabulary the student possessed when starting the course (Pre-Test 3), the better he or she performed on the lexis test (Pre-Test 4); that the wider the general vocabulary of the student (Pre-Test 3), the better he or she performed when assessed regarding dental terminology (Pre-Test 1); or that the more dental terminology the student possessed (Pre-Test 1), the better he or she performed on the lexis test (Pre-Test 4). These correlations seem logical as the wider the vocabulary of students, the better one expects students to perform on tests that involve English. However, these correlations correspond to pre-tests, and students' scores were very low on pre-tests in general, so the correlation among low scores mainly certifies low levels of English in general. Nevertheless, correlation between identical pre-tests and post-tests exists, therefore, the effectiveness of the course concerning acquisition of lexis and understanding of texts could be verified. However, regarding the hypothesis in particular, correlation between Post-Test 1 (which tested vocabulary related to dentistry) and Post-Test 2 (that assessed reading comprehension related to dentistry), could not be established as p is 0.348 and therefore the difference in p value between these two is bigger than 0.05, showing no correlation or relationship between the variables. This means that the hypothesis could not be statistically verified, and it may mean that reading comprehension involves many complex skills. To continue studying a possible statistical relationship between vocabulary and narrow reading comprehension, the number of students in the study could be increased.

Quantitative Data Collected With Surveys

As mentioned, all students completed surveys. The data collected can be found in Table 3.

Answers provided in the class survey were similar to answers given by undergraduate and postgraduate students in the interviews as students understand that

the course's aims were achieved as they learnt vocabulary (100%) and reading strategies (95.2%) during the course.

Regarding the research hypothesis, after taking the reading comprehension course focused on dentistry, the students assumed that the more vocabulary related to dentistry they knew, the more they could understand articles from this field in English. Additionally, when asked if they would be able to understand these articles if the course was not focused on dentistry, 57.1% of the students stated that they would not. Hence, most students consider that the course has enabled them to understand texts from the field of dentistry because of the approach used.

Table 3. Quantitative Data Collected From Surveys

Questions	Main answers
Do you think you have learnt vocabulary related to the area of dentistry during the course?	Yes (21 students, 100%)
Now that the course is over, do you think you can read academic articles in English?	Yes (20 students, 95.2%) Not sure (1 student, 4.8%)
Considering your experience in the course, do you think that the more vocabulary related to the career of dentistry you know, the more you understand research abstracts from your career?	Yes (21 students, 100%)
Do you think you would understand research abstracts related to dentistry if the course was not focused on dentistry?	Yes (8 students, 38.1%) No (12 students, 57.1%) No answer (1 student, 4.8%) Not sure (1 student, 4.8 %)

Validity and Limitations of the Study

As ethical research procedures were closely followed during the study (the research procedure, context, and participants were clearly described, and data collected

were consistent and triangulated), it can be said that the research process complies with agreed standards regarding validity and reliability. However, as only 21 undergraduate students participated in the research, the sample was considered too small and may not represent the universe of undergraduate students of dentistry. Nevertheless, this result may also highlight the fact that understanding academic texts is highly complex and that it involves several reading comprehension skills, not just knowing specific terms. Hence, this research may add complexity to the matter as all participants believed that the most important factor regarding comprehension of texts was knowing the key terminology; yet, as this could not be statistically verified, we may assume that comprehension of texts does not rely solely on lexical knowledge, but involves multiple abilities such as knowledge concerning the content of the text; being able to predict, infer, and summarize main ideas; understanding grammar; and analyzing discourse effectively. These aspects were also discussed during the course, helping students to acquire the necessary skills to understand academic texts.

Conclusions

Academic English language courses are increasingly being taught in universities worldwide and English language teachers must become aware of effective ways of teaching during these specific courses. In Uruguay, the Dental School of the Universidad de la República implemented reading comprehension courses in English for its undergraduate dentistry students more than 12 years ago. These courses are short (60 face-to-face hours), focused on authentic academic bibliography related to dentistry, and are designed for students with a basic to pre-intermediate level of English. The objective of this research was to establish if the course's aim was being accomplished (based on institutional and students' needs), and if so, if it was mainly because students were taught specific dental terminology which enabled them to comprehend academic texts from their field.

The first thing that was determined was that the course's aims were being accomplished. Not only did interviews and surveys show students' satisfaction concerning the course, as they stated that it was relevant and that its aims were being achieved (100%), test scores also evidenced that students were not able to read academic texts when they entered the course (Pre-Test 2, $M = 2.52/8$), but could successfully do so by the end of the course (Post-Test 2, $M = 5.38/8$). In addition, test scores showed that students possessed a very narrow vocabulary when they entered the course (Pre-Test 3, $M = 60.62/100$), hardly knowing specific dental terminology (Pre-Test 1, $M = 35.74/100$). These scores improved by the end of the course as the means rose to 67.07/100 (Post-Test 3) and 67.12/100 (Post-Test 1), respectively, showing an average vocabulary increase related to dental terminology of 88%; much bigger than the increment of 10.64% regarding general English vocabulary. This shows that context-specific words may be learnt faster than general ones as students may be more motivated towards learning terminology related to their career and encounter words more frequently, enabling memorization, during specific courses.

Secondly, although all the participants believed that the research hypothesis was valid and provided reasons supporting this, no statistical correlation between vocabulary tests and reading comprehension tests could be made. Although correlation could be established among tests of the same kind, showing that students widened their vocabulary and acquired reading comprehension skills, the statistical analysis (Pearson's r) of post-course test scores regarding knowledge of lexis related to dentistry in English (Post-Test 1) and understanding of written academic texts from the field of dentistry (Post-Test 2), did not show correlation among variables ($p = 0.348$). This suggests that the sample may be too small and that other variables such as content knowledge related to dentistry, knowledge of English lexis in general, reading comprehension skills, and understanding of discourse and English grammar,

are also affecting the understanding of written texts. In this sense, although students believed the hypothesis was correct and the professor who was interviewed mentioned that knowing dental terminology eased comprehension, they also mentioned that other reading approaches and strategies discussed were necessary and effective as well.

Regarding the course's approach, all participants highlighted that the course was highly meaningful because it was focused on the career of dentistry. This shows that both the course's program and interactions during class were focused on learners' interests and needs. Therefore, language and knowledge were constructed in a dialogical way during lessons where students discussed and put into practice different reading comprehension skills while analyzing the structure and language used in academic texts.

In conclusion, as results show, the reading comprehension in English course being taught at the Dental School is highly meaningful as it allows students with basic and pre-intermediate levels of English to acquire the necessary skills to read and understand different texts from their technical field. Future courses may also incorporate genre analysis and study the rhetorical patterns that appear in academic texts.

References

- Basturkmen, H. (2012). A genre-based investigation of discussion section of research articles in Dentistry and disciplinary variation. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11(2), 134–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.10.004>
- Benesch, S. (2001). *Critical English for academic purposes: Theory, politics, and practice*. Lawrence Erlbaum. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410601803>
- Bhatia, V. (2002). A generic view of academic discourse. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Academic discourse* (pp. 21–39). Longman.
- Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. Oxford University Press.
- Carabelli, P. (2018). *Lexical growth in English among undergraduate dentistry students* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Southampton University, United Kingdom.
- Caro, K., & Rosado-Mendinueta, N. (2017). Lexis, lexical competence and lexical knowledge: A review. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(2), 205–213. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0802.01>
- Carter, R. (2006). *Exploring grammar in context: Grammar reference and practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide. Spoken and written English grammar and usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cruz, A., & D'Alessandro, A. (2015). Esquemas de conocimiento previo en la comprensión lectora en lengua extranjera: su aplicación en materiales para el desarrollo de la comprensión lectora en el nivel superior [Schemes of previous knowledge in reading comprehension in a foreign language: Its application in materials for the development of reading comprehension at the higher level]. In C. Muse (Ed.), *Lectura y escritura 7: segundas lenguas y lenguas extranjeras* (pp. 52–62). Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.
- Cullen, R. (2008). Teaching grammar as a liberating force. *elt Journal*, 62(3), 221–230. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm042>
- de Chazal, E. (2014). *English for academic purposes*. Oxford University Press.
- de la Garza, B., & Harris, R. J. (2017). Acquiring foreign language vocabulary through meaningful linguistic context: Where is the limit of vocabulary learning? *Journal of Psycholinguist Research*, 46(2), 395–413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-016-9444-0>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2014). Teaching reading for academic purposes. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign*

- language (4th ed., pp. 189–205). National Geographic Learning & Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Harkio, N., & Pietilä, P. (2016). The role of vocabulary breadth and depth in reading comprehension: A quantitative study of Finnish EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 7(6), 1079–1088. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0706.03>
- Harwood, N. (2002). Taking a lexical approach to teaching: Principles and problems. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1473-4192.00028>
- Horst, M. (2005). Learning L2 vocabulary through extensive reading: A measurement study. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 61(3), 355–382. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.3.355>
- Hudson, T. (2007). *Teaching second language reading*. Oxford University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2011). Specific purpose programs. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 201–217). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444315783.ch12>
- Johns, A. M. (1997). *Text, role and context: Developing academic literacies*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524650>
- Kang, E. Y. (2015). Promoting L2 vocabulary learning through narrow reading. *RELC Journal*, 46(2), 165–179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688215586236>
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Krashen, S. D. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440–464. <https://doi.org/10.2307/326879>
- Küçükoğlu, H. (2013). Improving reading skills through effective reading strategies. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 709–714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.113>
- Laufer, B. (1992). Reading in a foreign language: How does L2 lexical knowledge interact with the reader's general academic ability? *Journal of Research in Reading*, 15(2), 95–103. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.1992.tb00025.x>
- Lewis, M. (Ed.). (2000). *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach*. Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. (2002a). *Implementing the lexical approach: Putting theory into practice*. Thomson Heinle.
- Lewis, M. (2002b). *The lexical approach: The state of ELT and a way forward*. Thomson Heinle.
- Marshall, S., & Gilmour, M. (1993). Lexical knowledge and reading comprehension in Papua New Guinea. *English for Specific Purposes*, 12(1), 69–81. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906\(93\)90028-M](https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906(93)90028-M)
- Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative researching*. Sage Publications.
- McCarter, S., & Jakes, P. (2009). *Uncovering EAP: How to teach academic writing and reading*. Macmillan.
- McCarthy, M. (2011). *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- McKay, S. L. (2006). *Researching second language classrooms*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McNamara, T. F. (1996). *Measuring second language performance*. Longman.
- Meara, P. (1996). The dimensions of lexical competence. In G. Brown, K. Malmkjær, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Performance and competence in second language acquisition* (pp. 35–53). Cambridge University Press.
- Meara, P. (1997). Towards a new approach to modelling vocabulary acquisition. In N. Schmitt, & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 109–121). Cambridge University Press.
- Meara, P. (2002). The rediscovery of vocabulary. *Second Language Research*, 18(4), 393–407. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0267658302sr211xx>
- Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Newbury House.
- Nation, P., & Waring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage and word lists. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 6–19). Cambridge University Press.

- Qian, D. D. (2002). Investigating the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and academic reading performance: An assessment perspective. *Language Learning*, 52(3), 513–536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00193>
- Read, J. (2000). *Assessing vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732942>
- Read, J., & Chapelle, C. A. (2001). A framework for second language vocabulary assessment. *Language Testing*, 18(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553220101800101>
- Reynolds, B. L. (2014). A mixed-methods approach to investigating first- and second-language incidental vocabulary acquisition through the reading of fiction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(1), 111–127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.88>
- Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., & Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(1), 26–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01146.x>
- Schmitt, N., & McCarthy, M. (Eds.) (1997). *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thornbury, S. (2001). *Uncovering grammar*. Prentice Hall.
- Uccelli, P., Galloway, E. P., Barr, C. D., Meneses, A., & Dobbs, C. L. (2015). Beyond vocabulary: Exploring cross-disciplinary academic-language proficiency and its association with reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(3), 337–356. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.104>
- Wallace, C. (2007). Vocabulary: The key to teaching English language learners to read. *Reading Improvement*, 44(4), 189–193.
- Williams, R. (1985). Teaching vocabulary recognition strategies in ESP reading. *The ESP Journal*, 4(2), 121–131. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0272-2380\(85\)90015-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0272-2380(85)90015-0)

About the Author

Patricia Carabelli is a graduate in Education Sciences (Universidad de la República, Uruguay) and holds two master's degrees: one in Human Sciences (Universidad de la República) and another one in English Language Teaching (Southampton University, UK). Currently, she is an English teacher trainer pursuing a doctorate in Linguistics (Universidad de la República).

Self- and Peer-Assessment of Student-Generated Podcasts to Improve Comprehensibility in Undergraduate EFL Students

Autoevaluación y evaluación por pares de *podcasts* generados por alumnos para mejorar la comprensibilidad de estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como lengua extranjera


Albedro Cadena-Aguilar
Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure
Universidad de La Sabana, Chía, Colombia


This study reports on a mixed-methods research project into self- and peer-formative assessment of student-generated podcasts in a group of 18 undergraduate students. The aim was to determine whether there were any gains in the spoken comprehensibility of the participants while having them reflect on and adjust their use of suprasegmentals (thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation). Data were gathered from student logs, student-generated podcasts, and a questionnaire. Results unveiled the exhibition of self-regulated behaviours and gains in comprehensibility. This study highlights the importance of helping learners look critically and reflectively at their own oral production and of incorporating training on suprasegmentals within English as a foreign language courses to help learners communicate more effectively within a globalised context.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, formative assessment, higher education, podcasts, self-directed learning, spoken comprehensibility

Este estudio reporta una investigación de métodos mixtos sobre autoevaluación y evaluación formativa por pares de *podcasts* generados por 18 estudiantes de pregrado. El objetivo fue determinar si había algún aumento en la comprensión hablada de los participantes mientras se les hacía reflexionar y ajustar su uso de suprasegmentos (grupos de pensamiento, acentuación en oraciones y entonación). Los datos se obtuvieron de registros y *podcasts* generados por los estudiantes, y de un cuestionario. Los resultados muestran comportamientos autorregulados y aumento en la comprensión. Este estudio resalta la importancia de ayudar a los estudiantes a examinar crítica y reflexivamente su producción oral e incorporar capacitación en suprasegmentos en cursos de inglés como lengua extranjera para ayudarlos a comunicarse efectivamente en un contexto globalizado.

Palabras clave: inglés como lengua extranjera, aprendizaje autodirigido, comprensión del discurso hablado, educación superior, evaluación formativa, podcasts

Albedro Cadena-Aguilar  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0633-3856> · Email: albedro.cadena@unisabana.edu.co

Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7425-6437> · Email: claudiap.alvarez@unisabana.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Cadena-Aguilar, A., & Álvarez-Ayure, C. P. (2021). Self- and peer-assessment of student-generated podcasts to improve comprehensibility in undergraduate EFL students. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.88928>

This article was received on July 6, 2020 and accepted on March 10, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

The incorporation of formative assessment practices into the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom has been considered an essential element to promote learning and achievement (Harlen & Winter, 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; van de Watering & van der Rijt, 2006). However, in higher education EFL contexts, assessment often remains dependent on teachers (Yorke, 2003), a situation that may hinder the development of self-regulation and lifelong learning skills (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) and deprive students from taking a more active role in their learning process.

At the same time, much English language instruction is still oriented towards classroom exchanges, with excessive emphasis on achieving native-like pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Levis, 2018; Macías, 2010; Tahereen, 2015). This focus is out of step with processes of internationalisation in higher education; these seek to integrate international, intercultural, or global dimensions (Knight, 2003) with knowledge, attitudes, and values that help learners compete in global marketplaces (Green & Shoenberg, 2006). Given the status of English as an international language (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2018), learners should focus more on achieving mutual comprehensibility with English speakers from different backgrounds than on achieving native-like pronunciation (Bøhn & Hansen, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Tahereen, 2015; R. Walker, 2010).

Accordingly, the present study examined how self- and peer-assessment of student-generated podcasts influenced participants' comprehensibility. In this light, the study was guided by two research questions: (RQ1) Does the use of formative assessment practices help students improve their comprehensibility when recording a podcast? (RQ2) What is the effect of training students in the use of suprasegmental features seeking comprehensibility?

Theoretical Framework

Self- and Peer-Assessment

The shift from teacher-centred assessment to student self-assessment reports significant gains when the latter is used as a formative rather than a summative procedure and when students are guided properly (Ross, 2006; Sargeant, 2008). In this light, this study abides by the definition provided by Andrade and Du (2007), who explain self-assessment as a formative process through which “students collect information about their own performance and see how it matches their goals and/or the criteria for their work” (p. 160). Nevertheless, self-assessment must be attempted only upon prior and proper coaching where not only do students get acquainted with assessment instruments and criteria but also become involved in their construction along with training on their application within a safe learning environment.

Despite challenges with anxiety levels and concerns about the reliability of student feedback in peer-assessment (Topping, 1998; A. Walker, 2001), it has been found that peer feedback has positive effects on the development of higher-order thinking, adoption of positive attitudes towards lifelong learning, and enhancement of social attitudes and trust in others (Hamer et al., 2015; Noonan & Duncan, 2005). In this light, Zimmerman (1990) claims that students can become more effective learners as they self-regulate motivational, metacognitive, and behavioural aspects of their learning. Similarly, Chong (2016) notes benefits for both givers and receivers of peer feedback, observing that “those who assess their peers would use their strengths and would feel more confident giving feedback. On the other hand, those who are assessed would think that the peer assessors are more knowledgeable than they are in the area” (p. 22). The current study considers this mutual benefit as a key asset in consistent formative assessment practices (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Harlen,

2007) with evaluation instruments that are sufficiently flexible to adapt to students' strengths (Chong, 2016) and facilitate students' continuous involvement in and reflection on the learning process. The present study examined the participants' perceptions on self- and peer-assessment practices as they engaged in the recording of podcasts to improve spoken comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Comprehensibility

The present study adopts Derwing and Munro's (2015) conceptualization of comprehensibility: "the ease or difficulty a listener experiences in understanding an utterance" (p. 5). This conceptualization attains the target language (L2) practitioners' purpose of helping learners achieve intelligible pronunciation which is paramount in their communicative success in day to day interaction with L2 speakers. Specifically, our research argues that the comprehensibility of oral discourse should be evaluated in terms of how easily both native English speakers (NESS) and non-native English speakers (NNESS) understand it. Similarly, Jenkins et al. (2018); Jenkins (2015); Levis (2018); Macías (2010); and Tahereen (2015) agree that students need not seek native-like pronunciation provided they are able to communicate with a wide range of English speakers. The present study argues that the enhancement of comprehensibility should be one of the priorities in L2 pronunciation lessons and that instruction on suprasegmentals (sentence stress intonation, thought groups) can be an effective way to achieve that objective.

Podcasts

Previous research (Campbell, 2005; Ng'ambi & Lombe, 2012; Popova & Edirisingha, 2010) has shown that using student-generated podcasts (SGPs) in combination with self- and peer-formative assessment can enhance engagement with learning materials and promote further learning beyond the classroom. These affordances are common in EFL and English as a second language

context, where SGPs are frequently used to support the development of speaking and listening skills (Farangi et al., 2015), foster group work (Ng'ambi & Lombe, 2012), and promote interactive student-student environments (Rosell-Aguilar, 2013). However, such studies also show there has been little work on incorporating SGPs into formative assessment methodologies while training students to participate effectively in them. In the present study, podcasts were used as an instrument to help learners rehearse, practice, and evaluate their spoken production—practices necessary at early stages of EFL language development.

Method

Context and Participants

This study was conducted at a private university in Colombia. The participants consisted of 18 native Spanish speakers (11 male, seven female), aged 17 to 23, with an A2–B1 CEFR level (Council of Europe, 2011) previously determined by means of a Cambridge placement-L2 English test. All were full-time students in different degree programmes taking a 64-hour English-language course in which they met for four hours each week. However, analysis of diagnostic tests, classroom observations, and informal interviews with participants showed that, overall, their oral production was *basically incomprehensible* for their classmates and the course instructor mainly because their discourse presented salient issues in the formation of thought groups and in the use of sentence stress and intonation. This situation limited their chances for successful communication with native and non-native speakers in everyday informal exchanges.

Pedagogical Intervention

Towards the Enhancement of Comprehensibility

To support the participants' development of comprehensibility while generating their podcasts, we taught

using a blended-learning strategy over five months, both inside the classroom (20 hours) and in an online learning environment (20 hours). During that time, participants were guided to analyse models of podcasts about mishaps to: (a) become aware of their structure; (b) identify commonly used verbal tenses; (c) familiarize themselves with useful language; and (d) identify suprasegmental features.

To help participants focus on the analysis and use of suprasegmental features, they were first made aware of the rhythmic differences between their native language (Spanish) and the language of instruction (English). They realized Spanish is a syllable-timed language, in which all syllables have equal length, while English is stress-timed, with equal intervals between stressed syllables (Abercrombie, 1967; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Accordingly, we used mark-up as in the following example to indicate differences between the rhythms of both languages.

-
- (1) The girl was looking for help
-
- (2) La joven estaba buscando ayuda

Second, participants began work on suprasegmental features by identifying thought groups. Participants used scripts from model podcasts about mishaps to identify groups of words that represented semantically and grammatically coherent units of meaning (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Then, they listened to recordings to verify that the thought groups they had identified coincided with the pauses made by the speaker. Afterwards, to train participants in the use of sentence stress, their attention was directed to content and function words in sentences or utterances to identify those with prominent stress. To help participants become familiar with intonation, they listened to model podcasts while marking the

scripts with upward arrows for rises in intonation and downward arrows for falls.

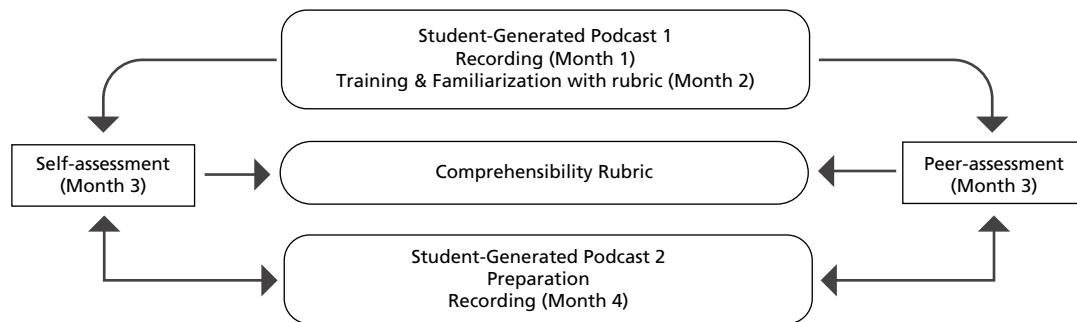
Students' Self- and Peer-Assessment Practices

After their training in suprasegmental features, participants engaged in a formative assessment process (Figure 1) consisting of self- and peer-assessment. Initially, participants recorded a podcast about a mishap using the models previously presented. Then, they became familiar with assessment criteria through a rubric (see Appendix A) designed for evaluating comprehensibility and self-assessing their own podcasts. Using the same rubric, they then peer-assessed their classmates' podcasts. The rubrics provided space for students to write comments on the aspects that went well and on those that needed improvement. This cooperative learning and the assessment process were intended to accustom the participants to providing and receiving feedback from different sources whilst "developing their capacities in monitoring and evaluating their own learning" (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 704). The process finalized when participants re-recorded their podcasts, seeking improvements in thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation by using their self and peer-assessments.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data needed for RQ1 were collected from student logs and a questionnaire (see Appendix B). The student logs, used throughout the pedagogical intervention and applied after each self- and peer-assessment activity, guided the participants to provide insights into their experiences (Cohen et al., 2007); their reflection was guided by a set of predesigned questions. The questionnaire, administered at the end of the intervention, focused on participants' viewpoints in the role of formative assessment in developing their comprehensibility using a five-point Likert scale.

To measure the effects of formative assessment practices on the participants' comprehensibility levels, all of

Figure 1. Formative Assessment Process

them were required to record a podcast about a mishap both at the beginning and end of the study. Afterwards, to address RQ2, the podcasts were transcribed to analyse the participants' discourse and observe any changes in their use of suprasegmental features. Additionally, these podcasts were subjected to the evaluation of comprehensibility by external evaluators, and the results were stored in a matrix for subsequent analysis.

Evaluating Comprehensibility

Four evaluators—the course tutor and three other evaluators external to the course—with varied educational backgrounds, representing each of Kachru's (1985) circles and with C2 (CEFR) English proficiency levels, evaluated the levels of comprehensibility in the SGPs. The course tutor was a local non-native English teacher (NNEST1) from the expanding circle (i.e., countries where English has no historical or governmental role, but where it is used as a medium of international communication; Kachru, 1985) with a postgraduate degree in education. The first external evaluator was a native English speaker (NES) from the inner circle (i.e., countries with traditional bases of English and its speakers; Kachru, 1985). The second external evaluator was a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST2) from the outer circle (i.e., places where non-native official varieties of English are spoken because of their colonial history; Kachru, 1985) with a broad teaching background. The third external evaluator was a local

expert (EXP) and a language teacher trainer from the expanding circle.

The evaluators evaluated both SGP1 and SGP2 to determine their levels of comprehensibility using the criteria shown in Table 1. The analysis of the results from these evaluations allowed us to answer RQ2.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data related to RQ1, the participants' logs were transferred to MAXQDA (VERBI Software, 2018) for better visualization and management. The grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) was used to classify sets of data into patterns, determine subcategories, and establish a main category. Reliability of the coding was checked by a fellow qualitative researcher who also analysed blind-coded students' excerpts. This blind-coder and the authors coincided on 80% of the coded data and then agreed on the best coding for the remaining 20% of the information. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were used to corroborate the qualitative data from the students' logs. We then triangulated these two sets of data. To this end, the participants' views on formative assessment reflected on the questionnaire as well as their insights and reflection throughout the learning process exhibited in students' logs were triangulated.

Concerning RQ2, we first transcribed SGP1 and SGP2 to analyse participants' uses of suprasegmentals. Analysis of the transcripts was carried out using a paired *t*-test.

Table 1. Levels of Comprehensibility

Comprehensibility level		Description
5. Fully comprehensible	FC+	Speech is effortless to understand
	FC–	Pitch variation may make the speech sound lively or engaging
4. Largely comprehensible	LC+	Speech requires little effort to understand
	LC–	Speech may be characterised by too many or too few variations in pitch, sounding disjointed or monotonous
3. Reasonably comprehensible	RC+	Speech requires some effort to understand
	RC–	Errors somewhat interfere with the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)
2. Basically incomprehensible	BI+	Speech is effortful to understand
	BI–	Errors are detrimental to the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)
1. Largely incomprehensible	LI+	Speech is painstakingly effortful to understand, or indecipherable
	LI–	Errors are debilitating to the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)
0. Incomprehensible	I	Speech cannot be rated Speech is not assessable or is unresponsive to the task

Note. Adapted from “Developing a user-oriented second language comprehensibility scale for English medium universities” by T. Isaacs, P. Trofimovich, J. A. Foote, 2017, *Language Testing*, 35(2) (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532217703433>). The original rating scale is publicly available on the IRIS Digital Repository (<https://www.iris-database.org/iris/app/home/detail?id=york:932362>). CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.

This involved the generation of a matrix in which we counted instances in which the participants actually used suprasegmental as was evident in both the SGP1 and SGP2. Additionally, a Pearson correlation analysis (SAS 9.4) was performed on the three variables (thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation) in both podcasts. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) stratified by students was used to measure the effects of suprasegmental use on the participants’ levels of comprehensibility. The evaluators’ measurements of comprehensibility in SGP1 were contrasted with those in SGP2. Participants’ data and time were used as a control factor for stratification. Therefore, the four evaluators evaluated each student’s oral performance to determine any differences in the levels of comprehensibility within SGP1 and SGP2.

Results

Does the Use of Formative Assessment Practices Help Students Improve Their Comprehensibility When Recording a Podcast?

Analysis of the participants’ views regarding their participation in formative assessment practices, as expressed through the student logs and the questionnaire, indicated they believed their oral production was improved by exercising self-regulated behaviours represented in metacognitive and behavioural aspects and the fostering of motivational beliefs. The student logs provided the examples quoted in the present study and were reproduced as written by the participants.

Exhibition of Self-Regulated Behaviours

Our analysis of the student logs and the questionnaire revealed metacognitive strategies and motivational beliefs that supported self-regulated behaviours (see Table 2).

Table 2. Participants' Self-Regulated Behaviours

Aspects		Traits
Exhibition of self-regulated behaviours	Metacognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring learning • implementing speaking strategies • using assessment tools
	Behavioural	Changing attitudes towards formative assessment practices
	Fostering motivational beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sense of achievement • self-confidence

Metacognitive Aspects. One characteristic of self-regulated learners is their management of metacognitive strategies (Zimmerman, 1990). Metacognition is represented in what a student knows about themselves as a learner and has been conceptualised as a blend of knowledge and regulation (Flavell, 1979). Students' knowledge about learning strategies and the ways they monitor, plan, and evaluate their learning (Trujillo-Becerra et al., 2015) are also aspects of metacognition. The coding procedures revealed that participants managed their learning through three metacognitive strategies: monitoring learning, implementing speaking strategies, and using assessment methods.

Monitoring Learning. Analysis of data collected through student logs showed that participants recognized gradual benefits from practising self-assessment. In the following excerpt, the participant contrasts their difficulties when recording SGP1 and SGP2.

In the first diagnostic I was terrible, I had a bad pronunciation, I didn't put the stress of the words and I was very nervous. Now, I am still nervous, but when I listen my new recording, I got happy. I really improved my work, that's wonderful. [sic] (Log, Participant 7)

Implementation of Speaking Strategies. As the study progressed, participants showed initiative in using strategies that helped them produce more intelligible speech in the target language. Participant 8 referred to how organizing their speech whilst reinforcing it at a segmental level (sounds) and at a suprasegmental level (prose division) led to oral improvement: "With the time I learnt to create stories with the correct organization, pronunciation, grouping and the final recordings were better than the first" [sic].

Using Assessment Methods. On the questionnaire, all the participants rated the rubric used to self- and peer-assess their podcasts as useful ($n = 5$ extremely useful, $n = 10$ useful, $n = 3$ somewhat useful). In considering how the rubric helped determine the degree of task completion and the learning derived from self- and peer-evaluation, Participant 17 noted:

Now I can decide when a work is well-done or need to be improved. It is thanks to the rubric. I also learn of my classmates as I learn of my own work, so I really found benefits with this experience. [sic] (Log)

However, using the rubric challenged some participants. For example, one claimed to have gained only partial understanding of the rubric criteria even by the end of the pedagogical intervention: "I think that the rubrics are still being difficult. But I interpret them better" [sic] (Log, Participant 18).

Behavioural Aspects. Zimmerman (1990) identifies the systematic use of behavioural strategies represented in "responsiveness to feedback regarding the effectiveness of their learning; and by their self-perceptions of academic accomplishment" (p. 14) as another trait common to self-regulated learners. Similarly, analysis of

the participants' perceptions about their participation in formative assessment practices revealed attitudes that supported more active involvement in the pursuit of higher achievement.

Changing Attitudes Towards Formative Assessment Practices. In this study, formative assessment consisted of self- and peer-assessment of SGP1 and SGP2. Concerning self-assessment, participants' abilities to self-assess evolved from limited or restricted participation to active involvement. At the beginning of the course, some participants were apprehensive about self- and peer-assessment and mainly awaited teacher assessment: "I guess that the person who have judgement to tell us our mistakes are the teachers" [*sic*] (Log, Participant 20).

By the end of the course, however, participants' perceptions of their role changed significantly:

While I had been evaluating my work, I could see a lot of things that I was making in a wrong way and I correct them. Now, my evaluation is more accurate because I know what things I have to take into count when I do it. [*sic*] (Log, Participant 18)

Likewise, participants showed no inhibition about self-assessment, acknowledging it as a previously unexplored learning strategy: "I don't have any problem to reflect upon my podcast, finally we have to learn as best we can and also this is a good strategy" (Log, Participant 3).

In terms of peer-assessment, at the beginning of the course, participants were reluctant to face their classmates' judgement: "I do not like other people listen my audio because I consider that my pronunciation in different aspects is not appropriate" [*sic*] (Log, Participant 6).

As the course progressed, however, participants' views on peer assessment became more positive: "Evaluate my partners is good because I find the correct way of pronunciation some words" [*sic*] (Log, Participant 15).

Students also seemed to notice differences in their peers' production: "Before I couldn't understand some word that my partners said" [*sic*] (Log, Participant 4).

Such perceptions are paralleled by participants' questionnaire responses concerning the usefulness of peer-feedback versus teacher feedback. We found that most participants ($n = 16$) felt peer-feedback was *as useful* as teacher feedback, while a few ($n = 2$) agreed that it was at least *somehow useful*. Nevertheless, when asked about the usefulness of peer-feedback, only 20% believed it was *very useful*, while 50% thought that peer-feedback was *somewhat useful*, and the remaining 30% found it *just useful*.

Fostering Motivational Beliefs. Participants mostly regarded their own active participation in formative assessment practices as a positive experience, since it helped them increase their sense of achievement and build their self-confidence.

Sense of Achievement. When participants rated their *comprehensibility* at the end of the course, 90% ($n = 16$) considered themselves *reasonably comprehensible* while 10% ($n = 2$) perceived themselves as *largely comprehensible*. These perceptions are further paralleled in data from the student logs on how they perceived their progress: "The final version is too different to the original; it is more worked and absolutely better" (Log, Participant 10).

This excerpt exemplifies how participants recognised progress between the first and final versions of their podcasts, perhaps motivated by their own involvement whilst refining the product.

Self-Confidence. Data from the student logs also suggest the participants' enhanced self-confidence derived from a sense of achievement in a variety of domains. For example, one participant attributed their improved performance to lowered inhibitions and greater confidence as the course progressed: "But in the last day, my performance was better, I was more relax and for that reason I could express better my ideas" (Log, Participant 2).

Another participant who had exhibited considerable frustration at the beginning of the course reported enjoyment upon completing their round of podcasts. Their self-confidence increased as they undertook formative assessment throughout the course:

At the beginning of the course I really hated to listen my voice in English, I used to think that it sound terrible, but when the pass of the days I really started to enjoy listen my voice in English and know it feels so good. [*sic*]
(Log, Participant 18)

What Is the Effect of Training Students on the Use of Suprasegmental Features Seeking Comprehensibility?

RQ2 was addressed by analysing transcripts of the SGP1 and SGP2, the subsequent matrix of participants' attempts to use suprasegmental features, and the levels of comprehensibility reported by evaluators.

Student-Generated Podcasts 1 (SGP1)

For SGP1 and SGP2, we analysed the transcripts to observe participants' uses of suprasegmentals before and after training. The mark-up used to identify the use of each suprasegmental is as follows: thought groups = /, sentence stress = underline, rising intonation = ↑ and falling intonation = ↓. Inaccurate pronunciation was signalled in *italics*. The following sample illustrates the basic use of suprasegmentals attempted by one of the participants in SGP1.

- (1) One day there was a group of friends/their name [*sic*] were Mateo Luis Camila
- (2) and Oscar/*dead* were so happy and united/so they decide to travel around the
- (3) mountain to find a new kind of mind/by connecting with the earth/but/they didn't
- (4) have in mind which kind of problem they would have/so/they start to travel one
- (5) Saturday at the morning/there was a sunny day/ but when they moved/they saw
- (6) differents scennaries [*sic*] with snow/and specially↑ a mountain of color red/one
- (7) day↓ when were when they were at this snow site↑/ one of the friends↑ Mateo/get

- (8) sick/so/ they start to/search about the mountain a different kind of
- (9) plants/to/to/have or get better to Mateo/so in one part of this place/they found a
- (10) mystery plant . . .
(SGP1, Participant 12)

In this sample, the participant made early attempts to pause and form semantically and grammatically coherent segments of discourse or thought groups (Lines 1–4). However, some other thought groups were wrongly assembled (Lines 5–8). With regard to sentence stress, the discourse does not generally contain prominent words except for the case of the word “one” in Line 9. The researchers agreed that this was the participant's attempt to convey nuanced meaning by drawing the listeners' attention to the very first part of the statement. The use of rising and falling intonation in SGP1 is restricted to parenthetical expressions (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), as observed in Lines 6 and 7, where the participant used adverbials (i.e., “specially,” “one day”) to utter non-finite asides, varying the intonation contour and, thereby, generating expectation of a main idea.

Student-Generated Podcasts 2 (SGP2)

For SGP2, we used the same mark-up as for SGP1; however, the analysis of SGP2 sought to identify changes in participant use of suprasegmentals. Accordingly, the following sample exemplifies a more sophisticated use of suprasegmentals by the same participant above.

- (1) Once upon a time↓/a group of students from the Xxxxxx university/ they lived in
- (2) Colombia↓/ each one with the respective family↓/ they *decided* to take a trip to the
- (3) world's high mountains↓/ they began their journey through the mountains↓/ and
- (4) every step that they walked/ they knew more and more new things↓/they had ever
- (5) seen in their life↓/ they saw new animals↑/ Abandonate houses↑/ and

- (6) occasionally↓/people walking by the same way↓/
after walking↓/ the scouts
- (7) decided to take a shortcut↓/ to get faster/ where
they began their journey through
- (8) the mountains/ but↓/ between many trees↑/ they
began to walk/ and they saw/that
- (9) the way didn't have output↓/ so they decided to
return/and always came to the
- (10) same point↓/ all people felt concerning /because
they didn't find a solution to the
- (11) problem↓/ and the sky was already getting dark↓/
there was a time that one of the
- (12) people ↑/ who had found↑/wanted to help↓/ so he
decided to call the police/
- (13) Finally↓/ they . . .
- (SGP2, Participant 12)

In contrast with Participant 12's performance on their SGP1, their SGP2 sample demonstrates greater ability to pause logically during the stream of speech, as shown in Lines 2–8, where speech pauses marked with a slash (/) helped frame more coherent utterances. The participant's use of sentence stress improved also, giving more prominence to certain content words (e.g., “more and more new things,” “shortcut,” “many trees”) and additional shades of meaning to their discourse (e.g., “the sky was already getting dark,” “they were very happy”). The sample also shows that, in contrast with SGP1, the participant used intonation for different purposes; for example, the phrases “once upon a time”

(Line 1), “occasionally” and “after walking” (Line 6), and “finally” (Line 13) were uttered with an initial high pitch followed by a terminal fall. In Lines 8–9, there was fluctuation in intonation, changing from low, to intermediate, and then to high pitch before reaching the terminal fall. Through the use of such pitch variations, the participant was able to generate a sense of surprise; the researchers were easily able to infer the message *there was no way out* (Line 9), despite the participant's wrong choice of the word “output.” In Line 10, the participant's stress on the words “all” and “didn't” helped the researchers clarify quantity and react to an unexpected result; these words were also uttered with a higher intonation contour, probably with the intention of drawing the listener's attention.

Matrix Analysis

The analysis of suprasegmentals in SGP1 and SGP2 using a paired *t*-test revealed a significant trend toward increased accuracy in the use of thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation (Table 3). The pair *t*-test applied to SGPs showed correlation within suprasegmentals before and after the sample population ($n = 18$) underwent training on the variables thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation to seek comprehensibility. These variables indicate correlation as the *p*-value in each of them is lower than 0.05 or 5%; thought groups (0.0004), sentence stress (0.0006), and intonation (0.0001). Lastly, intonation revealed the most significant correlation of all, followed by sentence stress and thought groups.

Table 3. Differences Between Scores Before and After the Pedagogical Intervention for Each Variable per Student

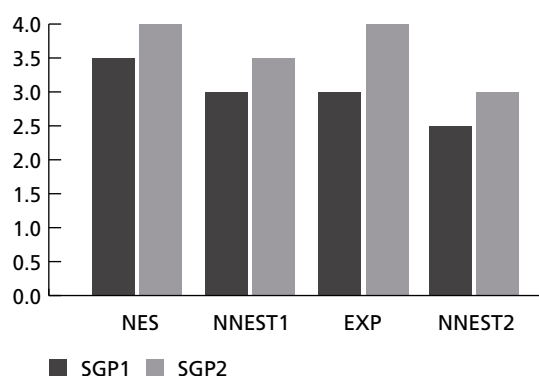
Variables	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Std. error mean	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Thought groups	18	0.2091	0.1993	0.0470	4.45	17	0.0004*
Sentence stress	18	0.3161	0.3205	0.0756	4.18	17	0.0006*
Intonation	18	0.2121	0.1539	0.0363	5.85	17	0.0001*

* $p < 0.05$ NS: Non-significant

Levels of Comprehensibility

In answering RQ2, the medians of grades reported by each of the evaluators (Figure 2) were also considered.

Figure 2. Evaluators' Scores for Comprehensibility Levels in SGP1 and SGP2

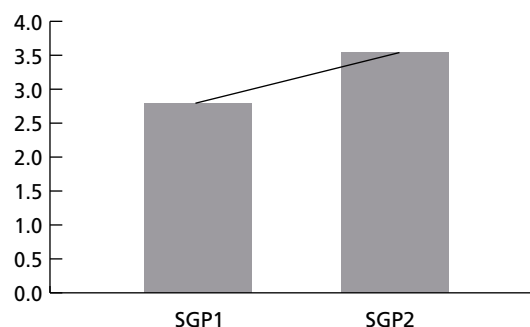


Note. SGP = Student-generated podcast, NES = Native English speaker, NNEST = Non-native English speaking teacher, EXP = Expert

The evaluation of SGP1 and SGP2 revealed differences in the levels of comprehensibility (Isaacs et al., 2017) of the average across the 18 participants in the study, as reported by each of the four evaluators. NES, NNEST1, and EXP rated SGP1 as *reasonable comprehensible* while NNEST2 rated it as *basically incomprehensible*. NES rated SGP1 as *reasonably comprehensible* (RC+) with the highest score (3.5) in contrast with NNEST2 who rated it as *basically incomprehensible* (BI+) with the lowest score (2.5). NNEST1 and EXP coincided in rating SGP1 as *reasonably comprehensible* (RC-). In SGP2, NES, NNEST1, and NNEST2 reported a slight gain in comprehensibility (0.5) when contrasting scores with SGP1 while EXP reported a more significant gain (1.0). NES and EXP coincided in rating SGP1 as *largely comprehensible* (LC-). NNEST2 reported that SGP2 barely achieved a *reasonably comprehensible* (RC-) level. None of the evaluators scored SGP2 as *fully comprehensible* (FC- or FC+). NES rated both podcasts with some level of comprehensibility, SGP1 as *reasonably comprehensible* (RC+) and SGP2 as *largely comprehensible* (LC-); he perceived a slight gain in comprehensibility between SGP1 and SGP2 (0.5). Evaluations of SGPs (Figure

3), contrasting the means of evaluators' grades in SGP1 ($M = 2.83$) and SGP2 ($M = 3.54$), reveal an overall gain in comprehensibility of 0.71 units. Thus, SGP1s were rated as *basically comprehensible*, while SGP2s were evaluated as *reasonably comprehensible*.

Figure 3. Comprehensibility Gains



Discussion

This study examined how the use of formative assessment practices with student-generated podcasts influenced participants' spoken comprehensibility. For RQ1, the results show that participants' involvement in formative assessment practices, supported by self-regulated behaviours, contributed to their production of more comprehensible podcasts. We suspect a number of factors contributed to this result. First, participants had the goal of producing more comprehensible speech to meet their academic requirements despite their speaking flaws. Thus, producing a series of podcasts gave them opportunities to monitor their performances and use their speaking strategies while simultaneously benefiting from giving and receiving feedback (Chong, 2016). This aligns with Black and Wiliam's (1998) findings that students tend to react positively to frequent formative assessment. In their view, the use of formative assessment helps students reflect honestly on what they have learnt and also on what they still need to learn to achieve a particular learning objective. Second, engaging in self- and peer-assessment challenged students with an assessment task that, in their context, was more likely to be performed by teachers (Yorke, 2003). Although before

the intervention, students seemed reluctant about self- and peer-assessment and in favour of instructors being the only credible assessment entity, they clearly did not report any major differences in value between feedback received from peers and from the teacher. Third, the internal and external reference points (peer-assessment and rubric) and the students' central role in feedback processes (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) helped them observe their own progress with a sense of achievement and self-confidence. These findings align with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) views on the influence of self-generated feedback on cognitive, motivational, and behavioural levels. In their view, comparison of the progress achieved (in this case, the two versions of the podcasts) against the goals desired (comprehensible speech) can encourage students to reinterpret tasks and adopt new tactics and strategies, a characteristic of higher-performing students who tend to use more language-learning strategies (Griffiths, 2008). Such changed learner awareness could, in turn, have positive effects on the cognitive and motivational domains, as well as self-regulation. Similarly, Kawai (2018) found that participants who undertake rehearsal, planning, and monitoring experienced reduced fear of failure and, thereby, more successful performances.

For RQ2, we observed improved use of suprasegmental features in SGP2, with intonation as the feature showing the greatest improvement, followed by thought groups and sentence stress. This result was not unexpected because, as participants attended training sessions on the use of suprasegmentals and rehearsed while recording a second version of their podcasts, it became easier for them to group their ideas and decide how pitch should fluctuate (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) to achieve more clarity in their discourse. In this regard, the greater levels of confidence and audience awareness achieved during the training process and formative assessment experience may have encouraged the participants to make new attempts to pitch changes in parenthetical expressions. As a result, these provided evaluators with better

hints as to the message being conveyed and enhanced participants' overall comprehensibility in SGP2. This suggests that explicit instruction on suprasegmental features in EFL could help learners achieve higher levels of comprehensibility (Gordon & Darcy, 2016). In contrast to the study of Bøhn and Hansen (2017), in which a group of teachers agreed on the importance of comprehensibility over native-like pronunciation but were unsure or not clear on the role of intonation when assessing pronunciation, the present study concludes that, after training on suprasegmentals, improvements on intonation were indeed the most significant aspects to help participants enhance their comprehensibility.

The present study also reports on the participants' changing levels of comprehensibility as observed by various qualified evaluators from different backgrounds. The results show that the evaluators perceived similar gains in comprehensibility, equal to 0.71 units with respect to the two evaluations performed (SGP1 and SGP2). Unlike the discourse observed in SGP1, in which only occasional words or phrases could be easily comprehended by listeners, the discourse exhibited in SGP2 contained longer stretches of language in which no significant effort from the listener was required for comprehension (Isaacs et al., 2017). Accordingly, we conclude that the level of comprehensibility in this group of learners generally evolved from *basically comprehensible* ($M = 2.83$) to *reasonably comprehensible* ($M = 3.54$).

Nevertheless, although evaluators reported similar gains in comprehensibility, it is interesting that NES' evaluation was more forgiving of grammar and word-level irregularities than the one provided by the other evaluators, who were more attentive to accuracy. This difference may have been influenced by their educational backgrounds: NEST1, NEST2, and EXP possess university degrees in English language teaching, whereas the NES has a university degree in a different area and was in the process of learning Spanish. These conditions probably led NES to focus more on communication, accepting the accuracy and pronunciation flaws often presented by

users of English as an international language (Jenkins, 2015; R. Walker, 2010). In contrast, NEST1 and NEST2 tended to be more concerned about accuracy, perhaps obeying rooted older paradigms of English language teaching despite the trends of globalisation on contemporary English usage (Crystal, 2003; Tahereen, 2015).

To conclude, because the participants in this study were experiencing difficulties when attempting a clear discourse in English, a pedagogical approach using explicit instruction, enhanced by student-driven assessment on the use of suprasegmentals—thought groups, sentence stress, and intonation—was incorporated into their regular EFL course. A promising finding was that participants progressed from producing *basically comprehensible* to *reasonably comprehensible* discourse for an audience of both native and non-native speakers. Moreover, the present study adds to the body of empirical evidence concerning student-content generation mediated by podcasts, demonstrating that students can go far beyond content generation when student-generated podcasts are intertwined within a self- and peer-formative assessment framework that allows them to rehearse, practice, and revise gaps in oral production. Such practices can help learners not only achieve higher levels of comprehensibility but, more importantly, exert control over their own learning as they experience senses of achievement and self-confidence while both giving and receiving feedback. Overall, self- and peer-formative assessment practices create a potential for change in classroom practices by getting students involved in their learning achievement and, consequently, empowering them to develop self-regulated behaviours that, in turn, contribute to more autonomous and effective lifelong learning for a globalised world.

Limitations and Further Research

There were a number of limitations in the present study that should be acknowledged. Due to time

and availability constraints, some students decided not to take part in the study; having a larger group of participants could have illuminated more issues. Also, an additional round of self- and peer-assessment of podcasts would have probably helped students to reflect more confidently on what they had already learnt, what they were in the process of learning, and what they had not yet learnt. Finally, the short duration of the present study represents another limitation; a lengthier study could provide further opportunities to strengthen the training on suprasegmental features. Further research can target the role of teachers in formative assessment practices, more specifically on the provision of models and demonstrations of self- and peer-assessment procedures that help students to enact these practices confidently. Research on the role of external evaluators in determining the degree of comprehensibility of the students' oral discourse can help instructors better understand how to tailor their lessons to help their students communicate effectively with a broader range of English speakers.

References

- Abercrombie, D. (1967). *Elements of general phonetics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Andrade, H., & Du, Y. (2007). Student responses to criteria-referenced self-assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(2), 159–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600801928>
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102>
- Böhn, H., & Hansen, T. (2017). Assessing pronunciation in an EFL context: Teachers' orientations towards nativeness and intelligibility. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 14(1), 54–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2016.1256407>
- Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2013). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: the challenge of design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 38(6), 698–712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2012.691462>

- Campbell, G. (2005). There's something in the air: Podcasting in education. *Educause Review*, 40(6), 32–47.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., Goodwin, J., & Griner, B. (2010). *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Chong, I. (2016). How students' ability levels influence the relevance and accuracy of their feedback to peers: A case study. *Assessing Writing*, 31, 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2016.07.002>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203029053>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Council of Europe. (2011). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, and assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Derwing, T., & Munro, M. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.42>
- Farangi, M. R., Nejadghanbar, H., Askary, F., & Ghorbani, A. (2015). The effects of podcasting on EFL upper-intermediate learners' speaking skills. *CALL-EJ Online*, 16(2), 1–18. Retrieved from http://caliej.org/journal/16-2/Farangi_Nejadghanbar_Askary_Ghorbani2015.pdf
- Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906–911. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906>
- Gordon, J., & Darcy, I. (2016). The development of comprehensible speech in L2 learners: A classroom study on the effects of short-term pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 2(1), 56–92. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.2.1.03gor>
- Green, M. F., & Shoenberg, R. (2006). *Where faculty live: Internationalizing the disciplines*. American Council on Education.
- Griffiths, C. (2008). Strategies and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 83–98). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497667.009>
- Hamer, J., Purchase, H., Luxton-Reilly, A., & Denny, P. (2015). A comparison of peer and tutor feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 40(1), 151–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.893418>
- Harlen, W. (2007). *Assessment of learning* (1st ed.). Sage Publications.
- Harlen, W., & Winter, J. (2004). The development of assessment for learning: Learning from the case of science and mathematics. *Language Testing*, 21(3), 390–408. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0265532204lt2890a>
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Isaacs, T., Trofimovich, P., & Foote, J. (2017). Developing a user-oriented second language comprehensibility scale for English-medium universities. *Language Testing*, 35(2), 193–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553221703433>
- Jenkins, J. (2015). Repositioning English and multilingualism in English as a lingua franca. *Englishes in Practice*, 2(3), 49–85. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eip-2015-0003>
- Jenkins, J., Baker, W., & Dewey, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315717173>
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.
- Kawai, Y. (2018). Speaking and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 218–230). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497667.020>
- Knight, J. (2003). Updated definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2–3. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2003.33.7391>

- Levis, J. M. (2018). *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108241564>
- Macías, D. (2010). Considering new perspectives in ELT in Colombia: From EFL to ELF. *How*, 17, 181–194.
- Ng'ambi, D., & Lombe, A. (2012). Using podcasting to facilitate student learning: A constructivist perspective. *Educational Technology and Society*, 15(4), 181–192.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572090>
- Noonan, B., & Duncan, C. R. (2005). Peer and self-assessment in high schools. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 10, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.7275/a166-vm41>
- Popova, A., & Edirisingha, P. (2010). How can podcasts support engaging students in learning activities? *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 5034–5038. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.816>
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2013). Podcasting for language learning through iTunes U: The learner's view. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17(3), 74–93.
- Ross, J. A. (2006). The reliability, validity, and utility of self-assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.7275/9wph-vv65>
- Sargeant, J. (2008). Toward a common understanding of self-assessment. *Journal of Continuing Education in The Health Professions*, 28(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1002/chp.148>
- Tahereen, T. (2015). Challenges in teaching pronunciation at tertiary level in Bangladesh. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 3(1), 9–20.
- Topping, K. (1998). Peer assessment between students in colleges and universities. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(3), 249–276. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1170598>
- Trujillo-Becerra, C. L., Álvarez-Ayure, C. P., Zamudio-Ordoñez, M. N., & Morales-Bohórquez, G. (2015). Facilitating vocabulary learning through metacognitive strategy training and learning journals. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 17(2), 246–259. <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2015.2.a05>
- van de Watering, G., & van der Rijt, J. (2006). Teachers' and students' perceptions of assessments: A review and a study into the ability and accuracy of estimating the difficulty levels of assessment items. *Educational Research Review*, 1(2), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2006.05.001>
- Walker, A. (2001). British psychology students' perceptions of group-work and peer assessment. *Psychology Learning & Teaching*, 1(1), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.2304/plat.2001.1.1.28>
- Walker, R. (2010). *Teaching the pronunciation of English as a lingua franca*. Oxford University Press.
- Yorke, M. (2003). Formative assessment in higher education: Moves towards theory and the enhancement of pedagogic practice. *Higher Education*, 45(4), 477–501. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023967026413>
- Zimmerman, B. J. (1990). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: An overview. *Educational Psychologist*, 25(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985sep2501_2

About the Authors

Albedro Cadena-Aguilar is a lecturer and researcher in the Languages Department at the Universidad de La Sabana. He is also a coordinator and a teacher in the English proficiency programme for the upper-intermediate level. His areas of research lie within self-directed learning, assessment, and teacher training.

Claudia Patricia Álvarez-Ayure works as a lecturer in the on-campus and online master's programmes for ELT in the Faculty of Education at the Universidad de La Sabana. Her research ranges over online learning environments, formative assessment, and teacher education.

Appendix A: Rubric for Self-and Peer-Assessment

Category	Meets expectations	Meets most expectations	Shows consistent progress	Needs improvement	Shows minimal progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrates a personal experience mishap using a logical and coherent sequence: setting, beginning, climax, and finalizes with an amusing conclusion. Shows high knowledge and command of the subject/topic. Makes excellent use of connective devices as well as discourse and sequence markers. Manages time adequately (2 minutes). 	Some traits of 5 and some traits of 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mishap structure does not include two or more of the elements required. Shows some knowledge and fair command of the subject/topic. Connective devices and or discourse markers are missing and or not always used correctly. Time limit is slightly exceeded or is barely reached. 	Some traits of 3 and some traits of 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mishap is minimally developed. Shows limited or no knowledge of the subject/topic. Connective devices and/or discourse markers are not used/are incorrectly used. Time is managed inappropriately.
Narrating actions in a mishap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses ideas with ease in well-controlled sentence structure. Uses appropriately a range of narrative verb tenses (simple, continuous, and perfect past tenses) 	Some traits of 5 and some traits of 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses ideas and responses with enough control of grammatical forms and proper sentence structure. Uses a limited range of narrative verb tenses with a fair degree of accuracy. 	Some traits of 3 and some traits of 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently expresses ideas and responses with inconsistent and fragmented sentence structure. Shows several inconsistencies with verb tense usage.
Using the right words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes consistent and appropriate word choice as regards the topic and context. Uses correct word inflections to form nouns, adjectives, adverbs. 	Some traits of 5 and some traits of 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes fair word choice with occasional flaws or unnecessary repetition. Makes fair attempts to word inflections although some are not appropriate. 	Some traits of 3 and some traits of 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows limited vocabulary that is little related and often repetitive. Lacks awareness of word inflection.

<p>Making myself clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers speech smoothly and shows little hesitation. • Grouping of words helps to understand the story better. • Uses intonation appropriately most of the time. • Places sentence stress accordingly. • Articulates individual sounds clearly most of the time. <p>Some traits of 5 and some traits of 3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers speech clearly enough despite some hesitation. • Attempts to use grouping, but sometimes inappropriately. • Uses intonation with fair appropriacy. • Attempts to place sentence stress although inappropriately in some occasions. • Mispronounces some individual sounds that do not interfere with comprehension. <p>Some traits of 3 and some traits of 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers speech with some distortion and frequent hesitation. • Makes wrong grouping and/or distracts the listener. • Lacks awareness of intonation differences / uses wrong intonation. • Uses stress inaccurately. • Mispronunciation of individual sounds often causes misunderstanding.
<p>Comments</p>	<p>Good things</p>	
	<p>Things to improve</p>	

____ I certify I have made a thorough and objective analysis of the podcasts assigned to me.

Appendix B: Students' Assessment Questionnaire

Dear students,

The responses to this survey will assist us in determining your perception of self- and peer-assessment practices seeking comprehensibility.

Select the option that best describes you.

Feedback instruments					
	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Not very useful
1. The implementation of rubrics as an instrument to evaluate my peers' work is...					
2. The guideline questions in the student logs used to reflect on self and peer assessment were...					
Level of success					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3. I believe my own feedback on podcasts helped me exceed/achieve my speaking goals for this course.					
4. I believe peer recording and listening to podcasts was a valuable strategy to become a more fluent speaker.					
Personal views on peer feedback					
5. I see peer feedback as an opportunity to reflect and learn from others.					
6. To me, peer feedback is as useful as teacher's feedback					
Usefulness of feedback					
	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Not very useful
7. In my opinion, the feedback I gave my peers on the stories told for the purposes of this course was...					
8. The feedback my peers gave on the stories I told for the purposes of this course was...					

Future benefits of feedback					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. In my view, students who take this course and record several versions of podcasts incorporating feedback from peers, would improve comprehensibility of storytelling podcasts.					
	Very likely	Likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
10. How likely would you be to recommend peer feedback on podcasts as a strategy to improve comprehensibility in a second language?					

Cross-Disciplinary Lessons in an Elementary Public Institution

Lecciones interdisciplinarias en una institución pública de básica primaria

Josefina Quintero

Diana Yurany Álvarez

Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia

Andrea Arcila


Centro Colombo Americano, Manizales, Colombia


This article reports the results of an action-research study, carried out in the fourth grade of a Colombian public elementary school, which sought the integration of the teaching of English and the natural sciences through cross-disciplinary lessons that followed the principles of content-based instruction. Observation, action plan, and evaluation were the ongoing research stages. Interviews, workshops, and the students' portfolio were the main instruments used to collect data. Results revealed that the cross-disciplinary lessons were appropriate and useful to connect the foreign language learning with other school subjects. Beginner students of English demonstrated an enhancement in the communicative skills and developed contextualized learning strategies, which proved the importance of integrating English with scientific contents as a contribution to curriculum innovations.


Keywords: content-based instruction, cross-disciplinary lessons, foreign language teaching and learning, public school, sciences curriculum

Este artículo reporta los resultados de una investigación en el aula, realizada con un grupo de cuarto grado en una institución educativa pública colombiana, cuyo propósito consistió en integrar la enseñanza del inglés con el currículum de ciencias naturales mediante un conjunto de lecciones interdisciplinarias siguiendo el enfoque basado en contenidos. La investigación se desarrolló en tres etapas: observación, plan de acción y evaluación. La recolección de datos se realizó mediante entrevistas, talleres y portafolios. Los resultados indican que las lecciones fueron apropiadas y útiles para establecer una relación interdisciplinaria entre los temas de enseñanza. Los estudiantes demostraron habilidades comunicativas y estrategias contextualizadas, mediante las cuales se constató la importancia de integrar el inglés con contenidos científicos como una contribución a las innovaciones curriculares.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje basado en contenidos, enseñanza aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, escuela pública, currículum de ciencias naturales, lecciones interdisciplinarias

Josefina Quintero  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9451-113X> · Email: josefina.quintero@ucaldas.edu.co

Diana Yurany Álvarez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0792-755X> · Email: dianayurany.alvarez@ucaldas.edu.co

Andrea Arcila  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1677-4890> · Email: andrea.arcila@colombomanizales.com

This paper presents final results of the research project titled *Transformación de las prácticas pedagógicas universitarias mediante la investigación-acción en el aula* (Transforming higher educational practices through classroom action research), sponsored by Vicerrectoría de Investigaciones, Universidad de Caldas. Code number VIP 0934815.

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Quintero, J., Álvarez, D. Y., & Arcila, A. (2021). Cross-disciplinary lessons in an elementary public institution. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.83889>

This article was received on December 3, 2019 and accepted on March 29, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Cross-curricular practices can be of great importance in educational settings provided there is a smooth integration among the different fields of study. Such integration has to do with pushing the boundaries of disciplines to have access to a broader meaning and understanding of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, integration offers relevant learning opportunities that facilitate less fragmented experiences by making meaningful links between content subjects and other related fields of knowledge.

Integration has provided many public and private institutions with a viable alternative to attain innovative changes in the classroom, covering the overarching disciplines, including those that will help the new generations of professionals to face a new society characterized by emergent issues such as collective intelligences, collaborative work, the crises of the planet, robotics, networks, communicative competences, and so on. For this reason, in the field of education, new interdisciplinary methodologies are required to meet the complex and dynamic profiles that arise as time progresses.

In the two initial decades of the 21st century, in response to the changing academic reforms, Colombian universities are also considering cross-disciplinary competences that would give pre- and in-service teachers a better pedagogical background than traditional professional careers (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2016; UNESCO, 2014). Teachers are challenged to solve practical pedagogical problems by using and integrating knowledge generated from root disciplines and different academic subjects in order to reach curriculum goals. Already during their undergraduate stage, students should acquire more cross-disciplinary knowledge which they could later apply to their professional development. Nonetheless, according to national policies, some subjects are integrated more often than others and the typical separation between different areas of study, which are

unconnected, fragmented, and disjointed, is frequently discussed.

A call for the transferability of cross-disciplinary trends in response to the ongoing curriculum reforms is a national policy established by the MEN as an indicator of improvement and high-quality accreditation both in basic and higher education. All of this and more underpins the idea to do a careful analysis of the integrative approaches to delve deeper into the renewal of teaching and learning methodologies. According to current national languages policies (MEN, 2016; Usma-Wilches, 2009; Zwisler, 2018), educators, institutions, policy makers, stakeholders, and bilingual programs are expected to examine why, how, and to what extent different curriculum subjects can be integrated.

Concerning the ongoing Colombian bilingual programs, since the 1980s, English has become the most prominent foreign language thanks, in part, to governmental policies that regard this language as fundamental to have access to the competitive worldwide markets (Bonilla-Carvajal & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Gómez-Sará, 2017; Zwisler, 2018), as well as an instrument to construct and disseminate scientific knowledge. Following the recommendations from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), it is expected that, by the end of their secondary education, all students should have acquired the necessary skills to be proficient in, at least, one foreign language (especially English).

As a consequence, the most recent curriculum reforms (McDougald, 2016; Usma-Wilches, 2009) in all the territory at all educational levels provide specific methodologies, assessment, and evaluation guidelines that teachers should apply in their classes, considering that traditionally, the foreign language has been taught as a separate component in a decontextualized way.

Among different strategies for the teaching of the foreign language in elementary education, the MEN (2016) clearly recommends all types of integrative methodological routes, such as content language integrated

learning (CLIL), content-based instruction (CBI), total physical response (TPR), action research, case studies, task-based learning, and so on. Moreover, the national curriculum proposal embraces transversal themes for each elementary grade with goals, objectives, contents, and functions of the language. Taking into account the specific cultural contexts, the teachers of English can adapt a variety of cross-curricular topics: healthy life, coexistence and peace, environment and society, global village, among others.

Based on the previous considerations, we wanted to explore how CBI may facilitate the teaching of a foreign language (in our case, English) through cross-disciplinary lessons, with the natural sciences as the core curriculum. The following question guided our study: How can the principles and method of CBI be integrated into the foreign language classroom by taking the natural sciences as the core curriculum content to design cross-disciplinary lessons in a public Colombian institution?

Consequently, the following objectives were posed:

- To establish the relationship between the teaching of English as a foreign language with the natural sciences as the core curriculum by applying the CBI approach.
- To design cross-disciplinary lessons as an innovative strategy in order to link the real context of the students with their language learning.
- To promote different English language skills through the implementation of research processes as a learning strategy inside the language classroom.

Literature Review

The most recent trends look in more detail at the concept of cross-disciplinary endeavors, so that the new generations can meet the challenges of the third millennium (UNESCO, 2014). In the Colombian educational system—elementary, secondary, middle, and higher education—there is increasing alignment

with the purposes of playing a pivotal role in understanding curriculum development as a holistic arrangement.

Integrating different curriculum areas into the foreign language topics is one of the most innovative strategies to improve the quality of teaching because it is a great opportunity to increase subject knowledge simultaneously. Some educational institutions are starting to design cross-disciplinary lessons as a means of working different subjects (i.e., social sciences, math, environmental education, technology, art, tourism, etc.) through English (Leal, 2016; McDougald, 2016; Vega & Moscoso, 2019).

The Content Based Instruction Approach

Authors like Grabe and Stoller (1997), Heidari-Shahreza (2014), McDougald (2016), and Stoller (2002), amongst others, have argued that the CBI approach, through cross-disciplinary strategies based on real content, favors communicative language teaching inside the classroom. Thus, language performance is so heavily influenced by the purposes for which both teachers and students are working in class.

The abovementioned authors list the following main premises behind the CBI trend which can help design cross-disciplinary lessons:

- The CBI approach is considered as an innovative tool for teachers to integrate the linguistic aspects with meaningful content knowledge.
- CBI is a context-driven approach and is very much centered on what the content can offer to students and how it is developed through the language; that is, the language is taught in a contextualized way.
- Teaching by using CBI can develop the critical and reflective thinking of students because they are aware of the kind of topics on which they are working. Students play an active role and keep motivated to learn the foreign language.

- The teacher can easily provide information on the specific matter being taught in the language being learned.
- Generally, the topics are contextualized and interesting, and the students learn them in an innovative, interactive, and communicative form.
- Students acquire different language skills through several kinds of strategies which go beyond the morphological and syntactic aspects of the language.
- Cross-disciplinary lessons integrate the students' previous knowledge and experiences as relevant background to begin each lesson.
- The CBI approach offers relevant implications for incorporating assessment alternatives in the language classroom such as introducing meaningful content in the student's foreign language learning.
- In CBI, learning and teaching are centered on the students' interests and needs. For this reason, the existing pedagogical methodologies, thematically organized materials, and didactic strategies are to be periodically updated and adjusted in order to create a more learner-centered classroom.
- By working together, both content and language teachers interact in selecting, planning, implementing, and evaluating the most suitable kinds of successful tasks for their learners.

The Natural Sciences Curriculum

Education in natural sciences and the environment is one of the main curriculum subjects taught in all public and private Colombian schools, according to the national policies of the MEN. Biology is integrated more often than other school subjects (Tokar & Koch, 2012); sciences present a high number of scheduled hours during the year and is the second most popular subject in Colombian bilingual schools, especially in private ones, which are increasingly doing the most with English and content (McDougald, 2016). These subjects make it possible for students to get familiar with phenomena in the natural world and with the physical, chemical,

and biological processes that affect the environment. Furthermore, to develop environmental awareness in students, it is important that they are given the opportunity to gather some basic knowledge related to the mechanisms of all living creatures, including humans.

Currently, teaching natural sciences in the school curriculum is a demanding task due to the new strategies proposed for the entire educational community. There is a worldwide concern for the environment and global warming (UNESCO, 2014) and, therefore, some educational institutions, especially at primary and secondary levels, are implementing environmental projects in order to motivate the students to help take care of the planet. Health risks, poverty, pollution, climate change, endangerment of species due to exploitation of fauna and flora, and even the socio-environmental conflicts of the communities are critical phenomena having a negative impact on ecosystems (C. A. Munévar-Quintero et al., 2017).

Thus, integrating English and sciences simultaneously is considered as an innovative curriculum experience to enrich the educational literature review concerning foreign languages acquisition (Tokar & Koch, 2012; Zirilli, 2019). It is important to highlight the importance of English as an effective vehicle for students to have access to more information on the natural sciences, demonstrating how public institutions can link the gap between topics that go hand-in-hand: language, natural sciences curriculum content, education, and policy.

Nowadays, English is gaining prestige as a vehicle for knowledge transmission, which, arguably, can make the learning of this language appealing to students. English within the natural sciences curriculum becomes convenient for students to understand and for them to talk about scientific concepts in a contextualized way, including a variety of engaging scientific aspects (such as states of matter, physical and chemical properties of matter, etc.). It is evident that foreign languages curriculum programs need to leave behind some traditional methods, providing teachers with a real-

time answer that is context driven because they have to be competent for implementing the most innovative teaching strategies.

Previous Studies

Tokar and Koch (2012) examined influencing factors concerning the use of integration as a teaching method into an undergraduate program. They previously compiled numerous contributions of integrating root disciplines such as natural sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities, among others. The most dominant obstacles hindering integration seems to be:

- lack of textbooks and handbooks,
- lack of time for scheduling integrated activities, and
- poor preparation during undergraduate studies, since teachers are not competent enough in combining different school subjects.

The results revealed that classrooms offer plentiful conditions for integrating social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. For instance, to apprehend basic concepts of natural phenomena, students and teachers would be able to explain some root knowledge concerning the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, as well as mathematics. The ability to integrate school disciplines is in positive correlation with teachers' interest and background and demands strong cooperation between them.

Along the same lines, Chou et al. (2019) carried out an experimental cross-curriculum reform whose main purpose was to design a self-adjusting learning strategy for preservice teachers. These authors consider that it is urgent to introduce self-adjustment mechanisms of inter-disciplinary teaching professionalism to provide a clear definition of the graduate skills according to specific characteristics of the regional areas and the job markets. In this commitment, teachers play an increasingly important role in curriculum reforms due to their know-how in organizing and integrating the

required academic subjects to cater to the local and regional needs.

In a most recent study, Chuku (2020) identified resultant benefits after applying numerous skill strategies for developing environmental topics while teaching English through CBI, considering that the global environmental degradation is a grave situation affecting populations. Thus, today's warming, deforestation, natural disasters, and water pollution were selected as "green" content integrated learning with English. She stated that environmental issues stimulate the improvement of both discrete and integrated skills in process- and product-oriented curriculum projects. For this author, countless issues around the world, which can be incorporated into language classrooms, especially by using CBI, are sparking the interests of both learners and teachers.

Chuku (2020) designed classroom integrated environmental lessons taking into account the students' previous knowledge, age, and language skills. Students were able to increase pertinent vocabulary, oral responses, reading and speaking activities, paragraph patterns, paragraph-writing tasks, skimming, scanning, note-taking practice, and other linguistic abilities. These exercises provided meaningful language use and facilitated authentic communication. According to Chuku, teachers understand the value of CBI for improving students' meaningful language and content instruction while debating environmental topics.

Zirilli (2019) conducted a bilingual case study applying CLIL to teach a non-linguistic topic focused on natural sciences. The participants were a small group of sixth graders from immigrant families. Despite certain curriculum limitations, the science teachers observed a high level of participation and motivation when students developed cooperative and experimental classroom activities favoring the acquisition of skills and abilities during the process of using the foreign language (English) as a vehicle for content learning.

Leal (2016) selected a natural science class with third grade bilingual students to conduct a small-scale study using the CLIL approach, bearing in mind that it was urgent to provide information on specific aspects concerning the effectiveness of the program. The researcher adjusted an assessment grid aimed at reporting students' achievement in terms of content and language demands of test items validity. Through the assessment grid, CLIL teachers would be able to observe and understand distinctly students' difficulties and strengths as well as to attend to their needs.

Method

This study is based on the principles of the classroom action-research approach which helps teachers develop their scientific skills while they improve their teaching contexts through reflection and inquiry (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1995; Kunlasomboon et al., 2015; Wallace, 1998). It is a cyclical process involving observation, planning, experimentation, and identification of critical points to improve real situations inside the classroom or other social environments by participants themselves.

For this study, action research seemed an appropriate choice because we wanted to encourage both teachers and students to participate in some version of that process of reflection and inquiry that is often reserved for the researchers. In this case, a sequence of four natural science lessons was planned using the foreign language (English).

Context and Participants

According to the Institutional Educational Project, the school was created by a Catholic community and, for this reason, it is deeply rooted in spiritual and religious values. It is located in a little town near Manizales (Colombia), a medium-size city in the center of the country. Students come from low- or middle-income families and are involved in different social, charitable, and inclusive celebrations or activities. Likewise, the institution has several concerns as it

cares for the environment and the students' health and lifestyle. For these reasons, the importance of teaching natural sciences contents, including environmental education, is paramount. As a result, the institution organizes this subject in curriculum units of learning, each one with a different main theme. There are four units for each of the two academic periods in the school year. The first main teachable contents and topics are: living environment, physical environment, physical processes, chemical processes and science, technology and society.

Furthermore, the Environment School Project and the Healthy Lifestyles Project are the two most influencing projects at the institution that permit students to transfer the knowledge acquired in the classroom. Students learn about the importance of water as a non-renewable resource, the role animals and plants play for maintaining balanced ecosystems, as well as the human practices that have a positive environmental impact such as recycling, reducing and reusing waste. Additionally, students learn about the maintenance of a daily diet and the need for eating healthy food. A vegetable garden is located on the premises at the back of the school where the students, with the help of their teachers, sow different kinds of plants. The participants of this study were 38 fourth-grade girls with ages 9 and 10 years.

The following team of experts was in charge of the creation of the cross-disciplinary lessons by applying the core principles of the CBI approach in the English class:

- A preservice teacher from the Modern Languages program playing the role of research assistant during her practicum stage. She is one of the authors of this paper.
- A practicum advisor to the preservice teacher who guided the whole research process, including the fieldwork, observations, evaluations, and the final report. She is one of the authors of this paper.
- A natural sciences teacher who facilitated the theoretical contents and the didactic materials for the researchers.

- An English head teacher who expressed strong concerns about the official curriculum guidelines. He observed the effect of the cross-disciplinary lessons and helped the preservice teacher to understand the school life during her practicum stage.
- A PhD student in the process of developing her doctoral thesis. She holds a BA in biology and chemistry, and was able to provide theoretical, scientific, didactic, and methodological guidelines concerning the natural sciences curriculum. She is also one of the authors of this paper.

Stages of the Research

First Stage: Observation

We carried out a series of observations during the first month of the academic semester to collect information on the institutional context and the methodologies, didactic resources, bibliography, and classroom environment in the English and natural sciences lessons. Semistructured interviews in Spanish were useful to collect participants' impressions before and after the action stage and then, the answers were translated into English. Additionally, we reviewed the school's constitutional principles, the English and natural sciences curriculum, and other educational documents to help us find the most suitable approach to teach English, and more importantly, to give shape to the cross-disciplinary implementation. We found that integrating natural sciences with the teaching of English seemed to be a motivating alternative to get students involved in different activities through classroom projects.

The preliminary results, taken from the observed classes, helped us to justify the design of CBI and to select the appropriate didactic materials for the forthcoming lessons. Checking some students' notebooks and the existing English curriculum, we confirmed that: (a) lessons were 99% in Spanish, and thus, the use of English was very limited, inside and outside the classroom; (b) vocabulary and grammar aspects were

memorized through sentences or in short dialogues without a specific context; (c) students translated every word into Spanish; (d) although teachers used flashcards, videos, and gestures to help students understand, this was not done regularly; (e) most English content was isolated and did not deal with real situations related to the students' context.

During this preliminary stage, teachers were interviewed about the frequency, reasons, rank, and type of disciplines they integrate into school courses. The respondents considered that academic subjects are rarely integrated. There are areas that the institution often ignores when considering how to integrate learning tasks whether totally, partly, or even nothing at all. Nonetheless, a few given options were mentioned concerning natural, physical, and environmental sciences:

When a teacher explains the interconnection between cause and effect for a certain phenomenon. (Teacher 1)

When teachers conduct practical tasks and demonstrations in the classroom or in the lab. (Teacher 2)

When students carry out physical experiments inside or outside the classroom. (Teacher 3)

When the academic community organizes institutional events which requires mutual cooperation, for example, the Science Fair, technology expositions, drug consumption. (Teacher 4)

My colleagues normally combine mathematics with biology, chemistry, and physics. On the other hand, philosophy, geometry, geography, Spanish, literature, mathematics, and language topics are less frequent. (Teacher 5)

One of the interviewees also pointed out that meeting cross-curriculum teaching goals is a very difficult task which implies a huge effort and sacrifice as well: "My opinion does not mean to dismiss the reputation of the construction of complex knowledge, but rather to recognize that we are used to working in isolation" (Participant 2). Bearing in mind that integration of

academic subjects is not easy to put into practice, Participant 6 added:

It is safe to say that teachers at the school currently overcome serious obstacles when undertaking transversal projects or they do not receive the necessary attention. This concern is often repeated by colleagues in our own, day-to-day schooling practices.

Second Stage: Action Plan and Implementation

Four cross-disciplinary lessons were designed by the team of experts (the English teacher, the science teacher, the preservice teacher, the practicum advisor, and the doctoral student) applying CBI, for the school period, during one semester. The lessons were based on the same topics arranged in the natural sciences curriculum. Some of them were: forms of energy; states of matter; pure substances and mixtures; mass, shape, and volume; chemical changes; and lab experiments such as measuring, weighing, combining, heating, cooling, and so on. The classes were carried out by the preservice teacher, but the science teacher was present helping to develop the experiments and clarifying scientific concepts in Spanish when students asked for explanations.

Each of the cross-disciplinary lessons included a structure divided into eight sections, as shown in Table 1: (a) topic, (b) linguistic objective, (c) communicative objective, (d) warm up, (e) presentation of the topic, (f) practice, (g) production, and (h) evaluation. The lesson shown in the Appendix is a sample selected from the total set of the four classes.

Third Stage: Evaluation

The whole team was able to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of each of the four implemented lessons and made suggestions, comments, and annotations. Also, the research group interviewed the English teachers, the natural sciences teacher, and the academic coordinator. They described and valued in detail the advantages and

disadvantages concerning the implementation of the CBI methodology, taking the natural science curriculum as the core content. Also, the preservice teacher made self-evaluations related to her classes through descriptions, interpretations, proposals, and reflections of issues on the most relevant aspects found. The English head teacher observed the class and provided feedback with recommendations to improve the lesson plans.

Workshops, worksheets, drawings, photos, illustrations, videos, original tasks, and portfolios were the main instruments and techniques used in the data collection procedure. One of the alternative assessment practices used in CBI is portfolio assessment (Delett et al., 2001), since students are able to observe, recognize, reflect, and be aware of their mistakes and achievements, as well as their weaknesses and strengths. Portfolio assessment can develop both critical thinking and communicative abilities in the language acquisition process.

By Lesson 2, students were starting to become familiarized with the dynamics of the lessons. They were expected to draw a characteristic of each season. Students sang the song “Sun Little Sun.” The preservice teacher asked about the North Pole. The students saw a video about the states of matter. She asked questions about the video: What the three states of the matter are, how the particles act in each one, and what a particle is. She explained what an atom is and how it is transformed in each state. The students named which state of matter can be found in each period and how these show up in each season. For example, in winter the ice is solid, and people wear hats, gloves, and coats. In spring there are flowers and the ice melts, so it becomes liquid. In the fall season the leaves fall down from the trees. In summer the sun, the sea, and so on.

The students pasted images in the correct season. Divided into small groups, they did word-search puzzles using the vocabulary. Four images related to the topic season were drawn and the students had to paste any kind of grain, candies, or another element to represent

Table 1. Topics, Objectives, and Resources of the Integrated Lessons

Topic	Linguistic and communicative objectives	Scientific vocabulary and grammar structures
Lesson 1: Going to the science museum	<p>To identify the vocabulary about forms of energy.</p> <p>To recognize the demonstrative adjectives.</p> <p>To talk about a science museum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a magnet • That is the sun • Those are manmade objects • Classify these objects: candies, beans, rice, oil, sugar, cereals or grains, a powered juice, a bottle of water • Paint a science museum • What are the forms of energy? • Don't waste energy • The guitar produces sounds • The sun produces light and energy
Lesson 2: The states of matter	<p>To identify the vocabulary about the states of matter.</p> <p>To talk about the North Pole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many seasons are there? • Describe a characteristic of each season • Draw the states of matter • What is a particle? • Is ice solid? Is water liquid? • Are there flowers in spring? • Paste images in the correct season • This is the water cycle
Lesson 3: Let's cook a chocolate cake	<p>To identify the vocabulary about the mixture.</p> <p>To talk about cooking a chocolate cake.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the candies in the glass • Stir in sugar and butter • Observe the mixture • Can you separate sugar and butter? • The juice of the lemon dissolves in water. Can you separate it? • Write the recipe of the chocolate cake • Count the minutes of oven use • I do not like chocolate, I prefer fruits
Lesson 4: Let's go to a shopping center	<p>To select the vocabulary about the specific properties of matter.</p> <p>To talk about going shopping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you eat fruits? I eat fruits every day • Do you like soda? Yes, I do. • Describe the chemical properties of matter (air, acid, base, water) • Describe the physical properties of matter • Metals are solid. Water is liquid. Carbon is black • Is volume a physical property? Is combustion a chemical property? Is gas a physical change? Is temperature a physical change? • What is an atom? The nucleus contains protons and neutrons • Physical properties include: texture, color, odor, volume, temperature, density, mass, volume, length, and shape • How many pounds of sugar do you need?

each state of matter. Finally, students created an atom with Play-Doh and labelled all the parts in English. Some students presented their work in front of the class. They really enjoyed the activity and designed some creative works within the planned time. In the interview, students expressed opinions like “It is fun,” “It was too easy, teacher,” “I love making drawings,” “I understood the science class.”

In Lesson 3, where students worked on cooking a chocolate cake, they were enthusiastic about the topic because it clearly responded to their likes and their family context; some students expressed that they usually did this activity at home with their mothers. The students brought the material asked for by the preservice teacher in the previous class (candies, beans, rice, water, oil, sugar, etc.), to teach them how to prepare a snack. Students started by putting these ingredients in a glass and they stirred them. In this way, students experimented that this mixture could be easily separated. Later, students took a glass with water, squeezed a lemon in it, mixed a spoon with sugar and stirred it. Immediately students noticed that the sugar and the lemon juice dissolved in the water and could not be separated. The preservice teacher introduced a video in which different types of mixtures were explained. Using a clock, each student wrote the recipe of the chocolate cake with its different ingredients as well as the time it took to bake the cake. Each student classified the recipe into homogeneous mixtures and heterogeneous mixtures.

Students were very happy and some of them said that they enjoyed cooking at home with their mothers. Some students uttered short sentences in English such as: “I love chocolate cake,” “It is delicious,” “I love cooking.” Long sentences were uttered in Spanish and translated by the head teacher or by the preservice teacher: “The activity was different and funny,” “I am able to explain my mother how to make a chocolate cake.” *[sic]*

In Lesson 4, students played a game called “apple lemon.” The girl who has the lemon when one classmate says “lemon” has to create a phrase using vocabulary

related to matter and time. The students saw different objects on the desk, simulating a shopping center. After that, they drew and colored each object and described their specific properties. The girls created a short dialogue about the physical and chemical properties of matter. Students really enjoyed the activity and acted as if they really were at a shopping center. At the end of the lesson, they uttered emotional expressions such as: “Thank you, teacher!” “The exercise was fun,” “It was a great class.”

Three English teachers, the science teacher, and the academic coordinator were interviewed after this stage. They recognized the value of integration. The head English teacher said that “through CBI it is possible to elicit interesting ideas about the experiments. I observed that the preservice teacher prepared error correction exercises. The most common mistakes were focused on grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and sentence structure.” The science teacher argued that it is imperative to update the obsolete textbooks and handbooks “which undoubtedly do not include plentiful guidelines for cross-curricular lessons.”

In addition, interviewees made some comments which are highly relevant for both science and language teachers’ education in the future. They mentioned three other factors which hinder integration: student age (too young), limited hours of school courses, and lack of know-how among teachers. Another opinion, a negative one, was that teachers feel that they are not prepared enough in these cross-curriculum competences: “Most teachers at elementary institutions do not speak English and they do not know how to integrate some relevant subjects” (academic coordinator). Lastly, the interviewees pointed out that novice foreign language teachers are more frequently engaged in cross-curricular practices while the more experienced ones usually lose interest in this sort of approach. Finally, the academic coordinator commented the following:

Many of today’s teachers in my school understand the importance of integrating curricula subjects; nonetheless, this essential task depends predominantly on their

professional preparation, personal interest, and work experience. [For this reason] it is necessary that the university reinforces the ability to integrate disciplines as the one that we observed through this interesting CBI project.

Results

We identified some useful information after evaluating the effects of the implementation of the cross-disciplinary lessons. For instance, the advantages and disadvantages of using the morphological and syntactic structures of English to facilitate the learning of natural science topics. During the development of the lessons, the students demonstrated basic communicative skills by using the foreign language with the CBI approach. We observed how the students started to use basic utterances in the foreign language to interact with their classmates and to somehow frame their comments and thoughts around the specific topics pertaining to their science class.

Students were able to put into practice some grammar structures, technical vocabulary, and scientific concepts, which were used to integrate communicative skills. Motivation was evident, as a result of implementing contextualized activities. Participants showed interest in the content classes and demonstrated more engagement in the evaluation sessions which allowed them to become more involved in the activities performed during the whole process.

Meaningful, integrated, and contextualized activities generated in the students an evident higher participation during the classes. This participation was supported by the use of the language through science contents and integrated strategies. It was imperative to take into account that the idea of learning and teaching was centered on the students' interests, needs, and previous knowledge. To reach such a goal, the team of experts was in charge of updating, adjusting, and evaluating the existing pedagogical methodologies and didactic

materials. The natural sciences topics, such as states of matter, properties of matter, mixtures, and so on, and the didactic materials served to improve quite effectively the students' language learning and acquisition.

Through contextualized and family activities such as visiting a supermarket, observing the climate (a rainy and cloudy day), ice cubes in the refrigerator, and cooking a chocolate cake at home, participants demonstrated a high level of interaction at the moment of doing natural sciences activities through workshops inside and outside the English class. Students were also able to help their partners when they participated in class so that they felt comfortable, which created an adequate learning environment for all.

Discussion

Although previous research studies carried out in Colombian educational settings (Fandiño-Parra, 2013; McDougald, 2016; Usma-Wilches, 2009) confirm that students, especially in public institutions, perceive the learning of a foreign language as a difficult and complex matter, it is possible to design cross-disciplinary language classes centered on students' interests and needs, and putting into practice meaningful and contextualized learning. Cross-disciplinary lessons become convenient for students to understand and use the foreign language in a communicative way as well as talk about issues related to other disciplines, even in some basic way.

In line with the research carried out by Chuku (2020), as a matter of fact, the CBI approach through cross-disciplinary lessons can help students to connect their previous knowledge (in natural sciences, in this case) with new subject matters. Students acquired the capacity to express their previous and new information by using English grammar structures and specific terminology for scientific curriculum contents.

It is noticeable that Colombian education requires new perspectives towards the teaching-learning of the English process moving away from the traditional classroom methods centered on memorizing isolated

vocabulary and mechanic repetition which are not put into practice immediately. Those practices seem to have been used in most public schools until now. In this sense, the interdisciplinary content-based lessons, proved in this study, became an effective proposal to contribute to addressing crucial necessities identified by the MEN (2016): the need to train qualified English teachers, especially for elementary levels; lack of didactic and contextualized resources; few number of hours scheduled in public institutions; lack of collaborative teaching groups able to integrate isolated disciplines inside the school curricula; among others. As McDougald (2016) suggests, both teachers and students need to recognize how content and language go together.

Bearing in mind that in Colombia there are many families with limited financial resources, we took advantage, using our experience, of affordable didactic materials that could be adapted and used in other similar school contexts. With these relevant curriculum contents, participants in public low-budget schools may be able to create their own worksheets, workshops, and other interesting activities in a meaningful and pleasant way as long as the English teacher presents relevant and contextualized topics.

It is true that Latin America, as all other regions in the world, is facing the worldwide impact of globalization and technology (F. I. Munévar-Quintero, 2014). Among other things, this is the reason why English is turning into the most powerful and privileged language integrated inside the curriculum reforms according to the most recent educational policies enacted by the MEN (2016). Nonetheless, Leal (2016) argues that little research is done on the use of integrated learning inside the classrooms. As a result, the methods and strategies to learn and teach English have to be updated to different and more complex aspects enriching the educational literature review.

CBI becomes a pertinent methodology to train new teachers at university, providing them with a real-time answer that is context driven because they have

to be competent for implementing the most innovative teaching strategies, where young generations face the challenge of cross-disciplinary work integrating updated issues such as the crisis of the planet, technology, digital intelligences, and global warming, among others (C. A. Munévar-Quintero et al, 2017; UNESCO, 2014). At the same time, graduates would be able to provide practical solutions to the urgent requirements concerning the Colombian English classrooms, particularly in elementary and basic public institutions.

As current teaching formation programs have to prepare new teachers in innovative strategies inserted in the latest tendencies (Chou et al., 2019; MEN, 2016; UNESCO, 2014; Zwisler, 2018), this classroom action-research project may be seen as one of these. It is necessary for the English teachers to be more creative not only in implementing methodologies but also in the ways of evaluating and looking for students' progress. Thus, we are left with the following question: Can CBI help new teachers to transform traditional methodologies used in the English classes? Of course, it is possible to qualify education programs by linking the gap between teaching methods and cross-disciplinary content-based approaches. In short, this action-research project presents a cross-disciplinary proposal aimed at innovative educators (not only English teachers) who are open to new challenges and are prone to work towards integrative perspectives that the academic community repeatedly attempts to achieve.

Conclusions

As a response to the research question, the CBI approach was successfully integrated into the foreign language classroom by taking the natural sciences as the core curriculum content through a set of cross-disciplinary lessons which were designed and adjusted in a public Colombian institution. There is a direct and strong relationship involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language with the natural sciences. The

starting point of this action-research project was the identification of the problem area demonstrating the necessity of the English curriculum in a Colombian setting, in this case, the fourth-grade class of an elementary public school. Next, it was necessary to modify several didactic and pedagogical aspects through the design of some interdisciplinary lessons based on CBI, in order to lay aside the traditional methodologies implemented in the language classroom.

After analyzing the results emerging from this classroom action-research project, it is important to conclude that the CBI approach offers effective pathways to integrate a meaningful context with the learning of a foreign language in public low-budget schools. It is evident that English teachers can include different strategies, methodologies, and techniques to improve their classes and leave behind some current and real issues of the traditional educational institutions, and thus help students work in a didactic and integrative way by using scientific contents.

Designing and creating new strategies and methodologies make the learning of English easier. For this reason, cross-disciplinary lessons in the natural sciences curriculum include a variety of engaging and captivating topics suitable for learning different unknown scientific aspects about students' science, environment, and academic tasks. Students seem more motivated and engaged in their foreign language acquisition and they are able to produce (even in a basic way) sentences and dialogues that link English with a specific and significant content about the natural sciences.

Finally, this research invites both researchers and foreign language teachers to appreciate the benefits of CBI in pedagogical practices. The main contribution of this study was the design of cross-disciplinary lessons based on the natural science curriculum which was introduced into the English syllabus to improve the institutional methodologies and innovative classroom projects.

References

- Bonilla-Carvajal, C. A., & Tejada-Sánchez, I. (2016). Unanswered questions in Colombia's language education policy. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(1), 185–201. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v18n1.51996>
- Chou, C.-M., Shen, C.-H., Hsiao, H.-C., Shen, T.-C., & Shen, T.-C. (2019). Self-adjusting learning strategies of preservice teachers' cross-disciplinary teaching professionalization: Adjusting 107 curriculum reform and industry 4.0. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 9(8), 530–534. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2019.9.8.1260>
- Chuku, E. N. (2020). Combining language learning with environmental awareness in Nigeria by using content based instruction strategy. *Academia Arena*, 12(2), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.7537/marsaaj120220.01>
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>
- Delett, J. S., Barnhardt, S., & Kevorkian, J. A. (2001). A framework for portfolio assessment in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(6), 559–568. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2001.tb02103.x>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J. (2013). Knowledge base and EFL teacher education programs: A Colombian perspective. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 18(1), 83–95.
- Gómez-Sará, M. M. (2017). Review and analysis of the Colombian foreign language bilingualism policies and plans. *HOW Journal*, 24(1), 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.24.1.343>
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (1997). Content-based instruction: Research foundations. In M. A. Snow & D. M. Brinton (Eds.), *The content-based classroom: Perspectives on integrating language and content* (1st ed., pp. 5–21). Addison Wesley Longman.
- Heidari-Shahreza, M. A. (2014). The effect of content-based language instruction on EFL learners' attention, engagement, volunteering and verbal interaction. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*,

- 31, 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.31.14>
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1995). *The action research planner*. Deakin University Press.
- Kunlasomboon, N., Wongwanich, S., & Suwanmonkha, S. (2015). Research and development of classroom action research process to enhance school learning. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 1315–1324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.248>
- Leal, J. P. (2016). Assessment in CLIL: Test development at content and language for teaching natural science in English as a foreign language. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 9(2), 293–317. <https://doi.org/10.5294/lacil.2016.9.2.3>
- McDougald, J. S. (2016). CLIL approaches in education: Opportunities, challenges, or threats? *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 9(2), 253–266. <https://doi.org/10.5294/lacil.2016.9.2.1>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2016). *Suggested curriculum structure: Transition to 5th Grade*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2LoPMLv>
- Munévar-Quintero, C. A., González-Londoño, L. F., & Henao, A. A. (2017). Conflictos socioambientales: entre la legitimidad normativa y las legitimidades sociales. Caso mina La Colosa, Cajamarca (Tolima, Colombia) [Socio-environmental conflicts: Between normative legitimacy and social legitimacies. Case: La Colosa Mine, Cajamarca, Tolima, Colombia]. *Luna Azul*, (44), 165–176.
- Munévar-Quintero, F. I. (2014). Aplicación de videotutoriales en ambientes virtuales para la enseñanza del curso: diseño de materiales educativos digitales [Application of video tutorials in virtual environments for the teaching course: Design of digital educational materials]. *Revista KEPES*, 11(10), 9–31.
- Stoller, F. L. (2002, April). *Content-based instruction: A shell for language teaching or a framework for strategic language and content learning?* [Keynote address]. TESOL Convention, Salt Lake City, UT, United States. Retrieved from <http://carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/modules/strategies/stoller2002/stoller.pdf>
- Tokar, G., & Koch, V. (2012). Factors hindering teachers from integrating natural sciences and mathematics into home economics courses. *Journal of Baltic Science Education*, 11(3), 216–223. <http://oaji.net/articles/2014/987-1419168132.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2014). *Latin American and the Caribbean: Education for all 2015 regional review*. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002327/232701e.pdf>
- Usma-Wilches, J. A. (2009). Education and language policy in Colombia: Exploring processes of inclusion, exclusion, and stratification in times of global reform. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), 123–141.
- Vega, M. V., & Moscoso, M. L. (2019). Challenges in the implementation of CLIL in higher education: From ESP to CLIL in the tourism classroom. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 12(1), 144–176. <https://doi.org/10.5294/lacil.2019.12.1.7>
- Wallace, M. J. (1998). *Action research for language teachers* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Zirilli, C. (2019). *Il CLIL nelle Scienze Naturali: un caso di studio in una Scuola Secondaria di Milazzo, Sicilia, Italia* [CLIL in the Natural Science classroom: A case study in secondary education in Milazzo, Sicily, Italy; doctoral dissertation, Universidad de Córdoba, Spain]. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10396/19623>
- Zwisler, J. J. (2018). Language policy and the construction of national identity in Colombia. *Revista Encuentros*, 16(1), 133–146.

About the Authors

Josefina Quintero is a head professor at Universidad de Caldas, Colombia. She holds a PhD in Education from Universidad de Antioquia. Her academic interests embrace the fields of curriculum, pedagogy, and educational research. She is a peer evaluator of CONACES and coordinator of a research group classified by MINCIENCIAS.

Diana Yurany Álvarez is a head professor at Universidad de Caldas, Colombia. She holds an MEd and a BA in biology and chemistry. Her academic interests include curriculum, pedagogy and learning environments. She is an active member of research groups classified by MINCIENCIAS.

Andrea Arcila has a BA in Modern Languages (Universidad de Caldas). She is a foreign language teacher in public and private institutions. She has developed educational classroom research during her teaching practicum. Her academic interests include the design of didactic materials, teacher professional development, ESP, and English for children.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the Innov-Acción Educativa research group from the Universidad de Caldas in Manizales, Colombia, which supports the development of high-quality projects; the educational institution which served as the research setting; and our colleagues, advisors, and researchers from the teaching preparation programs who put in practice the pedagogical principles. The authors also would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all of the head teachers and young researcher students who took part in this classroom project.

Appendix: Sample of a Cross-Disciplinary Lesson

Lesson 1.

Topic. Going to the science museum

Linguistic objectives. By the end of the class the students will be able to: (a) identify the vocabulary about forms of energy, (b) recognize the demonstrative adjectives (this/that/these/those).

Communicative objective. To talk about the elements found in a visit to the science museum.

Warm up. The preservice teacher played short videos about energy, light, sound, and magnetism. Some questions and answers were posed.

Presentation. The girls wrote (in Spanish, with the science teacher's help) some previous knowledge about energy, how we can get it and the objects that produce it. Later, the students and the English preservice teacher started talking about the basic concepts and objects related to energy, light, sound, and magnetism. Then, the preservice teacher introduced some examples and queried the students such as: Does a flashlight produce artificial light? Does the sun produce natural light? After that, she explained the use of the demonstrative adjectives in English.

Practice. Students made drawings and created a word-search puzzle related to forms of energy.

Production. With each of the word-search puzzles, students wrote examples by using the demonstrative adjectives.

Evaluation. The students drew, colored, and classified manmade and natural light on a worksheet. They identified the objects that create attraction with a magnet and the ones that do not. With the help of a guitar, they organized the objects that produce loud and soft sounds. Finally, they created examples by using the vocabulary from the worksheet and the demonstrative adjectives.

As a result, students proved each object found in the classroom by putting a magnet near in order to demonstrate that it creates magnetism. At the end of the class, they said: "It was too easy, teacher." The productions were collected in the students' portfolios.

Fostering Citizenship and English Language Competences in Teenagers Through Task-Based Instruction

Fomento de la ciudadanía y las competencias del idioma inglés
en adolescentes mediante la instrucción basada en tareas

Yanilis Romero

Adriana Pérez


Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia


This research analyzes how citizenship and communicative competences can be fostered through a task-based approach to language teaching. This paper proposes the design of a unit with social components as the main meaningful task for the teaching of the English language and for fostering citizenship competencies in A2 level learners. An action research method was used; data collection techniques included observations, diaries, interviews, and students' artifacts. Findings report that tasks might foster English language use if those are designed by taking into account students' context and interests. Furthermore, real-life tasks derived from contextual features can enhance civic engagement and promote values, which can be signals of citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship education, communicative competence, English language, values

Esta investigación analiza cómo se pueden fomentar la ciudadanía y las competencias comunicativas mediante un enfoque basado en tareas para la enseñanza de idiomas. Este artículo propone el diseño de una unidad con componentes sociales como la principal tarea significativa para la enseñanza del idioma inglés y para el fomento de las competencias ciudadanas para los estudiantes de nivel A2. Se utilizó un método de investigación-acción; las técnicas de recolección de datos incluyeron observaciones, diarios, entrevistas y artefactos de los estudiantes. En primer lugar, los hallazgos informan que las tareas podrían fomentar el uso del idioma inglés si se diseñan teniendo en cuenta el contexto y los intereses de los estudiantes. En segundo lugar, las tareas de la vida real derivadas de características contextuales pueden mejorar el compromiso cívico y promover valores, que pueden ser señales de ciudadanía.

Palabras clave: competencia comunicativa, educación ciudadana, inglés, valores

Yanilis Romero  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7954-5393> · Email: yanilistr@uninorte.edu.co

Adriana Pérez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0438-979X> · Email: aderamirez@uninorte.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Romero, Y., & Pérez, A. (2021). Fostering citizenship and English language competences in teenagers through task-based instruction. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90519>

This article was received on September 13, 2020 and accepted on May 25, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

In Colombia, 50 years of armed conflict and economic chaos has shaped a society in which conflicts are solved by means of violence and aggression, where many people seem to have no hope or vision for a better future, and where many care only for their own well-being instead of the collective one. However, the chance to improve Colombia as a country in which to live and progress is not only a duty of the government; every single person must take responsibility and do what is appropriate to help and be part of the transformation process. Education is a key means through which a new country can be built; one from which a new type of citizen can start to actively participate in the construction of a peaceful society. Jaramillo-Franco (2008) points out that society is interested in citizens who can be referenced as good role models, people who can put the collective demands over the individual ones, and who are able to solve their struggles in a constructive way. The Colombian General Law of Education (1994) explicitly states: "Education is a process of permanent, personal, cultural and social development that is based on a comprehensive concept of human beings, their dignity, their rights and duties" (p. 1, our translation). Even though all schools are expected to promote citizenship education, their approaches may vary. In some settings, it is taught as an obligatory subject, whereas in other schools, it gets taught rather implicitly (Chaux, 2004). In addition, teachers often focus on teaching core subjects and on students' scores in order to demonstrate learning achievement in these areas on national standardized tests. This singular emphasis on core subject matter discredits the concept of "integral" education.

According to Wetsby (2002, as cited in Shaaban 2005), in most school programs teachers are not fully trained to complement their academic duty to address their students' citizenship education. Given the urgent need to intervene in this state of affairs, we sought to introduce citizenship education inside the foreign language classroom. This involved putting into practice a number

of strategies at a high school in Montería¹ (Colombia) and focusing on teaching values and citizenship competencies, so that students were given opportunities to fully develop their potential and become active members of the communities and participate in the construction of a better future. The main objective of this study was to analyze how citizenship and communicative competencies are fostered in the ninth grade English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom at this school through a task-based approach to teaching English.

Literature Review

The theories and concepts which underpin this study are: citizenship education and citizenship competencies, task-based learning, sociocultural theory of learning, and communicative competence.

Citizenship Education

A great number of researchers, scholars, and teachers contemplate education as the answer to many of the issues that humans face in society, with educational institutions playing a big role in this area. According to Shaaban (2005), a designer of a proposal for incorporating moral education into the English as a second language (ESL)/EFL classroom in Beirut, Lebanon, "all schools have the obligation to foster in their students personal and civic virtues such as integrity, courage, responsibility, diligence, service and respect for the dignity of all persons" (p. 201), since all of these values are believed to develop distinctive traits of good citizens. Currently, education aims to educate a student who can achieve understanding in the different fields of knowledge, develop critical thinking abilities, behave as a responsible citizen, and who can positively commit to the building of a more inclusive society where there is equity. In the late 20th century, with the development of an increasingly globalized world, there was a marked

¹ Montería is a medium-size Colombian city located in the north-western part of the country.

emphasis on directing education as a means to ensure youth employment. As pointed out by UNESCO (1998), due to the competitiveness that the globalized economy brought about in the early 90s, policymakers focused on the development of students' employability skills, leaving aside the fostering of citizenship values. Thus, citizenship education has gone from being an essential foundation for instruction, to being removed and even outlawed by schools to then being again a significantly important focus of attention in schools' syllabuses.

Studies have investigated direct, significant benefits from having introduced citizenship education to the students, the school environment, and the community at large. Harecker (2012), in her research in Austria, stated:

Using exercises in schools which are based on a "values-centered" pedagogy is considered to be a worthwhile investment, which brings even more worthwhile dividends with it. In many cases, teaching can become easier, more enjoyable and has more effect; the pupils become more focused, more active and more independent. (p. 3)

Hébert and Sears (2004) also claim that "citizenship education should not be limited to one subject or school discipline, but shared with other disciplines—for example, with language and literature courses" (p. 8). Since language art does not have an explicitly detailed content, ESL/EFL has the perfect characteristics, materials, and resources to implement citizenship education (Shaaban, 2005).

Citizenship Education in Colombia

In Colombia, the concept of *citizenship education* has been viewed as a crucial issue in the pursuit of peace. It is believed by many that, due to the circumstances lived by Colombians through the last 50 years, it is crucial to take action to prevent acts of violence and intolerance from continuing; therefore, the government has decided to implement citizenship education. According to the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2004):

Education is one of the ways that can make peace a reality . . . if we give our children quality education, we will be not only getting them away from poverty, but also, giving them the opportunity of living and making a country of peace. (p. 3, our translation)

The Colombian education system in the last decade has paid attention to the development of the citizenship competences within schools. Thus, the "Educational Revolution Program" has been created to help students gain, through a good education service, all the competences to develop as global citizens, with the ultimate purpose of ensuring students with values and ethical behavior.

Educational centers are crucial to establish strong foundations to promote citizenship education, but this teaching has to be experiential instead of just theoretical. That is why citizenship education is not meant to be just a lecture where students are filled with information and facts, but a lesson where students get to interiorize the values and put them into practice in their lives. The MEN (2004) issued the standards for citizenship education, which introduced an integral program in civic and citizenship education. But the question is what to teach?

The teaching should be contextualized according to each community and its needs, thus, special relevance in this project is given to two important values: respect and responsibility as they are closely linked to the three main groups of competencies (i.e., coexistence and peace; democratic participations and accountability; as well as plurality, identity, and appreciation of differences) proposed by the Ministry (MEN, 2004) in order to categorically encourage the development of citizenship behavior.

Communicative and Task-Based Language Teaching

Hymes (1970, as cited in Johnson, 2004) called the ability to express utterances with the appropriateness of when to use them, according to the context, sociolinguistic

competence. For him, in addition to the knowledge of structures that enable someone to express ideas, feelings, and opinions, language is a means to communicate. His concept of communicative competence includes both the knowledge and the ability to use the language. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a second language communicative competence framework comprising three elements: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. The goal in many ESL/EFL educational contexts is to equip learners to interact successfully with native speakers or someone who uses English as a means of communication, and to make the person more competitive for a globalized world.

Concerning task-based instruction, Willis (1996) proposes tasks as helpful goal-driven assignments that foster meaningful communication and thus support the language learning process.

Nunan (1989) offers two types of tasks: Real-world tasks designed to practice or rehearse those tasks that students are likely to face in daily situations, and pedagogical tasks, which are theory-based and aimed at facilitating language acquisition, but which are not necessarily similar to real-world tasks. For the sake of this research, a pedagogical task is proposed in its three basic forms: pre-task, task, and post task. In other words, by using tasks, it is possible to introduce “children to the global goals as part of foreign language lessons, which can redress this balance and integrate a more holistic, personalized approach to children’s education into our classroom practice” (Maley & Peachey, 2017, pp. 10–11).

Method

Context

This study was carried out in a public school that offers integral education from K to 11 to approximately 2,200 students coming from the lowest income families around the southern part of the city of Montería. The high school is dealing with issues as bullying, rude manners, disrespect, lack of discipline, campus vio-

lence, and poor academic performances. Additionally, disciplinary reports evidence the students’ negative attitude to study, failure to complete homework or bring material to classes, purposeful interruptions of teachers’ classes, and lack of engagement in their learning process. In terms of English teaching and learning, students are taught using a mix of strategies with no clear definition of the method to guide their learning process. In regard to the syllabus, it is annually designed by the teachers, which means that the content is changed frequently with little monitoring of the sequencing of the lessons.

However, there does not seem to be any concrete action plan for bringing about a true transformation of the situation or any specific follow up plan to track students’ progress in terms of citizenship and values education.

Participants

The ninth graders formed a large group of 44 students: 25 young women and 19 young men, whose ages ranged from 12 to 15. They had been learning English for three years and were dynamic and liked working hard when they were fully engaged in doing tasks, especially tasks that required movement. They love asking questions and taking surveys among themselves; this aspect was discovered in a survey project class in which most of them fulfilled the requirements of the activity. Thus, they were easily attracted to work when something new was brought to the class.

Another participant was a female English teacher (part of the research team) with five years of experience working at the institution. Her language level was B2. She had taught the target students for two years in a row. Her role involved the design of the activities, rubrics, and the implementation of the unit.

Procedure

This small-scale project followed the principles of action research, which requires a thoughtful process

by which the teacher-researcher reflects on their own educational practice and, at the same time, collects and analyzes data to provide solutions to an identified problem. The problem, as described above, stems from the urgent need to implement methodologies that will develop citizenship competences in the schools and, specifically, the need to assess the methodology implemented in the ninth grade EFL classroom at a local high school in terms of its contribution to the development of both citizenship and communicative competences.

Action research, as mentioned by Cohen et al. (2017), aims at improving practice by acting and reflecting on it. It is designed to bridge the gap between research and practice and, as a form of “self-reflective” inquiry,” it allows researchers to examine their practice in context and thus find ways to improve it so that it can have a positive impact on social justice. As Cohen et al. discuss, action research turns practical problem-solving into a systematic tool to collect relevant data to expand knowledge; it enhances the competencies of participants to be able to do research. The researchers immerse themselves in an ongoing cyclical process that allows them to gather robust information to better understand particular complex social situations, which may ultimately explain processes of change within social systems at large. Thus, there is an implied ethic principle to improve the quality of human actions starting from specific problems that practitioners face in their professional practice.

Design of Activities

A task-based unit was designed with the purpose of providing opportunities to expose learners to learn English and use it meaningfully, as well as to promote civic awareness about a global problem. The topic chosen by the researcher in consensus with the teacher-researcher was global warming. As a result, the unit proposed has some linguistic features, competencies,

and evaluation and a general plan of action made up of details that are more specific about the lesson such as timeframe, objectives, procedures, and materials needed (see Appendices A and B).

Data Collection Techniques

Observations

An external teacher observed each lesson. Observation helped the teacher-researcher to analyze aspects such as exposure to the target language, the amount of time devoted to learning, materials, methodology, and evaluation. Seven observations were carried out for four weeks, comprising 12 hours of observation in total.

Diaries

Diaries—called notepads for students (a friendlier tag)—were chosen to obtain information on how learners perceived the class. Diary entries were recorded by students at the end of each class. The questions were given in students’ native language so their act of reflecting would be clear. Students’ entries were guided by pre-established questions (see Appendix C). The sample of diaries analyzed were from five students whose profiles differ in terms of interest and engagement during the sessions.

Videotaping

As Burns (1999) states, video recording is used for capturing in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances produced by either the learner or the teacher. The researcher chose this data source to analyze aspects such as exposure to the language, attitude, and features of the teaching methodology. All the lessons were video-recorded, with the camera located in an inconspicuous place. The videos were transcribed and analyzed after the implementation of the whole unit and relevant data obtained were coded to identify categories.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with two different groups of five students each: one group prior to the intervention and the other after the intervention. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The information gathered was analyzed thematically in categories. The interviews combined predetermined questions with opportunities for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions to better grasp the participants' insights.

Students' Artifacts

PowerPoint presentations made by the students were taken as a source to get relevant data to support their understanding about the social issue. Slides from each group were analyzed to nurture the findings of this study.

Results

First we carefully analyzed the information gathered and contrasted it with our own thoughts, ideas, and impressions. Then we coded the data into categories to finally attempt some interpretation and description of the patterns revealed by each instrument regarding students' communicative and citizenship competences. In this analysis, the students are given a number to protect their identity (e.g., Student 1, Student 2, etc.).

Analysis of the Observations

After the observations, it was possible to state that students' communicative competence was promoted. Next, we present some evidence of the pragmatic, linguistic, and sociolinguistic competences in practice. Turns 7 and 8 in Excerpt 1 show that students understood what the teacher was requesting from them and there was some behavior that responded to what she had just asked them to do. Something similar happens in Turns 9 and 10 where the teacher once again asked and students used English correctly to provide non-elaborated answers.

Excerpt 1. Promoting Pragmatic Competence (Taken from Lesson 1)

7 Teacher: Could you please sit down?

8 Students: Thank you miss!

9 Teacher: How was your weekend, eh? How was last week? How was your Saturday? How was Sunday? OK, good, fine?

10 Student: Normal...

11 Teacher: Normal? What did you do?

12 Student: Regular.

13 Teacher: What did you do?

14 Student: We did party.

15 Teacher: Oh...you went to a party, OMG...whose party?

16 Students: [in chorus] Eimis's

In Turn 15 the teacher recast a student error, giving this student the opportunity to notice the correct way to say it. Students also showed a budding ability to functionally use their linguistic resources to convey meaning and give an accurate reply when the teacher asked.

As seen from the last part of Turn 6 to 16 in Excerpt 2, the three students involved showed that they understood what they had summarized in the previous class and were capable of communicating their ideas orally using English as a means to transfer the message. Excerpt 2 also shows that the summary of the participants was good, which was in accordance with the unit's aim of writing the synthesis of a video.

Excerpt 2. Promoting Pragmatic Competence (Taken from Lesson 1)²

8 Teacher: Let's review, we are going to review our topic *y luego de que ya recordamos entonces iniciamos con la lectura. Quién me quiere voluntariamente ayudar con la lectura. Entonces vamos a leer qué es global warming en la lectura* [and after we have recalled, then we will start by reading the text, who voluntarily wants to help reading the text? OK, let us read what global warming is in the reading]. *¿Qué consiguió* [Student 1] *que era global warming?* Please, read aloud for the rest of the class.

² It is worth mentioning that, in this excerpt, the teacher reported having used Spanish (the students' mother tongue) as a strategy to guarantee that students understood the content.

- 9 Student 1: Global warming. Global warming refers to the increase of the earth's temperature due to the increase of the amount of gas in the atmosphere.
- 10 Teacher: In the atmosphere. OK, thank you. *¿Qué encontraron que eran las causas allí? Las causas Quién quiere ayudarme con las causas. ¿Quién tiene las causas? Levante la mano.* [Student 2], *¿me puedes ayudar por favor?* [Could you help me, please?]
- 11 Student 2: Causes: driving a car, flying an airplane, greenhouse, contamination.
- 12 Teacher: Again. Read louder.
- 13 Student 2: Driving a car.
- 14 Teacher: OK, driving a car, driving cars, the greenhouse effect, *¿qué mas?* [raising the voice tone to call everyone's attention]
- 15 Student 2: Contamination.
- 16 Teacher: And contamination. *Ahora sí, quién tiene los effects* [Now, who has the effects?]. Thank you [Student 2]. *¿Alguien más?* [Anybody else?]. Effects. Lady?
- 17 Student 3: And some animals are moving to new houses because of their natural habitats.
- 18 Teacher: Yes! Animals are moving to new houses or to new areas. *Muy bien.*

Sociolinguistic competence was also fostered during the teaching unit, as can be seen in Excerpt 3. The teacher was waiting for some students to begin their presentation, but they were having trouble with the electronic devices and a student used formal language to ask her to wait some more minutes.

Excerpt 3. Evidence of Sociolinguistic Competence (Requesting Time Politely)

Miss, Yanilis... Do you mind waiting, please?... We need some time. The computer does not accept my pen drive... we are trying. (Taken from Lesson 7)

The other category was citizenship competencies: The findings in this category come from observations made by the teacher-researcher who construed students' interaction as an ongoing process where citizenship

competencies took place. The promotion of citizenship competencies was an active component of the teaching and learning process of the English sessions. We acknowledge that fostering citizenship requires a long process, which in this specific context, had positively started.

In addition, this category recognizes the idea that students in the target group were and are experiencing a series of realities that may help them become better citizens in a long-term process.

As a whole, it is possible to say that classes presented opportunities for learning and practice, not only English but also civic behavior among students and teachers. This single factor matches the idea proposed by the socio-cultural theory where the learning process is seen as a social process within a given context and learners as active agents under the guidance of an adult (Vygotsky, 1978).

The methodology (task-based learning) offered opportunities for social interaction between the teacher and the students; it seemed that the classroom was a democratic place where the participation of both (learners and teacher) was necessary for the success of the sessions; the teacher constantly invited students to participate and ask for the clarifications they thought they needed. We may argue that the teacher unconsciously applied some of the strategies proposed by Shaaban (2005) because she promoted students' active involvement, cooperative learning, and explanation as part of the unit she was carrying. Though her methodology was based on a task-based approach, it clearly suits Shaaban's suggestions as to teaching citizenship competences.

In this way, students were able to be actively involved and broke the pattern in which only the teacher asks questions. Excerpt 4 evidences that the relation was set to be bidirectional instead of unidirectional. Note that in the observer's comment students are the active actors of the class, as one of the students asked what the word "anthropogenic" meant, followed by an explanation

from the teacher who supported the definition with an example.

Excerpt 4. Asking for Clarification and Supplying Requested Information About New Words (Taken from Lesson 1)

125 Teacher: [The teacher is presenting the activity]. In the next activity, you have headings, headings are like titles. You are going to identify which heading goes with each picture, OK? I'm going to give you two minutes to try to find out which one goes with which one, one picture is left out, there are only five...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, so I'm going to label just five pictures, I'm gonna give you two minutes, think about which picture goes with each heading. Which picture with which headings?

126 Student 3: What is floods, miss?

127 Teacher: Look at me. The Sinú river is increasing [used body language] and then goes to houses, and then got floods. Another word that you don't know?

128 Students: Flood.

129 Teacher: Yes, another word that you don't know?

130 Student 2: Anthropogenic.

131 Teacher: Anthropogenic...Do you know what is anthropogenic? It is caused by human activity, if I for example cause the rain [body language], let's suppose that I am doing things and then the rain will come, that is anthropogenic, so the rain is caused by my activity, anthropogenic means that people cause that...Another word? No? OK, let's see which words go with each one. Another minute so you could finish. Again, you are going to put one heading under the picture, OK.

In Excerpt 5, more specifically in Turn 18, the teacher assigned turns for students who were willing to participate in the class and they responded positively to this routine. They were patient, they listened to each other; it is possible to see that students were feeling capable and competent when participating.

Excerpt 5. Assigning Turns (Taken from Lesson 2)

18 Teacher: Yes. Animals are moving to new houses or to new areas. *Muy bien, ese es uno. ¿Otro efecto?*, another effect? Student 3?

19 Andrea: Due to the earth heating...sea level are raising [and] people have to move away from the coast.

Although students were not all the time displaying responsibility, it can be argued that they could have been developing argumentative competencies. When the teacher called out a student, she told the teacher to allow her to do her group presentation next class, and when the teacher asked for the reasons, she sustained her position with an argument, trying to negotiate with the teacher. Apparently, the teacher allowed more time, and the students promised to make a better effort and present a quality product.

Excerpt 6. Negotiating and Reaching Agreements (Taken from Lesson 4)

33 Student 3: Teacher, can we leave it for tomorrow?

34 Teacher: Why for tomorrow? What is it for tomorrow that cannot be done today?

35 Student 3: For tomorrow, we are going to be more prepared.

36 Teacher: So, what do we do?

37 Student 3: We practice hard.

Student 3's behavior was a confirmation that she was on the way to developing citizenship competencies, as she was able to manifest her position, listen to the uncomfortable situation, and ask for a second opportunity to comply with the task. The aforesaid performance paired with another standard typified as a communicative one in the documents for citizenship competencies (MEN, 2004). Thus, it was found that students were partially practicing values such as responsibility, which is a fundamental trait we considered when establishing a connection between citizenship education and moral values.

As part of the three citizenship objectives for the unit (see Appendix A), students reflected on a problematic situation, as shown in Excerpt 7. They were relating to the citizenship standards described by MEN (2004): “actively collaborate to reach common goals in my classroom and recognize the importance of rules to attain those goals” (p. 17, our translation) and “constructively work as teams [and] participate with my teachers and classmates in a project-oriented to a common welfare” (p. 19, our translation).

Excerpt 7. Promoting Citizenship Competences (Taken from Lesson 3)

- 8 Teacher: So that's the problem that we need to talk about, because that is the problem that every day a guy is putting a lot of noise. Now, which would be the solution for that problem? One person!
- 9 Student 5: Dialogue.
- 10 Teacher: Yes, dialogue.
- 11 Students: Manners.
- 12 Teacher: Yes.

These competencies were developed thanks to the task-based methodology as learners were first exposed to situations that presented a problem affecting the people of the world. Afterward, they analyzed it, reflected upon it, and proposed possible solutions; later, as a task, students were asked to find a problematic situation affecting their community and then do some kind of research about the problem, the effects or consequences, and then propose possible solutions. This methodology promoted the planned citizenship goal since it prompted students to construct and celebrate agreements regarding what problem to discuss in their presentation, how to distribute the work and responsibilities among themselves, what text finally to present in their slides; to decide who would be those to present the work orally in front of the others. It is important to admit that students attempted to keep their agreement and sometimes failed, but what is more important to highlight is that they finally did what was required of them and made a presentation.

The fact that students were able to look around in their communities with critical eyes and question what was perhaps taken for granted and accepted as an everyday reality constituted an important citizenship exercise.

Analysis of the Interviews

The interviews were analyzed in a systematic manner by splitting the text into significant components, creating categories and putting similar ideas together, thus helping the analysis make more sense (Burnard, 1994). These categories were the teacher's methodology, participation, diaries, learning, and motivation.

Teacher's Methodology. In the first set of questions, students acknowledged the teacher's methodology as a significant factor in their performance. Student 1 stated:³

I feel that now students understand a little bit more and participate in class. I don't feel the teacher is explaining something, but that we all are constructing the lesson.

Participation. Students also reported that another factor that helped them was the stress-free environment, since the teacher motivated participation voluntarily, not obligatorily; therefore, they felt more at ease and were eager to participate.

I like the class because [the teacher] is not threatening us to participate, she doesn't say it is a mark, but she says: “Who wants to contribute?” (Student 1)

Diaries (Notepads): Students' impressions about the notepads were all positive.

We can let off steam with the notepad. We just have to write and learn, and by writing we can revise what we have learnt. (Student 1)

Since the teacher asks us to write about what happens in the class, we reflect on the topics and the experiences that the lesson gives us. (Student 3)

³ The interviews were held in Spanish and we have translated the students' answers.

Such insights allowed the perception that the notepad was a tool that helped students delve deeper into their thoughts and feelings.

Learning. Likewise, in the second interviews, carried out at the end of the study, students displayed acknowledgement of improvement both in the academic part as well as in the personal one.

In the academic part I have changed, I felt that it has been better, the lessons, every day we have learnt more things, more experiences. (Student 2)

I have changed a little in the academic part, my mind is wider open. (Student 3)

Motivation. Motivation was another aspect students mentioned; they expressed the following:

Interviewer: Is there a word you could use to express how you feel now in classes?

Student 2: Motivated.

Before my mind wasn't able to catch all those things in English, and now, I feel more motivated, more excited about English. (Student 3)

Analysis of Students' PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint presentations in the foreign language classes have been used for quite some time and they have demonstrated several advantages, such as making both teaching and learning interactive and an enjoyable and rewarding activity (Musa & Al-Dersi, 2013). Students who were part of this study had been working on the unit called "Global Warming." Throughout the unit students were then asked to carry out a group mini-research project which included identifying a particular environmental problem affecting their communities, thinking of its causes, consequences, and possible solutions, and, as a final product, they were asked to make a PowerPoint presentation to report their findings to the class. This task was intended for students to continue developing the ability to identify a problematic situa-

tion, construct a problem-solution text, synthesize it in PowerPoint slides, and orally present it to the class.

We designed a rubric to evaluate the presentations (see Appendix D). The criteria used for that evaluation were completeness, use of discourse markers and connectors, clarity and coherence, and citizenship competence.

Next, we summarize the findings after analyzing the slides of five groups. It is worth mentioning that all the students demonstrated in this analysis the capacity to identify an environmental problem affecting their community. Some of the problematic situations found by students were: the excessive pollution of water and soils (Group 1), street contamination (Group 2), bad odors and mosquitos due to accumulation of waste (Group 3), noise pollution (Group 4), and security problems (Group 5). The content of the five presentations was organized taking into account the main four aspects (problem, causes, effects, and solution) which students discussed.

Regarding the identification of the issue, students were able to recognize relevant problems in their surroundings; most of them provided an example, made a comment, and showed photos of them. These three elements in their work also demonstrated that learners had understood and possessed clarity about their intended research, that they were able to have a critical look at their environment.

The students were also able to give more details about the problem, specifying what they considered to be the causes and the consequences. Groups 1 and 2 rightly identified some of the conditions leading to excessive pollution of water and soils (see Figure 1).

Regarding the identification of causes and effects, these groups were able to identify the precise effects of the problem they were stating. This situation was a good indicator to know that students did not only learn about the characteristics of a problem-solution text but also about how those issues have an undesirable impact on the environment and on people (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Slides Showing Problems Found in the Community by Groups 1 and 2

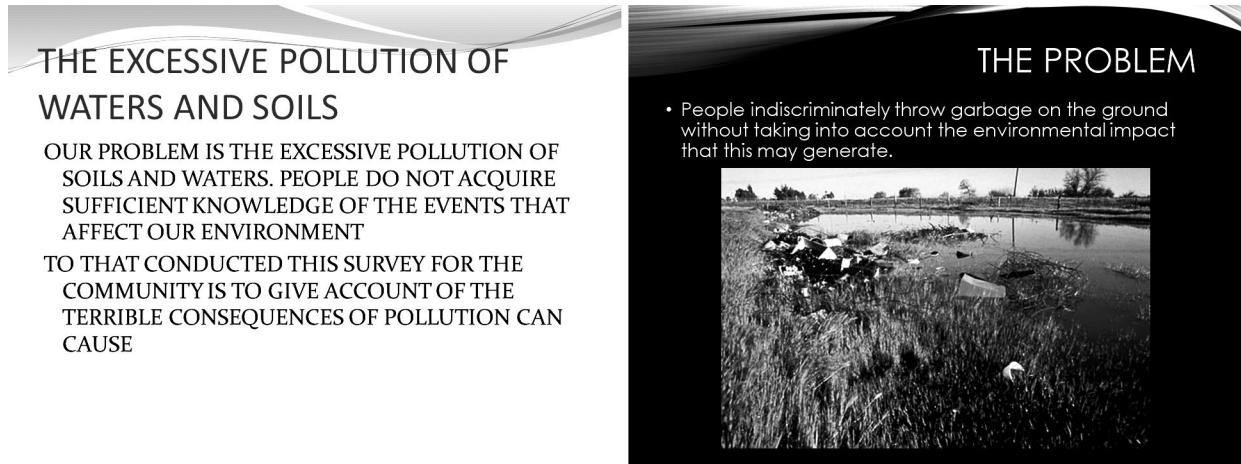


Figure 2. Slides Showing Causes Presented by Groups 1 and 2

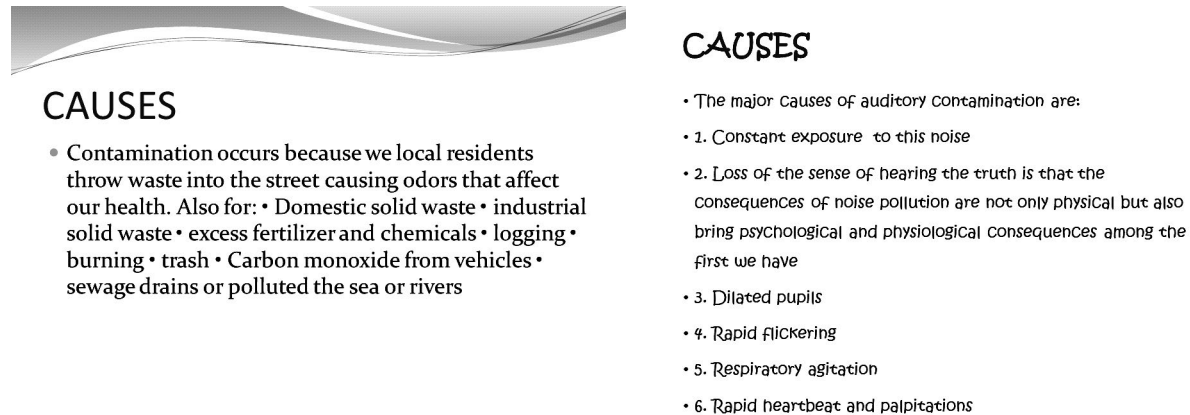
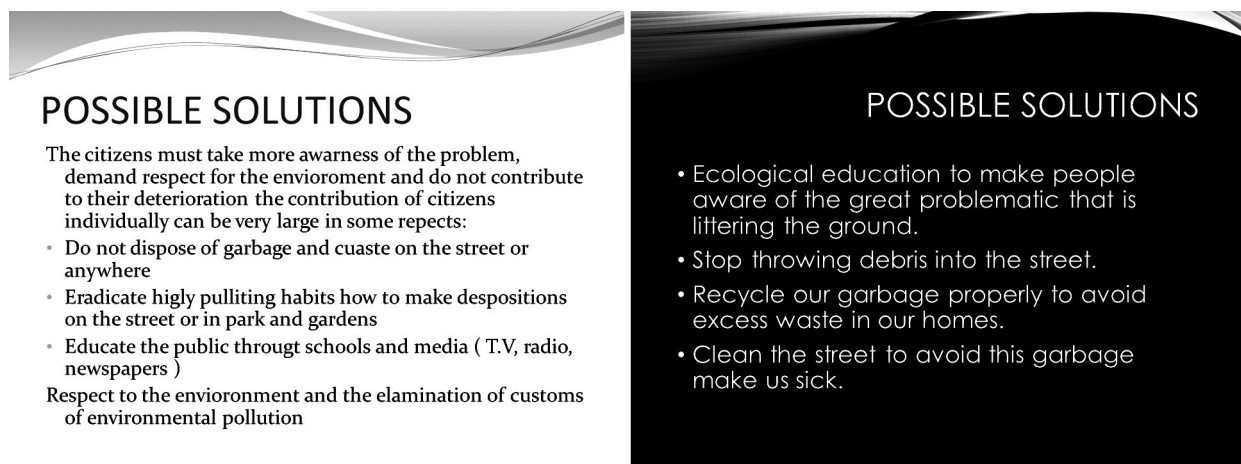


Figure 3. Slides Showing the Proposed Solutions by Groups 4 and 5



All the groups proposed practical solutions. Group 4 gave a peaceful and collective solution and Group 5 showed awareness and knowledge of their legal rights (see Figure 3).

These proposed solutions were consistent with some of the proposed standards for citizenship education (MEN, 2004): “identify and analyze situations in which civil and political rights are violated” (p. 23, our translation). The slides also evidence the students’ growing command in English: They not only wrote fairly accurate texts, but most of them managed to give spoken messages during the oral presentations. The task-based instruction provided instances in which the foreign language was used to convey ideas and promote communication among the actors in the classroom.

Analysis of Students’ Notepads

Students were given the chance to self-evaluate their role during the class, and their attitude to face conflict while the sessions were taking place. Participants were numbered to provide confidentiality of the identities of the students.

Student 1 was concerned and understood that every action brings consequences either positive or negative. She wrote in the reflection for Lesson 3 that her classmates did not do the right thing; then, the teacher called students’ attention for not being responsible. She even recognizes that the teacher was scolding them, as they were not behaving as expected. In the same sense, she finally admitted that the “scolding part” was a good thing to do as the teacher brought them down to earth. She wrote: “But the teacher gave us a talk, one of those I called scolds, but I like them. She brings us down to earth. So, after this, everybody must present tomorrow.”

The form in which Student 1 expressed her consciousness about not coping with the objectives of the class and immediately starting a call for commitment was evident in her reflection for this class. Thus, she

started to develop citizenship competencies, especially the one that refers to a person who foresees the consequences in the short and long term about his or her actions and avoid those that can cause harm to others or themselves.

In general terms, students showed that the class motivated them to talk in English as their oral participation was noticeable throughout as it increased throughout the lessons. The fact that students were able to write summaries, complete charts, read, comprehend, and give their own conclusions using the English language are proof that students’ communicative competence was being developed through the activities proposed in the unit. Some other aspects to highlight are that most students’ responses in English were fairly well-constructed, and they initiated verbal interventions in English, which means that they felt comfortable communicating ideas using the English language. The above-mentioned evidence may indicate that the task encouraged learners in a constructive way to learn language through meaningful interaction while developing activities and tasks, as Feez (1998) claims in his assumptions on task-based instruction.

In a general view, students understood and conveyed messages, but it is evident that they should work on spelling, syntax, and cohesion, among other elements (see Figures 4 and 5 where there is a sample of students’ synthesis from the video).

Figure 4. Transcription of the Synthesis of a Video Written by Student 6 [sic]

Ana is a business management, she spoke in the video about Global Warming, the effects of global warming, the green house effect.

Causes: problem affecting humanity, green house causes poor economy, and in all the humanity.

Principal solution: Not to contaminate, plant trees, carpool, reduce waste, reuse bulbs.

Change your way of thinking.

Figure 5. Transcription of the Synthesis of a Video Written by Student 7 [sic]

Ana is a person; she talks about the problem of contamination in the video. She mentioned the effects of the big problem of global warming, and others.

Some causes: this problem affects all the animals and the people. Another problem is the economy because it affects the soil

Solution: stop contamination, use the 3 R's, and use cars with many people in

Figures 4 and 5 showed that English language learning was taking place during the implementation of the lessons. The students' writings were more comprehensible, and ideas were organized. This evidence is coherent with Willis's (1996) ideas about evaluating tasks in terms of achievement of an outcome as they bear some resemblance to real-life language use.

Conclusions

After the application of this research project, we could see that citizenship and communicative competences were fostered using a task-based approach to language teaching, because the role of the task proposed in the unit let learners experience several situations like identifying a problematic issue; proposing possible solutions for it; interacting with classmates, teachers, and people from the community; and producing a problem-solution text. Such experiences contributed to the understanding of the students' role in society and how they can contribute to the solution of real-life problems that could also benefit their communities and impact society at large. That is to say, learners were the participants of this study and it was possible to evidence the process through which they were undergoing while learning English and displaying positive civic behavior as future citizens.

Upon concentrating on the evidence of citizenship competencies developed in this ninth grade EFL class, it was perceived that most learners were capable of

adjusting to the rules proposed for the harmony of the class and demonstrating that they could all come to an agreement to turn in a requested product. In addition to this, students showed certain commitment to foster values such as respect and responsibility. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to say that they still needed time to work on those aspects, since pupils are within the process of developing character, which is meant to be a long process. Coexistence was seen among students, respect and responsibility existed in the classroom and they were put into practice when students listened to each other and conducted themselves in an ethical manner. To be realistic, the promotion of citizenship competencies needs more than a unit to be developed and they can be perceived not in the way they are written in the standards but with small actions, insofar as students are provided with chances to assume a positive attitude while participating in the process.

An important lesson derived from this experience is the fact that the teacher can plan more detailed scaffolding for the students before they are able to produce the type of text they are expected to produce. As it was, the teacher never showed the class an example of the final product they were supposed to produce and was never explicit about the criteria of evaluation (the students never knew the rubric for the oral presentation). Some students fully engaged with the task showed awareness of different tools with which they had to fight for their own rights, which aligns with the purpose of the study: to see how the students' citizenship competences were developed. The verbalization of awareness of responsibility or participation in the problematic situation or in the solution was taken as an indicator of a higher level of awareness. Other signals of the development of citizenship competences were students' attitude to resolve conflicts during the lessons and the receptive attitude to work on the weaknesses when being corrected by the teacher. For further studies, the assessment of citizenship via the use of validated instruments is recommended.

References

- Burnard, P. (1994). The telephone interview as a data collection method. *Nurse Education Today*, 14(1), 67–72. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0260-6917\(94\)90060-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0260-6917(94)90060-4)
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/i.1.1>
- Chaux, E. (2004). Introducción: aproximación integral a la formación ciudadana [comprehensive approach to citizen training]. En E. Chaux, J. Lleras y A. M. Velásquez (Eds.), *Competencias ciudadanas: de los estándares al aula. Una propuesta de integración a las áreas académicas* (pp. 13–28). Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Universidad de los Andes. <https://doi.org/10.7440/2004.01>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- Feez, S. (1998). *Text-based syllabus design*. AMES.
- Harecker, G. (2012). *Teaching values at school: A way to reach a better understanding in our world*. <https://bit.ly/39SpXGH>
- Hébert, Y., & Sears, A. (2004). *Citizenship education*. <https://bit.ly/39UB5t3>
- Jaramillo-Franco, R. (2008). Educación cívica y ciudadana como respuesta a la violencia en Colombia [Civic and citizenship education as an answer to violence in Colombia]. *Transatlántica de Educación*, 4, 65–76.
- Johnson, M. (2004). *A philosophy for second language acquisition*. Yale University Press.
- Ley General de Educación [General Education Law], Diario Oficial No. 41.214 (1994).
- Maley, A., & Peachey, N. (Eds.). (2017). *Integrating global issues in the creative English language classroom: With reference to the United Nations sustainable development goals*. British Council.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2004). *Formar para la ciudadanía... ¡Sí es posible! Lo que necesitamos saber y saber hacer* [Training for citizenship...It is possible! What we need to know and know how to do]. https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-75768_archivo_pdf.pdf
- Musa, K. A., & Al-Dersi, Z. E. M. (2013). Advantages of using PowerPoint presentation in [the] EFL classroom & the status of its use in Sebha University. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies*, 1(1), 3–16.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shaaban, K. (2005). A proposed framework for incorporating moral education into the ESL/EFL classroom. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 18(2), 201–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310508668742>
- UNESCO. (1998). *Learning to live together in peace and harmony: Values education for peace, human rights, democracy and sustainable development for the Asia-Pacific region*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000114357>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (Rev. ed.). Harvard University Press.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.

About the Authors

Yanilis Romero holds a master's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT) and is studying for a PhD in Education at Universidad del Norte (Colombia). She has worked researching on projects regarding the improvement of teaching and learning English processes with different audiences in public institutions.

Adriana Pérez holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from the Latin American and Caribbean University (Venezuela), a master's degree in Education in Teaching Spanish, and a BA in Education from the Universidad de Oriente in Venezuela. She is currently working for the Spanish Department in Universidad del Norte.

Appendix A: Unit Planning

Aspect	Description
Task	To make a presentation about a local problem and propose solutions for it.
Communicative competences	Linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic
Linguistic features	Words that signal a problem Lexis around environmental problems Discourse organizers Cause & effect indicators
Citizenship competence	To critically analyze conflicts among groups, in my neighborhood, town, or country. To construct, implement, keep, & repair agreements between groups. To show respect and tolerance.
Evaluation	Students' participation during the task cycle. Final presentation. Criteria: identification of problem, proposal of solutions, spelling, and use of lexis

Appendix B: Detailed Plan of Action

Class stage	Objective/competencies/ standards	Teacher's procedures and students' activities
Warm-up (15–30 min)	Follow instructions given during classes to do academic activities. Show a tolerant attitude and respect when listening to others.	The teacher does a warm-up activity. Silently, some students act out some words while others infer the meaning in Spanish (unknown words in a video they will watch).
Pre-task (2 hr)	Use general knowledge of the world to comprehend what is heard.	Students watch a video twice. They have to take notes as the video is playing.
	Coherently organize texts when writing taking into account formal elements such as punctuation and spelling.	Teacher asks students what the video is about. She uses yes/no questions.
	Summarize information from a video in writing.	In groups of three, students write a short paragraph about a video message based on what they know or on notes taken.
	Development of respect and tolerance when listening to others and working together	Students share what they write while the teacher writes key words on the board. Later, she induces students to notice three things: 1. The problem 2. The causes and the effects 3. The possible solutions
	Express opinions, likes, and preferences about topics discussed in class.	Students give their opinions related to the topic (interesting, important: why or why not?)
Task (3 hr)	Identify a problem-solution text and understand it.	Students read a problem-solution related to global warming.
	Critically analyze conflicts between groups in the neighborhood or community.	In groups, students discuss their understanding of the causes, effects, and possible solutions. Students fill out a chart and then share as a class.
	Construct, celebrate, and keep agreements among people and groups.	Students read another cause-effect text and answer some comprehension questions regarding the problem, the cause, and the effects. In groups of four, students think of a problem in their community. They design a presentation using slides to show the problem, causes, and consequences (pictures needed).
	Make short oral presentations on findings of a research.	In groups of four, students formally present their findings in a five-minute presentation. Listeners should write down possible solutions to the problem presented by each group.
2 hr	Express opinions orally about the topics developed in class.	The best groups share their work with other groups from the same grade.
	Students make short oral presentation about their findings.	Students report to the class their findings in a very informal way.
Post-task (3 hr)	Propose a solution to a given problem.	Students organize the information and investigate further so they can do a short oral presentation for the class.

Appendix C: Prompts of Questions to be Answered in Students' Diaries

Note. The questions were originally given to the students in Spanish.

1. What was your role (positive or negative) in the English class and/or in the group work? Explain.
2. How was your contribution? (Positive, negative, significant, unhelpful, useless).
3. How did you perceive the contribution of the other partners?
4. What went right/wrong in the class, and/or in the group work?
5. What could have been done differently?
6. Was there a conflict in the class? Describe it.
7. How was your participation in the conflict?
8. Was it solved? How was it solved? Or how could it be solved?

Appendix D: Rubric to Evaluate Students' Oral Presentations

Oral Presentation: Problems in our community

Note. The original was provided in Spanish.

Teacher's name:

Student's name:

Category	4	3	2	1
Content	Shows a complete understanding of the subject.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of part of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
Completion	The work has the complete content: three slides with visual aids.	The work has almost all required parts: three slides with visual aids, loaded with text.	The work has all the parts.	The work does not have all required parts.
Oral presentation	Shows preparation, enthusiasm, and uses a good tone of voice.	Shows some preparation, enthusiasm, and uses a good tone of voice.	Shows very little preparation and enthusiasm, and uses a low tone of voice.	Does not show preparation, enthusiasm, and does not use an appropriate tone of voice.
	The ideas are presented in a clear and orderly manner.	The ideas are presented properly but not very coherently and orderly.	Shows isolated ideas with little organization.	Does not present ideas orally and lacks coherence regarding the ideas.
Language	Facial expressions and body language generate strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic.	Facial expressions and body language are used trying to generate enthusiasm, but it seems fake.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language. They do not generate much interest in the way they introduce the topic.
Visual aids	Students use several visual aids, which show considerable work/creativity, and they make the presentation.	Students use 1–2 visual aids, which show considerable work/creativity, and they make the presentation better.	Students use 1–2 visual aids that make the presentation better.	Students do not use any visuals or any support during the presentation.

Language Teachers' Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences During the COVID-19 Confinement

Experiencias con la enseñanza remota de emergencia de docentes
de lenguas durante el confinamiento por COVID-19

Catalina Juárez-Díaz

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

Moisés Perales


Universidad de Quintana Roo, Chetumal, Mexico


This study describes 26 English language teaching faculty members' and 32 preservice English as a foreign language teachers' emergency remote teaching experiences and emotions. Verbal data gathered through an online questionnaire with open questions were analyzed using semidirected content analysis. Most faculty and all students reported negative feelings, which were connected with some faculty members' focus on delivering content without interaction and with insufficient Internet access. Some students' autonomy allowed them to overcome the first of these challenges. Teachers with online education training reported better experiences. Thus, universities and the State must provide more training and equipment to close the digital gap and ensure effective emergency remote teaching.

Keywords: COVID-19 confinement, emergency remote teaching, language teachers, learning experience, teaching experience

Este estudio describe las experiencias y emociones de 26 profesores y 32 docentes de inglés en formación con la enseñanza remota de emergencia. Los datos verbales, recolectados mediante un cuestionario con preguntas abiertas realizado en línea, se analizaron con un análisis semidirigido del contenido. La mayoría de los profesores y la totalidad de los estudiantes reportaron sentimientos negativos relacionados con la falta de interacción y con la brecha digital. La autonomía de algunos estudiantes les permitió afrontar lo primero. Los profesores capacitados en educación a distancia tuvieron mejores experiencias. Así, las instituciones y el Estado deben proporcionar más capacitación y equipamiento para reducir la brecha digital y hacer efectiva la enseñanza remota de emergencia.

Palabras clave: confinamiento por COVID-19, enseñanza remota de emergencia, experiencias de aprendizaje, experiencias de enseñanza, profesores de lenguas

Catalina Juárez-Díaz  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8079-5039> · Email: catalina.juarez@correo.buap.mx

Moisés Perales  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6279-1520> · Email: mdperales@uqroo.edu.mx

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Juárez-Díaz, C., & Perales, M. (2021). Language teachers' emergency remote teaching experiences during the COVID-19 confinement. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 121–135. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90195>

This article was received on August 29, 2020 and accepted on March 24, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Mexican institutions began to offer distance education massively during the confinement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift marked the abrupt, forceful maturation of the information and communications technology (ICT) introduction process that started around 1980 in Latin America (Conceição, 2006). However, the digital gap is an obstacle to implementing ICT-mediated instruction efficiently. In some developing countries, less than half of their population owns a computer, and wireless access is limited. Accordingly, in Mexico only 44.9% of the population owns a computer, 73.5% own a cellphone, and 52.9% have an Internet connection. A high percentage of Internet users (89%) pay for that service, and only 11% have wireless access (INEGI, 2019). The digital gap is probably the reason why face-to-face education continues to be the option favored by most of the population. As of 2019, more students (3,610,744) were enrolled in face-to-face higher education institutions, and only 641,411 were registered in online schools (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2019). Despite that fact, the vast majority of Mexican institutions have moved fully online since March 2020.

Teachers and students cannot attend schools as they did pre-COVID-19. As a result, they have to work online. Since the confinement came into being, institutions closed and teachers were in need to teach virtually, so they had to move abruptly to the online modality. According to Hartley (2007), the integration of ICT in education should be gradual, planned, challenging, and complex; however, in some contexts, that process can be careless and unplanned. Due to the health contingency, the transition to remote teaching could not wait even though some institutions were not ready to face the challenges brought about by such transition. Teachers and students working in a face-to-face setting had to move their classes to the online mode abruptly and, in many cases, with little to no preparation. Considering this complex reality, we conducted the study reported here and addressed the following research questions: (a)

What have been English language teaching (ELT) faculty members' and preservice teachers' experiences with emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the COVID-19 confinement? (b) How do teachers and students feel about working in that way?

Theoretical Framework

As stated by McAvinia (2016), "terminology describing the use of technology in education is in a constant state of flux, and this can make discussion of the field extremely difficult" (pp. 4–5). Cognizant of this fact, we adopt Paulsen et al.'s (2002) proposal of the features of online education: (a) physical separation of teachers and learners, (b) involvement of an educational institution that oversees the planning and execution of the process and provides constant support, and (c) the use of a computer network (the Internet) both to distribute the content and to afford interaction among teachers and students. The massive shift of higher education to a fully online delivery mode in Mexico and elsewhere has brought about a need for new terms to distinguish the carefully planned process of online education from the abrupt, unplanned delivery of content fully online brought about by crises like the COVID-19 confinement. One such term is ERT, which Hodges et al. (2020) define as follows:

A temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated. The primary objective in these circumstances is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis. When we understand ERT in this manner, we can start to divorce it from "online learning." (Emergency Remote Teaching section, para. 1)

Hodges et al. (2020) highlight some features of ERT, namely limited resources for faculty support and training and the paramount importance of ensuring that content is accessible to all students in an inclusive and flexible manner. For that reason, they recommend privileging asynchronous options in ERT. They acknowledge that some traditional goals of online education, such as the promotion of collaboration and deep learning of content, might need to be de-emphasized in ERT due to its inherent limitations. Although Hodges et al. do not address it explicitly, we suggest that lack of student support and training in online learning skills is an important feature of ERT too. This is because students accustomed to traditional, face-to-face instruction may lack the digital literacies and autonomous learning skills necessary to learn effectively in ERT.

As implied by Hodges et al. (2020), faculty knowledge of ICTs as applied to education is important for the success of ERT. This principle applies to English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers too who, nowadays, are expected to know how to teach with ICTs. This knowledge includes several dimensions such as assuming new roles, learning to manage time, developing social skills, and even adopting different teaching styles. Teachers also need to be increasingly creative to teach online successfully (Hampel & Stickler, 2005, as cited in Guichon & Hauck, 2011). Teaching online demands time, effort, and engagement from teachers and institutions to employ ICT appropriately, reconceptualize teaching, and establish communication and interaction with students. Institutions seeking to migrate to distance education through online teaching and learning should do so gradually. In the transition to the online modality, institutions should prepare and support teachers and learners both pedagogically and technologically, especially those uninterested in teaching online (Comas-Quinn, 2011).

However, due to the unexpected and abrupt nature of the transition during the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience of moving to a fully online mode was likely a new and challenging one for unprepared teachers and

learners. In this study, experience is defined as something that happens to people, which involves a change in the ways they understand and relate to one another and/or to some aspect of reality (Sklair & Larrosa, 2009). The quality of teachers' and learners' experiences with ERT can be shaped by a variety of factors, some of which are described below.

Ideally, teachers and learners working together online should create communities of inquiry. A community of inquiry (CoI) is a group of people composed of teachers and students; they interact in a discursive process "to construct meaning and confirm understanding" (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008, p. 9). Garrison et al. (1999) proposed a framework to guide teachers to create learning experiences in CoIs. In those experiences, teachers should consider three recursive presences: cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. They are vital in learning experiences to achieve successful learning outcomes (Rourke et al., 2001).

The cognitive presence integrates reflection and interaction to work with information. Students are exposed to it; they interchange information, conceptualize it, and apply it. This presence allows the construction of knowledge and corroboration of understanding through communication. The teaching presence is a component that ensures productivity in a CoI. Teachers are in charge of selecting the teaching methods and approaches, designing, facilitating, mediating, and directing the learning experience (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

The social presence is the ability of teachers and students to portray themselves and interact on the basis of their identities, which sets the basis for engagement in the CoI (Garrison et al., 1999). It creates a fun and productive community of learning and increases encouragement and cooperation (Garrison et al., 2001). It supports cognitive and affective goals. Cognitive goals are reinforced because social presence abets critical thinking. The second type of goals are supported "by making the group interactions appealing, engaging, and thus intrinsically rewarding, leading to an increase

in academic, social, and institutional integration and resulting in increased persistence and course completion” (Tinto, 1987, as cited in Rourke et al., 2001, p. 52). The framework by Garrison et al. (1999) should guide teachers to include the three vital presences necessary to obtain successful learning outcomes.

Shield, Lamy, and Goodfellow (1984, as cited in Shield et al., 2001, p. 79) propose that there are two kinds of tutors in online environments: the cognitive tutor and the social tutor. The cognitive tutor pays attention to knowledge construction, and the social tutor focuses more on interaction. The interaction and roles of teachers depend on the type of tutor they are at any given time. The cognitive tutor’s role is that of an observer and content expert. The roles of the social tutor are those of a confidant trying to encourage students’ autonomy, a counselor who guides students through the problems they experience while working online, and a human being interacting with students at any time (Hauck & Haezwindth, 1999, as cited in Shield et al., 2001). The roles and types of tutor influence the dynamics of the learning environment. As suggested by Hodges et al. (2020), these ideal features of online education (the creation of CoIs, an adequate balance among the types of presence and tutor) may not be present in ERT due to its inherent limitations.

Method

This qualitative content analysis study examined teachers’ and students’ experiences while working online during the pandemic confinement. We chose a qualitative research approach because it allows for the study of “the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions” (Yin, 2011, p. 29).

Context and Participants

The study was conducted in the College of Modern Languages (CML) of a large public university in central Mexico. The first author works in this college and is very familiar with the context. The second author works

elsewhere but is often invited to teach courses and supervise theses there. The college offers face-to-face, online, and blended-learning degree programs. However, most of the students are enrolled in the face-to-face mode, which is also where most of the faculty teach. Faculty members teaching in the online and blended-learning programs are trained to do so. Training in distance education for the rest of the faculty was not offered when the COVID-19 confinement began and only began to be offered after the data for this study were collected.

The sampling process was voluntary (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014). The researchers invited faculty and students of the face-to-face BA program in ELT to participate in the study via an email to the college’s listserv containing a link to a Google form (see below) on May 30th, 2020. Due to the low number of responses, we asked the program’s coordinator to re-send the invitation. The students and faculty who answered the invitation by June 26th were included in the study. The sample consisted of 26 faculty members (five men and 21 women) and 32 students (eight men and 24 women). The teachers’ ages ranged from 37 to 58 years old, and the students were 18–26 years old. All the students were enrolled in the face-to-face program at the beginning of the pandemic. Three of the teachers taught in both the face-to-face and online programs, and the remaining 23 only in the face-to-face program. In the excerpts below, the acronym P_{TS} is used to identify participating teachers, and P_{SS} to identify participating students.

Instruments

The participants who accepted the invitation received an informed consent letter and a questionnaire via email. Initially, we had planned to conduct an interview, but we discarded this idea due to time and Internet access constraints on the part of the participants. The questionnaire was adapted from that used in Juárez-Díaz (2020). This questionnaire was designed to investigate EFL learning experiences at the college level. It was

reviewed and validated by a panel of four Mexican and one Bolivian university professors with expertise and recognition in education and/or EFL, including this study's second author. It includes questions about learning experiences as well as feelings, thoughts, and actions arising from the experiences. The wording of the questionnaire was changed slightly to focus on online learning and, for faculty participants, teaching. The two resulting questionnaires (one for teachers and one for students, see Appendix) were sent to the participants as Google forms in Spanish. The participants answered the questionnaire in Spanish, thus, the excerpts in the results section are translations.

Procedures

After the participants' responses were received, the first author read them to make sure that they were clear and informative. She determined that two participating teachers had not provided enough information or the information they provided was not clear enough. Then, she contacted these participants by phone and asked them to elaborate on their answers. While speaking with them, she typed on the Microsoft Word files containing their written answers to capture the participants' new information.

The participants' responses were analyzed using semidirected qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The first author read the participants' answers without initially looking for the presence of any theoretical constructs. As categories began to emerge from similarities and differences across different responses (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014), the first author noticed that many of them could be captured by existing constructs such as the two types of tutors or the three types of presence. She then began to reduce and label categories accordingly, while keeping the process open for other categories not present in existing frameworks. The resulting coding was audited by the second author, who read the transcripts and verified the applicability and consistency of the codes. The

principle of saturation was reached so that only 32 out of 43 responses were considered for the study (Álvarez-Gayou, 2003).

Results and Discussion

Teachers' and Students' Online Experiences

The data discussed below paint a picture of complex decision-making on the part of the teachers in the face of competing needs and no training for both teachers and students. This had a negative impact on students' and teachers' experiences and emotions, but a few were able to thrive thanks to their autonomous learning skills.

Confronted with the reality of ERT and the absence of clear institutional policies and support, the unexperienced teachers made an effort to learn how to teach remotely on their own. Most of the participants worked with *Google Classroom*, *Schoology*, *WhatsApp*, and email to send materials, assign tasks, and store students' products. They had different reasons for using those platforms. Among those were ease of use and financial accessibility for themselves and for students who did not own a computer and/or did not have access to the Internet. Below are excerpts from the participants' answers that show their choices and the rationale behind them:

I used Schoology because I needed a platform to organize my courses. (PT5)

I chose to work with Edmodo and assigned activities weekly. I decided not to work through video conferences because there were students who told me that they did not have the means or financial resources to be connected. (PT3)

I use asynchronous materials presentations, explanations, online resources... I used them because not all students have Internet at home or at their workplace, so they could access the materials whenever they managed to have an Internet connection. (PT12)

I use WhatsApp because, when users refill their data plans, they get free social networks, and this works for almost the whole student population. (PT1)

Teachers used those platforms to work online; they allowed teachers to send materials and tasks. They received, stored, and checked students' tasks. They took advantage of the possibility to work synchronously or asynchronously according to their and the students' conditions and limitations (Conceição, 2006). In this way, teachers could give a chance to students to work when they could. The decision to promote learning through those tools suggests that teachers became cognitive tutors since they acted as content experts and focused on the construction of knowledge by concerning themselves with content delivery (Shield, Lamy, & Goodfellow, 1984, as cited in Shield et al., 2001). This is in alignment with extant recommendations for ERT in terms of prioritizing equal access to content (Hodges et al., 2020).

At the same time, the participants' focus on making material available and gathering students' products showed their lack of experience with online education. According to Conrad (2004) inexperienced online teachers tend to become content-oriented. This happened to most of our teacher participants as they focused on providing enough material to the learners, except those with training in online education. In other words, the type of interaction promoted by their online teaching was mainly student-material. Learner-learner and teacher-learner interaction, which is widely recommended for online education (Cundell & Sheepy, 2018), tended not to occur due to the limitations inherent to ERT.

Using the platforms to distribute and store content seemed appropriate to many teachers as they thought that this allowed them to support students who did not have technological tools and/or had rigid work schedules. Although this is a good ERT practice per Hodges et al. (2020), many students found it unhelpful. Most students reported that most teachers only provided content and assigned homework without giving opportunities to ask

questions. Thus, 54.5% reported disliking this way of teaching because they felt that they were on their own and did not learn as much as in face-to-face classes. Then, the absence of interaction and feedback did not fit these students' perceived needs. This affected them negatively, leaving them with questions and with the experience of not having learned:

I have an endless number of assignments, I felt stressed out because I did not understand, and I just delivered things. I did not learn the right way. (PS10)

Teachers just overwhelmed us with assignments and personally, I didn't learn anything. (PS11)

I feel like I'm not learning what I should learn. Many teachers only send homework and do not give any explanation as they used to do in face-to-face classes, and many times this is a bit complicated and confusing. (PS13)

I don't understand the classes, the teachers only send activities. (PS14)

The teachers assign a lot of homework and don't teach anything. (PS17)

Some teachers only sent the material and we didn't have any support or comments in order to understand the topics accurately. (PS18)

This result is similar to Allen et al.'s (2002) finding that students learn less in online courses because such courses involve less teacher-student interaction than face-to-face classrooms do. According to Rourke et al. (2001), it is necessary to integrate the three presences mentioned above in the learning experiences to reach the learning goals. Students' experiences suggest that teachers mostly performed the teacher presence in the sense that they organized the content and activities in the course. However, students perceived that teachers left aside the cognitive presence, which helps to verify understanding and develop knowledge (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). As for the type of tutor, students' reports that teachers mostly focused on content rather than interacting meaningfully with students or promoting meaningful student-student interaction dovetail with

teachers' own reports in suggesting that teachers were primarily cognitive tutors. Nevertheless, the focus on content was probably adequate in light of the recommended emphasis on content accessibility in ERT, its intrinsic limitations, and the digital gap in Mexico.

These students' and teachers' comments also show that the social presence was absent in the experience of learning and teaching online during the pandemic. The social presence is the basis for setting communication and motivating students to learn (Tinto, 1987, as cited in Rourke et al., 2001). The social presence creates a pleasant and productive community of learning. It increases encouragement and cooperation to learn (Garrison et al., 2001). As teachers neglected this presence due to the training limitations inherent to ERT, the learning outcomes were affected. This is an undesirable but potentially unavoidable feature of ERT, particularly at its early stages.

In the context of planned online education, online teachers must fulfill three main responsibilities: organizing the course (e.g., organizing content, managing time), monitoring students' understandings while promoting collaboration and reflection, and diagnosing learners' needs (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). Nevertheless, the experiences reported above by teachers and learners show that the teachers only took one responsibility out of the three they have as online tutors, which was organizing the course. They did not monitor students' understandings or promote collaboration and reflection. Furthermore, teachers did not accomplish their third responsibility, which was to diagnose learners' needs (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). These shortcomings are to be expected in ERT. They were compounded by the fact that, at first, the university did not implement any measures to diagnose learners' digital literacy and autonomous learning needs to better prepare them for an ERT situation.

The students' comments above suggest that those specific students (PS10, PS11, PS14, PS17, PS18) and others who made similar comments (PS7, PS9, PS12, PS23, PS26,

and PS30) are somewhat dependent on teachers rather than autonomous. It seems that they make teachers responsible for their learning outcomes and prefer to receive information passively as, unlike other students, they did not report taking an active role in their learning. This finding matches that in Mali (2017). ERT thus triggered an unfavorable learning experience in students accustomed to working in teacher-centered contexts.

However, not all students felt helpless in the face of minimal teacher support. A minority (21.8%)—exemplified by PS16, PS19, and PS24—overcame their learning difficulties by taking control of their learning process. Once they realized that interaction with teachers would be minimal or non-existent, they acted to learn and understand the topics by themselves. According to Grow (1991, as cited in Narváez-Rivero & Prada-Mendoza, 2005), self-directed students can learn with or without the help of an expert and move independently in the learning process. They plan, organize, carry out, and evaluate their learning. Thus, a few students took the responsibility of their learning outcomes, which is an essential characteristic of self-directed learning (Garrison, 1997). Here are their reported experiences:

I sought more information on my own in order to learn.
(PS16)

I learned by myself because online classes didn't work for me. (PS19)

I am autonomous and due to the lack of support from some teachers, I had to search more information on my own. (PS24)

It was advantageous for these students to have self-directed their learning processes. This allowed them to experience learning despite the absence of the teacher presence and the social presence. They actively worked on their learning process and felt that they had learned. In other words, they became autonomous learners. Similarly, other studies have found that online learning helped students become autonomous (Çelebi et al., 2016; Herrera-Díaz, 2012; Mali, 2017).

Although most of the teacher participants (54%) focused on providing material and assignments, a large minority (46%) used platforms that allowed them to interact, provide feedback and explanations synchronously, such as Zoom or Skype. They used these platforms to communicate with their students and monitor students' understanding:

We connect via Zoom, we practice and upload work in a virtual room. I consider it the best way to have "face-to-face" explanations. (PT17)

I used Zoom for interaction... WhatsApp to have communication and build trust and motivation. (PT20)

I use WhatsApp, mail, Skype, or Zoom. It has been the most practical way I have found to communicate and guide content work. (PT21)

The use of platforms where virtual sessions could take place generated positive learning experiences in students. In contrast to those students whose teachers did not interact with them online, students whose teachers held virtual classes reported more positive experiences. They found it convenient to have video conferences to clear out questions, receive explanations, and interact with their teachers. Such interactions generated a positive learning experience. This finding is similar to the one obtained in Muñoz-Marín and González-Moncada (2010), who found that students' learning experience was positive when teachers guided them with technology use, provided feedback and individualized attention. Below are some students' comments in this regard:

I like to have classes with Zoom because it has helped me to get answers for my questions. (PS1)

The online classes or videos with the teachers explaining helped me to learn. (PS4)

I learnt with the online classes, where I can interact with my teachers. (PS12)

I liked the online classes; they are easy to understand as they are similar to being in a classroom. (PS22)

I learned with the classes by video calls because the topics were explained to clarify the topics. (PS30)

In those experiences, the social, cognitive, and teacher presence were involved. Teachers made students feel as if they were working face-to-face with their teachers, and that helped them learn. Rourke et al. (2001) state that these three types of presences are vital for learning to occur. Besides, the participants found videoconferences useful to interact with teachers, clarify questions, address misunderstandings, and have a learning experience similar to that of a traditional classroom. Candarli and Yuksel (2012) obtained a similar result: Students work better with platforms that allow them to work alongside their teachers to construct knowledge.

Despite these positive student experiences, teachers reported that access remained a problem for other students. Teachers said that some students missed the online classes because they did not have a computer or Internet access to work virtually. The participating teachers volunteered the following comments:

Not all students have access to the platform or the Internet. (PT2)

Not all students connect to the videocalls; the Internet keeps malfunctioning. (PT4)

The lack of equipment affects students, they do not have computers to carry out activities remotely. Some students live in communities where access to the Internet is spotty. (PT7)

It is not surprising that students missed online classes in light of the fact that computer ownership and Internet access remain limited in Mexico (INEGI, 2019). This issue confronted not only the students, but also at least one teacher: "Not all of us have easy access to a computer or the Internet. I am contributing not only my effort to cover the contents, but also my resources, my computer, my connection" (PT12).

Teachers also mentioned that some students who took the virtual classes did not engage in them; their participation was low and they cheated on the tasks:

Some students only entered the session, but they did not participate. (PT10)

There are some students who registered as members of the platform, but they do not do any of the activities that I request. (PT13)

I noticed that students cheated on the tasks, they asked some relatives or friends to do their homework, they handed in perfect tasks and in a Zoom meeting where we talked about the exercise experiences, they couldn't say their name or good morning in English. (PT22)

I scheduled my classes at 7 in the morning and 50% of the students did not log in. (PT11)

In online education, one of the teachers' duties is to encourage students to be involved and engaged in the sessions. De los Arcos and Arnedillo-Sánchez (2006, as cited in Rosell-Aguilar, 2007) suggest that online teachers employ teaching strategies to increase students' attention and interaction. Some researchers recommend telling students directly and precisely what teachers expect from them regarding engagement in discussions, attendance, and responsibilities in the learning process (Sharpe et al., 2006). In this way, students might have a clearer idea of teachers' expectations about their behavior, functions, and roles in the online learning experience. According to Comas-Quinn (2011), online teachers must reconceptualize their and students' roles and how they construct knowledge through online interaction. However, the rushed transition and the limited resources and support typical of ERT make it unrealistic to hold teachers to such high standards. In addition, the digital gap might make student participation impossible regardless of the strategies that teachers deploy. This problem demands an educational policy response at a higher level in order to train teachers to teach online in ERT circumstances and to reduce the digital gap. The next section turns attention to the participants' feelings.

Feelings Toward Online Teaching-Learning

Most teachers (56%) reported that they did not like to work online. They preferred face-to-face classes whereas

42.30% of the teachers expressed that they like to work online. Teachers had both positive and negative feelings about online teaching-learning. Some teachers felt uncomfortable working online because of the problems they encountered in the teaching experiences. Teachers had to work harder and for longer hours than they did in face-to-face classes before the confinement. In other studies, teachers experienced the same problems related to increased work time and workload (Cladellas & Castelló, 2011; Comas-Quinn, 2011; Weasenforth, 2001). The time demand and work overload generated negative emotional states such as feeling overwhelmed, annoyed, stressed out, tired, and frustrated. According to some researchers, negative feelings affect teachers' performance and health. Work overload causes them anxiety and stress and their general welfare is affected negatively (Houlihan et al., 2009). The participating teachers said:

Teaching online demands more time to prepare classes and follow up with each student in a personalized way, especially when there are large groups. (PT3)

I am overwhelmed with work. It is very demanding to work online. (PT10)

I am tired because the time I spend teaching has tripled. (PT13)

I feel stressed by everything, my students, my children, my house, the situation worldwide. (PT17)

It is crucial to prevent negative feelings because they cause mental and physical disturbances that affect teachers' performance. Stress, nervousness, anxiety, and anger may have severe or chaotic consequences not only at work but outside work. Those feelings can lead to poor decision-making (Cladellas & Castelló 2011).

By contrast, online teaching generated positive feelings in some participants such as satisfaction when teachers could develop new teaching strategies, learn about ICT, and apply their knowledge to ERT. This was true of the three experienced teachers but also of a few more. The former ones were comfortable because they

already had online education training and experience; the latter adapted to the new way of working. They felt challenged to look for ways to continue working and being in touch with their students. When they witnessed students' academic development, they felt satisfied and happy:

I feel satisfied, I think it was a beautiful experience where I learned new ways to teach. (PT26)

I feel comfortable, it is in fact a process that I have already practiced for 6 years. (PT14)

Unlike the teachers, who had more varied feelings on both the positive and the negative side, all participating students reported that the experience of learning online during the confinement triggered negative feelings in them. This was true even for those who felt that they had learned and interacted with teachers. The students felt stressed out, frustrated, overwhelmed, sad, unsatisfied, confused, anxious, bored, empty, and pressured. They attributed those feelings to the number of assignments, the lack of computer and/or Internet access, boring classes, and lack of understanding and learning. Similarly, online learning has been found to provoke negative feelings such as depression, anxiety, and disinterest in non-ERT contexts (Whitman et al., 1984). It was to be expected that such negative feelings should increase in an ERT situation considering the uncertainties in education and life at large brought about by the pandemic (Hodges et al., 2020). The student participants expressed the following:

I feel frustrated, confused, overwhelmed, unmotivated because in online classes I am not learning effectively and it only generates excessive physical and mental fatigue. (PS2)

I am stressed out about the homework and worried about learning because online classes don't work, and we weren't ready for this. (PS19)

I feel stressed out because sometimes the technical failures of the Internet interrupt my online classes and I also feel that this tool has not been enough for my learning. (PS22)

Students felt stressed out from working online because they were not prepared for ERT, lacked autonomous learning skills and, in some cases, had inadequate ICT resources. These difficulties resulted in an increased cognitive and emotional burden as most students felt unable and were untrained to cope with the demands of ERT. When students feel stressed out, they can also feel disempowered. In turn, this might affect their performance, cognition, decision-making, and attention (Whitman et al., 1984). Teachers' reports of academic disengagement and difficulties with content appear to confirm these negative effects. However, as discussed above, some students met the challenges of ERT, overcame stress and felt an increased sense of competency.

Conclusions

The experiences of most teachers with ERT during the confinement revolved around providing content and assignments and performing the teaching presence as cognitive tutors (i.e., focusing on knowledge via content delivery), but without the social presence or the reflective, metacognitive component of the cognitive presence. Most teachers refrained from using video calls or other synchronous types of communication out of a desire not to exclude those students with limited equipment or Internet access. Accordingly, the experiences of most students focused on completing and submitting assignments, without opportunities to ask questions and clarify misunderstandings. These students reported that they did not learn. Nevertheless, a few students experienced this absence of cognitive presence as an opportunity to take command of their own learning by looking for and processing information on their own.

However, a minority of teachers (including those with previous online teaching experience) used video calls and synchronous communication, which allowed them to perform the cognitive and social presences and to act as social tutors. The students of this second type of teacher report that learning occurred. Nevertheless,

these teachers also reported that some students were excluded, did not participate at all, or cheated on their assignments. Exclusion and lack of engagement might have been caused by the digital gap. As such, these data speak of a trade-off between exploiting interactive technologies like video calls and inclusion. In other words, the concern of the first group of teachers that using data-intensive tools like video calls would exclude some students appears to have been validated by the second group's reports of disappearing and/or disengaged students. This resonates strongly with Hodges et al.'s (2020) recommendations to work asynchronously and prioritize equitable access to content in ERT over other goals such as promoting collaboration and deep content learning.

Regarding feelings, the second group of teachers reported satisfaction from professional growth and from witnessing student learning. However, the digital gap, students' attitudes, and increased work hours and workload caused the online teaching experience to trigger negative feelings. From the students' standpoint, the online learning experience triggered many negative feelings. That finding is similar to the one obtained in Herrera-Díaz (2012), whose participants had negative feelings while working online and were in favor of face-to-face classes.

Most teachers and students experienced difficulties with ERT during the pandemic. Many teachers worked asynchronously by providing content and assignments. While this is recommended practice in ERT (Hodges et al., 2020), it was not satisfactory to most students. During normal online education, teachers must promote appropriate learning experiences with the cognitive, teaching, and social presences that are necessary for the learning cycle to occur. Additionally, both teachers and institutions must promote learner autonomy in the context of online education. However, due to insufficient training and the abrupt nature of the shift to ERT, most teachers used ICTs in content-focused ways and most

students were not able to learn autonomously. All of this had a negative impact on learning outcomes.

Because such negative effects on learning are intrinsic to ERT, Hodges et al. (2020) recommend adjusting grading methods to reflect that reality. Unfortunately, the grading practices at CML were not adjusted to the circumstances of ERT, which probably contributed to the stress and anxiety that teachers and students felt while working online. Therefore, a recommendation for institutions preparing for ERT is to provide not only technical support but also emotional support. In addition to adjusting grading practices, such support can include stress management strategies. Managing stress positively helps students learn. On the contrary, when stress is not coped with successfully, it affects students' and teachers' decision-making and general welfare. Therefore, stress management should be a component of institutional support during ERT.

Another implication of this study is that, when preparing for ERT, training needs to be provided not only to teachers but also to students. This training should address not only technological skills but also autonomous learning skills. As discussed above, this type of skills appears to have helped some student to have positive learning experiences despite the asynchronous, non-interactive nature of the teaching they were exposed to at CML.

The digital gap (INEGI, 2019) made inclusion in the online modality difficult as evidenced by the fact that not all students attended virtual sessions or participated in them actively. This digital gap, along with insufficient teacher preparation in online teaching and student preparation in autonomous learning indicates that Mexican institutions such as the one where this study was conducted were not ready to implement ERT in an effective and inclusive manner. These shortcomings challenge public institutions and the State itself to take action to reduce the digital gap in Mexican higher education.

Because ERT events may happen again in the future due to the increased likelihood of extreme climate events (Diffenbaugh et al., 2017) and even new pandemics (Yamey et al., 2017), it is important for educational institutions to minimize harmful impacts on learning by addressing critical ERT areas. This study has identified four such areas: the digital gap, teacher training, student training in both ICT use and autonomous learning, and stress management support. At the time of writing this manuscript and after the initial shock of moving to ERT abruptly, CML and other institutions have begun to provide ERT support. The nature and impact of such support must be investigated by future studies.

Conducting such studies would be important to increase the field's knowledge of ways that ERT support can contribute to the resilience of EFL educational systems in the face of catastrophic events. While there are published studies of educational resilience following earthquakes (Kinchin, 2019), we are not aware of any studies that have addressed ERT as part of EFL educational systems' resilience and pandemic preparedness. Pandemic preparedness in particular appears to have been addressed primarily from the perspective of health systems (Yamey et al., 2017). However, as the current COVID-19 pandemic has shown, educational systems are also critical for the functioning of societies. Therefore, their pandemic preparedness and resilience must be theorized and investigated in order to maximize opportunities for meaningful learning to occur in the context of ERT events.

References

- Allen, M., Bourhis, J., Burrell, N., & Mabry, E. (2002). Comparing student satisfaction with distance education to traditional classrooms in higher education: A meta-analysis. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 16(2), 83–97. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15389286AJDE1602_3
- Álvarez-Gayou, J. L. (2003). *Cómo hacer investigación cualitativa: fundamentos y metodología* [How to do qualitative research: Fundamentals and methodology]. Paidós.
- Candarli, D., & Yuksel, H. G. (2012). Students' perceptions of video-conferencing in the classrooms in higher education. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 357–361. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.663>
- Çelebi, H., Karaaslan, H., & Demir-Vegter, S. (2016). Corpus use in enhancing lexico-grammatical awareness through flipped applications. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 12(2), 152–165.
- Cladellas, R., & Castelló, A. (2011). University professors' stress and perceived state of health in relation to teaching schedules. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 9(1), 217–240.
- Comas-Quinn, A. (2011). Learning to teach online or learning to become an online teacher: An exploration of teachers' experiences in a blended learning course. *ReCALL*, 23(03), 218–232. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344011000152>
- Conceição, S. C. O. (2006). Faculty lived experiences in the online environment. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57(1), 26–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601106292247>
- Conrad, D. (2004). University instructors' reflections on their first online teaching experiences. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(2), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v8i2.1826>
- Cundell, A., & Sheepy, E. (2018). Student perceptions of the most effective and engaging online learning activities in a blended graduate seminar. *Online Learning*, 22(3), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i3.1467>
- Diffenbaugh, N. S., Singh, D., Makin, J. S., Horton, D. E., Swain, D. L., Touma, D., Charland, A., Liu, Y., Haugen, M., Tsiang, M., & Rajaratnam, B. (2017). Quantifying the influence of global warming on unprecedented extreme climate events. *PNAS*, 114(19), 4881–4886. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1618082114>
- Garrison, D. R. (1997). Self-directed learning: Toward a comprehensive model. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(1), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369704800103>

- Garrison, D. R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st century: A framework for research and practice* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203166093>
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87-105. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2001). *Critical thinking and computer conferencing: A model and tool to assess cognitive presence*. <http://auspace.athabasca.ca/handle/2149/740>
- Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118269558>
- Guichon, N., & Hauck, M. (2011). Editorial: Teacher education research in CALL and CMC: More in demand than ever. *ReCALL*, 23(3), 187-199. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344011000139>
- Hartley, J. (2007). Teaching, learning and new technology: A review for teachers. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 38(1), 42-62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2006.00634.x>
- Hernández-Sampieri, R., Fernández-Collado, C., & Baptista-Lucio, P. (2014). *Metodología de la investigación* (6th ed.) [Research methodology]. McGraw Hill Education.
- Herrera-Díaz, L. E. (2012). Self-access language learning: Students' perceptions of and experiences within this new mode of learning. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 14(1), 113-127.
- Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. (2020, March 27). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *Educause Review*, 27. <https://bit.ly/3iEyh68>
- Houlihan, M., Fraser, I., Fenwick, K. D., Fish, T., & Moeller, C. (2009). Personality effects on teaching anxiety and teaching strategies in university professors. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 39(1), 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v39i1.494>
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- INEGI. (2019). *Estadísticas a propósito del día mundial del internet* [Statistics on world internet day]. <https://bit.ly/2KCRSH1>
- Juárez-Díaz, C. (2020). Experiencias de los estudiantes de idiomas extranjeros en relación con su estilo de aprendizaje en Educación Superior [Foreign language learners' experiences regarding their learning style in higher education]. *Revista de Estilos de Aprendizaje*, 13(26), 118-130. <http://revistaestilosdeaprendizaje.com/article/view/1515>
- Kinchin, I. (2019). Testing the resilience of our educational systems. *Journal of Biological Education*, 53(3), 235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00219266.2019.1587897>
- Mali, Y. C. G. (2017). EFL students' experiences in learning CALL through project based instructions. *TEFLIN Journal*, 28(2), 170-192. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v28i2/170-192>
- McAvinia, C. (2016). *Online learning and its users: Lessons for higher education*. Chandos Publishing.
- Muñoz-Marín, J. H., & González-Moncada, A. (2010). Teaching reading comprehension in English in a distance web-based course: New roles for teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 12(2), 69-85.
- Narváez-Rivero, M., & Prada-Mendoza, A. (2005). Aprendizaje autodirigido y desempeño académico. *Tiempo de Educar*, 6(11), 115-146.
- Paulsen, M., Keegan, D., Dias, A., Dias, P., Pimenta, P., Fritsch, H., Follmer, H., Micincova, M., & Olsen, G.-A. (2002). *Web-education systems in Europe* (ED477513). ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED477513.pdf>
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Changing tutor roles in online tutorial support for open distance learning through audio-graphic SCMC. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 3(1-2), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v3n1-2.37>
- Rourke, L., Anderson, T., Garrison, D. R., & Archer, W. (2001). Assessing social presence in asynchronous text-

- based computer conferencing. *The Journal of Distance Education*, 14(2), 50–71.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2019). *Principales cifras del sistema educativo nacional* [Main figures of the national educational system]. <https://bit.ly/3o6SUsl>
- Sharpe, R., Benfield, G., Roberts, G., & Francis, R. (2006). *The undergraduate experience of blended e-learning: A review of uk literature and practice*. The Higher Education Academy. <https://bit.ly/3o9pWs6>
- Shield, L., Hauck, M., & Hower, S. (2001, October). Talking to strangers: The role of the tutor target language speaking skills at a distance. In A. Kazeroni (Chair), *Usage des Nouvelles Technologies et Enseignement des Langues Étrangères untele* [Symposium]. Compiègne, France.
- Sklair, C., & Larrosa, J. (2009). *Experiencia y alteridad en educación* [Experience and alterity in education]. Homo Sapiens.
- Weasenforth, D. (2001, October). ¡Ouch! Real headaches in a virtual classroom. In A. Kazeroni (Chair), *Usage des Nouvelles Technologies et Enseignement des Langues Étrangères untele* [Symposium]. Compiègne, France.
- Whitman, N. A., Spendlove, D. C., & Clark, C. H. (1984). *Student stress: Effects and solutions* (ED246832). ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED246832.pdf>
- Yamey, G., Schäferhoff, M., Aars, O. K., Bloom, B., Carroll, D., Chawla, M., Dzau, V., Echalar, R., Gill, I. S., Godal, T., Gupta, S., Jamison, D., Kelley, P., Kristensen, F., Mundaca-Shah, C., Oppenheim, B., Pavlin, J., Salvado, R., Sands, P., . . . Whiting, E. (2017). Financing of international collective action for epidemic and pandemic preparedness. *The Lancet*, 5(8), 742–744. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(17\)30203-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30203-6)
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (1st ed.). The Guilford Press.

About the Authors

Catalina Juárez-Díaz holds a BA in Modern Languages (English). She is a lecturer in the College of Modern Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico. She has published papers on learning styles, learning experiences, and foreign language learning. She is an official candidate for membership within Mexico's National Research System.

Moisés Perales holds a PhD in English and Education from the University of Michigan, USA. He is a full-time associate professor of Language and Education at Universidad de Quintana Roo, Mexico. He is an appointed member of Mexico's National Research System and of the editorial and review boards of several journals.

Appendix: The Two Questionnaires

Note. The original language of the questionnaires was Spanish.

The preservice teachers' questionnaire:

1. As a student, how do you feel during this confinement period?
2. Why do you think you feel this way?
3. Do you like how your teachers are working during this confinement period in your different courses? Why?
4. How do the teachers of your different subjects teach their classes during this confinement period?
5. Do you reflect on what you learned in your different subjects during this confinement period? Yes or no? Why?
6. What has helped you the most to learn during this confinement period?
7. What has made it more difficult to learn during this confinement period?
8. What else can you say about your learning experience during this confinement period?

The faculty questionnaire:

1. How do you teach the content of the courses to your students during this confinement period?
2. How do you feel about the way you are working during this confinement period?
3. Why are you working the way you mentioned in Question 1?
4. How are your classes during this confinement period?
5. Do you think that your students have learned in your different courses? Why?
6. Have you had any favorable teaching experiences during this confinement period?
7. As a teacher, what has been the best thing you have experienced in the different courses you teach?
8. Have you had any unfavorable teaching experiences during this confinement period?
9. As a teacher, what has been the worst thing you have experienced in the different courses you teach?
10. What other aspect do you consider relevant to talk about regarding your teaching experience during this confinement period?

Configuration of Racial Identities of Learners of English

Configuración de identidades raciales de aprendientes de inglés

Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina

Karen Vanessa Varela

Katherine García


Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia


Racial identity, as well as other social identities, is intrinsically related to language learning. Nevertheless, this relationship has been taken for granted. Despite research done in the area, not a lot has centred explicitly on finding the connections between race and language learning. This article addresses that point in an attempt to shed light specifically on English language learning and teaching. We used a qualitative research methodology to analyse oral and written narratives that were produced by participants telling their experience as English language learners. This article underscores the results that relate language learners' racial experiences as a crucial factor in the configuration of their identity as well as the economic, social, and cultural factors involved.


Keywords: English language learning, English language learners, race, racial identity

La identidad racial, como otras categorías sociales, está intrínsecamente relacionada con el aprendizaje de idiomas. Sin embargo, esta relación se ha dado por sentado. A pesar de las investigaciones realizadas, no mucho se ha centrado explícitamente en encontrar conexiones entre la raza y el aprendizaje de idiomas. Este artículo aborda ese punto en un intento por iluminar el aprendizaje y la enseñanza del idioma inglés. Se utilizó una metodología de investigación cualitativa para analizar las narraciones orales y escritas, producidas por participantes aprendices de inglés, sobre su experiencia. Este artículo resalta los resultados que relacionan las experiencias raciales de los estudiantes con los idiomas como un factor crucial en la configuración de su identidad, así como los factores económicos, sociales y culturales involucrados.

Palabras clave: aprendientes de inglés, aprendizaje del inglés, identidad racial, raza

Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6625-501X> · Email: sxbonillam@udistrital.edu.co

Karen Vanessa Varela  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5970-3278> · Email: kvvarelac@correo.udistrital.edu.co

Katherine García  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9029-9303> · Email: kgarcia@correo.udistrital.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Bonilla-Medina, S. X., Varela, K. V., & García, K. (2021). Configuration of racial identities of learners of English. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 137–150. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90374>

This article was received on September 6, 2020 and accepted on March 16, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Learning a foreign language implies a commitment to the foreign culture and the language itself; however, language learners cannot separate language from identity since, as Norton (2013) says, language is intrinsic in the identity of the individual. In this sense, the interaction with others allows learners to establish their self-identifications, configuring identities as a discursive process (Davies & Harré, 1990; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Harré et al., 2009), which implies taking one side or another through sharing with others.

Hence, the use of another language does not only involve communication with native speakers, but also the organization of meanings about who the learners are and how they are related to the social world (Norton, 2013). Thus, racial identity is implicit in second language learning due to the connections that coexist in language and identity (Bonilla-Medina, 2018). Those ideas relate language learning to identity construction by means of the tensions that can arise about who the speakers of a determined language are or what it means to become its user.

In the following article, we focus on the way English language learners configure their racial identity through the process of learning the language. In order to develop this study, we formulated the following research questions: How do the processes of learning English as a foreign language in the Colombian context relate to the construction of the racial identity of the learners? What relationships can be established between the meanings that learners give to the learning of a particular foreign language and the construction of their racial identities?

In doing so, we use a narrative approach where we collected life stories from 10 participants who were learning English in the Colombian context. In these stories, they expressed their thoughts about their processes of learning and the changes that they had experience along the way, and they related racial experi-

ences. We expanded the information through in-depth interviews where we tried to direct the conversation toward identity and English learning. In this manner, the analysis made on those instruments was useful for us to determine categories that were linked to the theory and the research question. Consequently, we identified three categories: (a) The Construction of the Learners' Imaginary Based on Global Whiteness, (b) Temporary Identities Subsidised by English Whiteness, and (c) Learners' Racial Identity Constructions Fighting and Negotiating Structural Racism Reinforced by English. All these categories reflected the complexities in terms of identity configuration in the process of learning and language and how race was imbricated in such a process.

Theoretical Basis

Race and Second Language Teaching Background

In the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning in the country, studies addressing race are rather few and they indirectly relate racial categories as fixed, and singularised in reference to majorities and minorities. Usma et al. (2018) is one of the examples whose reflection develops a political agenda towards highlighting indigenous identities as a community affected by the way linguistics policies in the country are planned and mandated. With the same goal but from a different perspective, Clavijo (2017) pinpoints characteristics of community pedagogies to teach English as a suitable approach to rescue the values and principles of indigenous communities. Others, such as Agudelo (2007), propose innovative pedagogical models to teach English incorporating intercultural perspectives that balance both foreign language curiosity with interest in local autochthonous indigenous knowledge. In this line of thought, these and other studies particularly relate to indigenous and Afro-Colombians as the centre of attention. Race referring to racial identities that do not fit in these categories appear not to be addressed in these

studies. It appears that race categories are exclusive of indigenous or Afro-Colombian communities so there is an assumption that “others” are not racialised or affected by racial structures. In agreement with critical race theory (CRT; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) and more specifically, whiteness theory (Bonnett, 2000; Clarke & Garner, 2009; Telles & Flores, 2013), one of the arguments in this study is that individuals, whatever their origin or socially constructed race category, are immersed in a race system which constitutes their identity, and this construction usually comes to provide privileges or disadvantages. From this perspective, language is taken as a relevant factor involved in racialised practices and discourses produced by racial structures which need to be explored in the context of language learning.

The previous studies are instances of research that have started to emerge in the country in regard to the relations between race and foreign language learning; nevertheless, those studies also attempt to define racial identity as an unalterable category. Stating the view that racial identities, as well as other type of identities, are not fixed or unchangeable (Charles, 2019; Carbado & Gulati, 2003; Yosso, 2005), one presents the cited studies which show that there is a need to explore what Thesen (1997) coined as “transition identities.” That is, those identities that seem to be non-racialised as opposed to those where emphasis is given to racial categories (such as indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in the Colombian context). In this case, we also want to refer to language as a marker of racialised discourses that may shape language learners’ racial identity despite their origin, skin colour, or phenotype. In fact, those racialised discourses and practices may grant privileges as well as mask disadvantages to language learners who are part of a race-structured world. Those practices are referred to here as constitutions of racialised experiences which are generated by the general race system (centred in whiteness). In this vein, analysing the way in which language learning has impacted learners’

identity would be a path that is a contribution to the studies initiated in this area.

Checking the arena of racial identity and the learning of a second language, conclusions lead one to say that these types of studies have been more popular in the USA (Norton, 1997; Thesen, 1997), England (Leung et al., 1997) and Australia and their major interests have revolved around the role of language itself rather than its effects on racial identity. In this study, the main purpose is precisely to examine that latter area.

Premises to Conceptualising Race in the Analysis of Language Learning

There are important theoretical underpinnings that were part of the approach given to this study. First of all, race is a social construction (Alexander & Knowles, 2005; Du Bois, 2001; Runge-Peña & Muñoz-Gaviria, 2005), therefore, this underlines the idea that race is created and reinforced in social practice. In other words, race is not real, however, it is perceived as such (Chadderton, 2009). In this manner, thoughts surrounding the idea of race are also created, produced, and reproduced in social practice (Banton, 2002; Bernasconi, 2001; Lott, 2001). Underscoring this thinking is significant because it explains how social tags, such as the ones created in racial categories, are powerful as to maintain discriminatory conditions towards individuals or groups while social practices sustain those conditions (Banton, 2002). In this respect, race is problematised in order to understand it in practices to see how it may contribute to unequal relationships.

Critical Race Theory: Whiteness as a Lens to foreign Language Learning and Identity

We used CRT to have a theoretical framework backed on a critical, historical, and structural viewpoint to analyse race in the learning of a language. It was used with the purpose of understanding how race tags play a role in the realisation of most social practices.

Furthermore, CRT helped us to challenge circumstances in which racial categories interacting with language learning are used to marginalise individuals or social groups (Carbado & Gulati, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). According to CRT theorists, uncovering discrimination in a system that has taken practices for granted has been their major goal (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Gillborn, 2006, 2010; Leonardo, 2002). That is to say, CRT is committed to combating subtler forms of racism, especially those practices that have become accepted, unquestioned, and normalised. Although CRT is soundly important in identifying features that have allowed the reproduction of unperceived discriminatory practices, it is necessary to say that determining differences based on skin colour in Colombia would be rather difficult (Koopman, 2012). Therefore, this research used “whiteness” as a theory which attempts to envisage practices that go beyond skin colour (Bonnett, 2000; Clarke & Gardner, 2009; King, 1991). In this regard, whiteness is not a way to label subjects with certain skin colour, but it is a cognitive dimension that is displayed in discourses that have been embedded in social practices and that situate some in a racial, social, economic, political, and cultural hierarchical position.

Whiteness, as a theory, resonates with this study because it looks to explain racial structures that shape the identities of individuals apart from their conventionally assigned race tags. It is a theory that coincides with the analytical marker of “whiteness device” (*dispositivo de blancura*) as explained by Castro-Gómez (2000) and Mignolo (2000, 2005) who, from a postcolonial perspective, have argued that Latin-American countries have been colonised not only historically and economically, but also symbolically. In this vein, these authors assert that after colonisation, social, economic, and cultural structures remained latent and they became common sense to people of this territory subjecting them to different levels: the knowledge level (coloniality of knowledge), the political level (coloniality of power), and

the subject level (coloniality of being; Granados-Beltrán, 2016). In turn, this constructed a common sense that has become a regime of truth (Said, 1976) that has been a platform for a whiteness cognitive device. That is, a psychological instance that maintains human beings organised and divided in racial categories.

Whiteness theory has been focused on as going beyond the racial structures as a socio-political and economic system to scrutinise more deeply the symbolic dimension of race and derived constructs of a race hierarchy. In this manner, the “whiteness device” of post colonialists and a debate for a whiteness unconsciousness in CRT are interwoven and they come to be useful to explain what happens in English language learning in regard to conceptions of racial identity, self-identification, and the consequences that those ideas bring about.

Method

This study was carried out in Bogota, Colombia. The methodology used in this project was narrative-oriented. In this context, written life stories and in-depth interviews were collected from 10 intermediate-advanced English language learners (see Table 1) who told about their English learning process and related racial experiences. Most participants were Colombians, except for one Taiwanese woman (Maya), and they learned English for personal purposes. To choose participants we focused on a variety of socio-economic and physical aspects that could lead us to obtain rich data from the participants’ experiences.

Narratives, considered as a form of construction of social reality (Somers, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2010), favour the creation of meanings about social phenomena (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012) and facilitate access to the realities that individuals construct. In this view, data were analysed through the lenses of our theoretical framework and emerging themes were grouped in order to try to find relationships with the learners’ meanings of their experiences.

Table 1. Participants' Information

Pseudonym	Age Group	Gender
Damian	20–25	Male
Charlie	20–25	Male
Connie	25–30	Female
Manuela	40–45	Female
Louise	20–25	Female
Jean Pierre	20–25	Male
Johns	20–25	Male
Pola	25–30	Female
Edwin	40–45	Male
Maya	25–30	Female

Results

The analysis of the narratives developed by the participants let us see that the learners' experiences as speakers of a foreign language are usually fraught with certain ideals or expectations around that language and its native speakers. Those experiences, and the ones proper of the learning activity, are the ones that we want to highlight for the analysis of racial identity construction. What is clear here is that most of the participants started learning English with the interest of traveling around the world and interacting with diverse cultures. However, this desire has some nuances that learners are usually unconscious about and that, from the point of view of race, must be dismantled. As researchers, we consider that this exercise would contribute to bringing a new lens to language learning and that, by learning from these experiences, language learning could be addressed to more responsible, equitable practices.

Three are the emergent categories. The first category—The Construction of the Learners' Imaginary Based on Global Whiteness—describes how language learners constitute themselves by constructing imaginaries which usually come to them in discriminatory discourses of global whiteness where English is subsidiary. The second category—Temporary Identities Subsidised by English Whiteness—is related to the way

learners consciously and unconsciously take advantage of racial structures enhanced by English. In doing this, learners experience social mobility, but without being aware that those gains are temporary and that they also reproduce subtle discriminatory practices. And the third category—Learners' Racial Identity Constructions Fighting and Negotiating Structural Racism Reinforced by English—aims to describe learners' identity construction shaped by structural racism in English learning practices as well as other practices that learners develop in order to fight and resist injustice caused by other racial structures.

The Construction of the Learners' Imaginary Based on Global Whiteness

This category is defined by the symbolic power that extends from whiteness to a global level by imperceptible means, and which builds the learners' imaginaries of desire about language and what it means constructing their identity. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), English global recognition has been greatly enhanced by pop culture. That is, the media, technology, music, films, and so on, have helped strengthen the status of English as the language of business as well as increase the perceived prestige and power of this language. In this line of thought, English, as well as its command, has gained more importance and prestige over other languages. In other words, having knowledge of English builds a coloniality of being in the learners' imaginaries where this language becomes the ideal that aligns with that of the ideal native speaker (Leung et al., 1997).

This idealisation of English is subtle if we follow what Delgado and Stefancic (2001) claim: "whiteness [represented in English] is often associated with innocence and goodness" (p. 75) which clearly become very attractive for receivers (learners). That is the case of Maya, a Taiwanese woman, who learns English in the Colombian context and who asserted that her interest in the language increased through films. Thus, the mass

media appear to influence the way she sees the culture of the language and herself. In the following excerpt, we asked Maya if she had a preference for any variety of English. She answered:

I would say the British accent is always very cool . . . it sounds very cool . . . England centuries movies which are really fun, like *Pride and Prejudice* or like, I would say, *Harry Potter* . . . that British accent . . . although, I can't understand them but it's really cool, how they speaking that way yeah. [sic]

Maya's taste for the English accent directly related to what she has seen in films, unveils that those media discourses have instilled in her an imaginary of the foreign language that is full of fantasy. Indeed, media appear here to have a big role in furthering the prestige of a given accent, in this case, the English one. These are aspects that construct an imaginary that reinforces dominant ideologies. Quijano (as cited in Castro-Gómez, 2000) refers to this created desire for others' culture as a derivation of whiteness that colonization has left in the mindset of the colonized countries' population. Intelligibility, which is a very relevant element in Maya's learning process, is sacrificed by her view, as long as the accent sounds "cool." In this sense, the coloniality of being, spread by media, usually seduces foreign language learners rather than oppresses by means of those propagated discourses of goodness and superiority that English language has.

In Jean Pierre's narrative, this power of English comes via other means and affects differently the way he constructs his identity as an English learner. Although he appears to be aware of the imperialism of the English language that governs academic production (a coloniality of knowledge), this recognition does not lead him to take an active role as a learner (coloniality of power) because he thinks in the end there is no other choice but to assume a subaltern position and accept that the idea that language is superior at the global level.

Today English produces knowledge, then that generates, like a linguistic or idiomatic monopoly . . . it detracts other languages that also give opportunities . . . if you look for . . . like scientific research or . . . academic writings, most of them are going to appear in English. And many times, it's even written by people who don't speak English as a native language, . . . the language of science is English." [sic]

As seen, Jean Pierre suggests that for someone to aspire to scientific production, English is indispensable. Behind the participant's words there is the idea that, nowadays, scientific knowledge is exclusively produced in English. By asserting that "the language of science is English" Jean Pierre promotes the belief (or imaginary) that, in the scientific arena, this language is superior to all other existing languages. In this vein, English is hiding discriminatory discourses that connect learners to white supremacy since English is a synonym of whiteness: bringing ideas of white power, privilege, and taken-for-granted benefit (Clarke & Garner, 2009). Thus, English, as well as whiteness, becomes a membership where a person who possesses it is automatically benefited with the privileges of the dominant race (McIntosh, 2004).

This imaginary of English language based on global whiteness is transformed in Charlie as an unconscious feature of identity construction. This is argued because, he claims he identifies with the English culture to the point that he becomes detached from his own Colombian culture, music, and language.

Look, first I don't feel identified living in this country . . . there are cultural issues that I don't feel identified with. [I prefer to be in contact with] English most of the time, in the YouTube videos, the movies, and literature. [sic]

As seen, global whiteness spread through English is a symbolic power that influences learners' identity construction, heavily accommodating to racialised discourses of blind acceptability to whiteness. As reflected in the participants, apparent innocent discourses spread

whiteness subtly and individuals accept these discourses consciously and unconsciously but also perpetuating the estrangement of selves and causing what for Charlie is a detachment of his own culture, his identity.

Temporary Identities Subsidised by English Whiteness

As related in the previous category, whiteness represented in English supports the construction of a racial identity which is subordinated to a stereotypical environment established by social convention. In this vein, we can say those stereotypes in English also provide economic opportunities for people who learn this language. This category is then, related to the learners' construction of their identity favoured by the cultural and economic dimensions present in the English language ideas. This dimension works similarly to what race theorists have called white privilege. In this sense, the category means that learners experience a shifting of their (racial) identities as they go along their path of learning the language. English language learners are aware of the language's privileged status which, according to them, grants them access to better jobs, schools, occupations, and various economic opportunities (Telles & Flores, 2013), and they seem to use this knowledge strategically to modify social status. However, as seen in the data, this racialised experience is usually temporary, and does not really transcend learners' life project and keep them subaltern (Spivak, 1988). This is why we refer to these racial identities as temporary or transitional, following Thesen (1997).

Edwin, one of our participants who was in police service as part of the government's mandatory rule for men in Colombia, appeared to construct this transitional identity that granted him access to the privileges attached to English. He was promoted in police internal ranks thanks to his previous knowledge of English.

A captain arrived and, we started to speak in English so, he said: "WHAT ARE YOU DOING, at this time here? Wasting yourself, nooo, go tomorrow for tourism!" Then,

the next day [the captain] made me a letter and he sent me for the tourism speciality. The tourism police is one of the best workspaces they have because there, they accompany the tourists who come and, [diplomats], people from abroad come. [sic]

As Edwin relates in this brief story, the opportunity to speak in English to a superior police officer allowed him to be moved to a better position in his police career. Thus, English worked as a provider of opportunities which, in this case, had to do with the chance of obtaining a better position in society (Vela, 2012; Wade, 1995). In other words, Edwin takes advantage of English white privilege to escalate to a higher status that at that moment was provided for him.

From this perspective, Edwin was able to be part of a select group in which, not only did he obtain prestige at a social level, but he also managed to place himself in a higher level in terms of employment. Those are benefits provided for Edwin because of the whiteness that the language brings. Edwin claims that due to his proficiency in English, he had the opportunity to interact with foreign diplomats, which also allowed him to look like someone from a superior social position.

In this way, English as a means of whiteness became a type of "property" for him from which he obtained benefits that according to Harris (1995, as cited in DeCuir & Dixson, 2004) are "the right of possession, the right to use, and the right to disposition, the right to transfer, the right of use and enjoyment" (p. 28).

However, as we named in our category, those benefits do not last long. As seen in Edwin's description, English proficiency allowed him to use the whiteness of English to enjoy social advantages at a certain moment of his mandatory military service. Nonetheless, this did not appear to be a long-lasting advantage since it worked in favour of the rich (white) foreign diplomats visiting the country rather than changing Edwin's socio-economic position. This is something that CRT has called "interest convergence," which is, white's social

sensitivity for others working for the white benefit (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

As seen, English as well as whiteness works in this learner's identity as a kind of property which gives him privilege. Privilege that is social and economic, and yet, it is also temporary because it is provided according to the needs of traditional privileged English speakers who come to the Colombian context rather than new English speakers such as Edwin.

Pola, a future teacher of English, is another participant who narrates in her story how her identity was shifting during her learning of the language and how she strategically used whiteness through English as socio-economic advantage. This was represented in how, thanks to a trip she made to the United States, she managed to get a job easily back in Colombia.

I arrived from the USA in August and in October I already had a job, and...even though I didn't have certified work experience and I didn't have an international exam, then I think...that can be seen to be like an advantage. There are many people who go to work in different things such as in a call center or, well, I don't know, in other jobs . . . or tourist guide and they earn the same as what they earn as teachers or even a little more. [*sic*]

Pola's gain can be seen as white privilege as it was provided to her as a property that she could use to obtain a job. This white privilege is even beyond the language itself, as it is also related to the idea of what living the experience in a foreign country such as the USA means. By asserting to have had experience abroad, she realised she was easily hired without any certification by a company and started to earn good money. However, this is also described here as a temporary identity because there are hidden discriminatory practices involved. She does not take into account that this privilege comprehends non-professional jobs that may not maintain social

benefits for long (Mignolo, 2000). That is why she even disdains her own future profession as a teacher by establishing a comparative view on the wages each job may provide. Self-discriminatory identity is what comes to her as a professional. Accordingly, it can be affirmed that Pola's identity started shifting when she took advantage of whiteness at that moment, however, in the long term, this would not assure the brilliant opportunities she devised.

The shifting of identity in Pola's case uses the advantages of speaking English but mainly of having had an experience abroad. This experience positioned her above the other applicants for the same job revealing how the power of English impacts various fields of the learner's social practice. One of these fields has to do with the difference in employment opportunities one has when using this language. This power equated in these terms is a device that facilitates the acquisition of economic status in society (Castro-Gómez, 2000). That is, as a commodity that one possesses. For that reason, the language learner, as stated by Zentella (1995), may potentially come to be part of a society that creates stereotypes, labelling those who do not speak English as coming from deplorable socio-economic backgrounds, or as people who do not deserve to enjoy corporate employment opportunities.

In summary, the experiences of English language learners let us see this situation critically and affirm that, even though economic and cultural benefits were obtained, thanks to English, there are two main factors to consider: First, that benefits are not long-lasting because they have limits mediated by interests which usually do not impact the economy of peripheral populations and the economy of the so-called third world countries (Usma et al., 2018); and second, that this shifting of identity may bring about subtle discriminatory discourses addressed to those who are not associated with the language speakers.

Learners' Racial Identity Constructions Fighting and Negotiating Structural Racism Reinforced by English

This category attempts to describe learners' identity construction shaped by structural racism in the English learning process and the practices that learners develop in order to fight and resist injustice caused by racial structures. First of all, it is necessary to refer to structural racism which, from the view of CRT, is related to racism embedded in institutions shaping people's practices and identities and converting discrimination into common sense (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Structural racism is then developed through a set of values, attitudes, symbols, and practices that produce and reproduce stereotypes that usually place a group of people over another (Mamani, 2020). In the case of English language learners, their physical characteristics or their identity as bilingual speakers of Colombian origin are aspects that usually link them to structural racism and consequently contribute to shaping their identity along their learning route.

Manuela, for example, is a self-identified Afro-Colombian English learner and teacher. Her personal narrative reveals how, despite becoming a competent professional who has been recognised as good teacher and language speaker, she has been overtly attacked because of her skin colour, even by her colleagues. This case represents one of the most visible recognised racist experiences shaping a learner's identity as a result of structural racism based on skin colour. Moreover, as Mamani (2020) says, structural racism contributes to normalising practices that usually give privilege to a group of people and excludes another not only on the basis of phenotype, but also nationality, culture, religion, place of living, class, or gender. Therefore, intersections of race with categories such as class or gender also play a key role in this category.

That English is racialised and produces structural racism is not unknown to various participants in this

study. For example, Louise touches several times upon the prevalence of racist linguistic policies disseminated by the government in our country:

I think that "Colombia Bilingüe," is a program that discriminates a lot; why? First, because it creates standards in which only certain social wealthy groups are favoured, and...there are not resources for that, and those are creating stereotypes of...that is, of a political content that is behind those standards" *[sic]*

Nevertheless, when the structural racism involved in those policies becomes a practice affecting people's identity, it is usually accepted and unquestioned. In Connie's narrative, it is evident how, as part of the normalization of those practices, her identity as a teacher was racialised, that is, she felt discriminated against and undervalued as a Colombian English language teacher. A school where she used to work required teachers to have international experience to keep being part of the staff. Such pressure fostered discrimination among the teacher staff.

Connie: When I was working in a school, well, one of the requirements of the school was that, as teachers, we had to have an experience abroad studying or living.

Researcher: And what happened if a teacher could not go?

c: Well, they gave you some time, and afterwards, they didn't hire you anymore.

r: And how long did they give you?

c: Me? No...I worked there for a year and a half and the year after, I had the chance to travel and I left.

r: Did you know about any teacher who had been given time limit if that experience was not achieved?

c: No, most of them had travelled and, I travelled, and other three teachers were going to travel too, to the United States, hmm with an organisation that used to take teachers to teach Spanish in the USA? Well, I don't remember.

r: And those teachers travelled because the school helped them to do so? or they did it by their own means?

c: No! not at all, nothing, everything was to keep our job when we came back.

r: And did they wait for you?

c: Oh yes, but none came back...I mean, *we* didn't come back.

r: Was that written anywhere or it was just what happened in the school?

c: No, really, it was not written, when the...the language boss gave us feedback, she would always, told us what we had to do if we wanted to keep on working there. [*sic*]

Structural racism lived in the school as reported by Connie here is embedded not only in the way school institutional policies work to increase the English level of teachers, but it is also seen in how the practices around those policies reproduce those racist attitudes by the teachers themselves. Despite that, apparently, the institutional policy was not officially written anywhere, and the teachers themselves contributed to the social pressure over those teachers who have not had the experience abroad. In Connie's narrative it is clear that the school culture was represented not only in policies, but in teachers' practices sustained in a racist system that privileged centralisation of English nativeness. Such attitudes pushed her to have an experience abroad and to transform her identity to become a "good teacher" in the school's eyes.

Following Gillborn (2006), this structural racism has wider implications in teachers' identity that transcends the symbolic dimension represented in that social prestige achieved by the native speaker experience, and goes to the economic dimension for teachers to fulfil this need as a matter of preserving their jobs. Obviously, the economic conditions were not given for these teachers to comply with the school's needs because, as Connie said, teachers were not economically supported, that is, "everything was to keep [their] job when [they went] back". Hence, racism is not only symbolic, but also economic and this would certainly contribute to constructing a racialised identity as a teacher in what

Louise noted as "standards in which only certain social wealthy groups are favoured." That is, only the ones who have the economic possibilities would have access to travel, and therefore, keep their job. In Colombia, a country where the economy is weak, it is not strange that those opportunities are limited because of factors such as family or personal needs. Therefore, teachers may represent another group that ends up losing their jobs and being slammed by racism intersected with socio-economic conditions.

Notwithstanding the difficulties mediated by structural racism, learners who, in this case, are also teachers, construct their identities with capacities to negotiate with those structural conditions in multiple and incommensurable ways. Connie particularly accounts for her persistence to try to travel and achieve, not only because of that symbolic power of a native speaker her school demands, but also in order to gain certain social mobility that would allow her to avoid going back to her former school, as she reported in the excerpt. Further in the interview, she also relates how that desire of fighting the social conditions in which she seemed to be encapsulated, empowered her to fight hard.

Researcher: And do you think that learning the language in the British context as a Latin American has advantages?

Connie: As a Latin American? well, of course, there are differences, in the educative area, for example, Latin American people have to pay more in terms of education. While, obviously Britons have, they have their bursaries. Of course, it is much more difficult for a Colombian person. To study abroad in that sense, well...many times has to do with preferences. Well, those preferences for the native speaker hmm, well, that is. [*sic*]

As seen in the excerpt, Connie's narrative shows that, to overcome those barriers imposed by racial structures, she was involved in an economic and symbolic investment (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, acceptance of asymmetric relationships between an

English native and Latin American student led her to pay more money for her education while she also perceived native British were even provided with bursaries to do so. Moreover, she accounts for white supremacy which was the symbolism of a native speaker she had to face to be able to achieve her dreams. She says, “it is much more difficult for a Colombian person.” To study abroad, “many times has to do with preferences. Well, those preferences for the native speaker.” What she calls “preferences” is really whiteness which, echoing McIntosh (2004), works here as a commodity bringing benefit to the ones who possess it and that she, as a Latin American, did not. These factors forced her to make other skills stand out and through them increase her hope to overcome the racial barriers that framed her Colombian identity. We can see that in the following excerpt:

Researcher: How did you reach the experience to work as an English teacher over there if you already realised that it was that difficult for a Latin American?

Connie: I finished my language program, I had experience teaching in Colombia, I got an A+ in my training course, I was outstanding in my practicum with college students, I prepared excellent material, I delivered very good lessons, the feedback from my students was always really good. [sic]

This is evidence of the participant's fights against racial structures in which there is an awareness process of a racialisation of her identity as a Latin American that involved her in an unjust system and which she found as the motivation to fight harder to overcome it.

Finally, other testimonies showed how English as a whiteness device (Castro-Gómez, 2000) seemed to be used strategically by participants as a resource to negotiate and fight against other racial structures that shaped their identity based on phenotype. A significant example was presented by Manuela in her life history when she talks about the poor socioeconomic circumstances she had to live as an emigrant from

Quibdó, moving first to Medellín, and then to Bogotá. She emphasised how she felt social conditions were always more difficult for an Afro-Colombian family like hers. In her hometown she felt it was not that demanding while the attitude of people in Medellín and Bogotá towards them always shaped them as “different”; a feeling that usually came associated with estrangement and disdain. In her narrative, she explained that phenotypical racial structures played in her favour once when she was given the opportunity to work as a marketing assistant in a shop: “We were 100 candidates and only 10 were chosen, and I was picked in that bunch because they said they required to have a white blond, a brown, and black girl to serve as the publicity for their products.”

Unfortunately, with time, she realised that the job conditions were poor. She was assigned full-time work and that meant working 12 hours a day from Monday to Sunday and earning the minimum wage. Then, she decided to start another type of investment by enrolling in the university to achieve a career as an English teacher, so she used English as a whiteness device strategically to fight the given social conditions on her racialised identity as a black woman. In her view, this new decision would always be better than staying and enduring the racialised conditions to which she was submitted at the shop. Then, Manuela's story tells that race was always crucial in her life as a black person and being an English language learner provided whiteness as an opportunity to cope with her phenotypical racialisation.

Conclusions

The development of this article helps one to understand that racial identity and English learning maintain power relations, which are worthy of being addressed in research so new understandings of language learning are visualised. The direction taken from this study aimed to address the complexities of language learning that usually involves hidden discriminatory practices affecting identities. This study reveals the preponderance of

hierarchical discourses that classify groups and provide advantages and disadvantages to different people under different circumstances. We think that understanding those relations may be a way to illuminate areas in language learning to find clues for developing more socially sensitive practices.

Specifically, in the findings of this study, it has been seen how learners' identity is shaped by being involved in a sentiment of attraction to the language and speakers that is usually transmitted unconsciously through media. Through this construction, it is shown that this imaginary of English and its speakers not only affects learners' perception of the foreign culture, but also affects the image that they have of themselves. Having in mind these affections, learners also appear to model and shift their identity according to the characteristics that are provided with by the environment and social conditions. That was evident as learners accommodate to major discourses of English as success but ignore the discriminatory practices that are subtle and keep them as subaltern. Finally, those experiences presented by learners here reveal that, despite the constant reproduction of racist practices, they also sometimes offer learners tools to develop strategies to overcome such racial barriers.

References

- Agudelo, J. J. (2007). An intercultural approach for language teaching: Developing critical cultural awareness. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 12(1), 185–217.
- Alexander, C., & Knowles, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Making race matter: Bodies, space and identity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Banton, M. (2002). *Racial theories* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Bernasconi, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Race*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Bonilla-Medina, S. X. (2018). *Racial identity in educational practices in the context of Colombia* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of East London, London, UK.
- Bonnett, A. (2000). *White identities: Historical and international perspectives*. Prentice Hall.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). Forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.
- Carbado, D. W., & Gulati, M. (2003). The law and economics of critical race theory [Review of the book *Crossroads, directions, and a new critical race theory* by F. Valdes, J. McCristal-Culp, & A. P. Harris]. *The Yale Law Journal*, 112(7), 1787–1828. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3657500>
- Castro-Gómez, S. (2000). Ciencias sociales, violencia epistémica y el problema de la “invención del otro” [Social sciences, epistemic violence and the problem of the “invention of the other”]. In E. Lander (Ed.), *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas* (pp. 145–163). CLACSO.
- Chadderton, C. (2009). *Discourses of Britishness, race and difference: Minority ethnic students' shifting perceptions of their school experience* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.
- Charles, Q. D. (2019). Black teachers of English in South Korea: Constructing identities as a native English speaker and English language teaching professional. *tesol Journal*, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.478>
- Clarke, S., & Garner, S. (2009). *White identities: A critical sociological approach*. Pluto Press.
- Clavijo, A. (2017). Voces invisibles de las minorías indígenas en Colombia bilingüe [Invisible voices of indigenous minorities in bilingual Colombia]. In E. Mateus & J. Reichert Assunção Tonelli (Eds.), *Diálogos (im)pertinentes entre formação de professores e aprendizagem de línguas*. Blucher. <https://doi.org/10.5151/9788580392708-08>
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1990.tb00174.x>
- De Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2012). *Analyzing narrative: Discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139051255>

- DeCuir, J. T., & Dixon, A. D. (2004). "So, when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 26–31. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033005026>
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (1st ed.). New York University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780195301731.013.51089>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2001). The conservations of races. In R. Bernasconi (Ed.), *Race* (pp. 84–92). Blackwell Publishers.
- Gillborn, D. (2006). Citizenship education as placebo "standards", institutional racism and education policy. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 1(1), 83–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197906060715>
- Gillborn, D. (2010). Reform, racism and the centrality of whiteness: Assessment, ability and the "new eugenics". *Irish Educational Studies*, 29(3), 231–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2010.498280>
- Granados-Beltrán, C. (2016). Critical interculturality: A path for pre-service ELT teachers. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 21(2), 169–185. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v21n02a04>
- Harré, R., Moghaddam, F. M., Cairnie, T. P., Rothbart, D., & Sabat, S. R. (2009). Recent advances in positioning theory. *Theory & Psychology*, 19(1), 5–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354308101417>
- King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60(2), 133–146. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2295605>
- Koopman, S. (2012). "Mona, mona, mona!" Whiteness, tropicality, and international accompaniment in Colombia [Paper presentation]. SFU/UBC Latin American Studies Working Paper Series, Vancouver, Canada. <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/10695>
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (Eds.). (2006). *Education research in the public interest: Social justice, action, and policy*. Teachers College Press.
- Leonardo, Z. (2002). The souls of white folk: Critical pedagogy, whiteness studies, and globalization discourse. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 5(1), 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320120117180>
- Leung, C., Harris, R., & Rampton, B. (1997). The idealised native speaker, reified ethnicities, and classroom realities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 543–560. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587837>
- Lott, T. (2001). Du Bois's anthropological notion of race. In R. Bernasconi (Ed.), *Race* (pp. 59–83). Blackwell Publishers.
- Mamani, C. (2020, June 11). *Racismo estructural, ¿susceptibilidad, veracidad o qué?* [Structural racism: Susceptibility, veracity or what?]. LATFEM. <https://bit.ly/3ptic5t>
- McIntosh, P. (2004). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, 6, 188–192.
- Mignolo, W. (2000). La colonialidad a lo largo y a lo ancho: el hemisferio occidental en el horizonte colonial de la modernidad [Coloniality far and wide: The Western hemisphere on the colonial horizon of modernity]. In E. Lander (Ed.), *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas* (pp. 55–86). CLACSO.
- Mignolo, W. (2005). Cambiando las éticas y las políticas del conocimiento: lógica de la colonialidad y postcolonialidad imperial [Changing the ethics and politics of knowledge: logic of coloniality and imperial postcoloniality]. *Tabula Rasa*, 3, 47–72. <https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.228>
- Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 409–429. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587831>
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090563>
- Runge-Peña, A. K., & Muñoz-Gaviria, D. A. (2005). El evolucionismo social, los problemas de la raza y la educación en Colombia, primera mitad del siglo xx: el cuerpo en las estrategias eugenésicas de línea dura y de

- línea blanda [Social evolutionism, race problems, and education in Colombia, first half of the 20th century: The body in soft and hard line eugenic strategies]. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, (39), 127–168. <https://doi.org/10.35362/rie390808>
- Said, E. W. (1976). *Orientalism*. Penguin Books.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Maintaining social justice hopes within academic realities: A Freirean approach to critical race/LatCrit pedagogy. *Denver University Law Review*, 78(4), 595–621.
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and Society*, 23(5), 605–649. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992905>
- Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). Narrative research: Time for a paradigm. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 204–224. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.20.1.10spe>
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In R. Morris (Ed.), *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (pp. 1–21). Columbia University Press.
- Telles, E., & Flores, R. (2013). Not just color: Whiteness, nation, and status in Latin America. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 93(3), 411–449. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2210858>
- Thesen, L. (1997). Voices, discourse and transition: In search of new categories in EAP. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 487–511. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587835>
- Usma, J., Ortiz, J., & Gutierrez, C. (2018). Indigenous students learning English in higher education: Challenges and hopes. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 23(2), 229–254. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v23n02a03>
- Vela, J. (2012, June 16). Racismo, clasismo, servilismo y discriminación social en Colombia [Racism, classism, servility and social discrimination in Colombia]. *El Bogotano*.
- Wade, P. (1995). *Blackness and race mixture: The dynamics of racial identity in Colombia*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>
- Zentella, A. C. (1995). La hispanofobia del movimiento “inglés oficial” en los Estados Unidos por la oficialización del inglés [The hispanophobia of the “official English” movement in the United States for the officialization of English]. *Alteridades*, 5(10), 55–65.

About the Authors

Sandra Ximena Bonilla-Medina holds a Doctor of Education degree from the University of East London. She is currently a full-time professor and researcher of Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. She is a member of the research group ESTUPOLI and director of the “semillero” second language teaching and learning, culture, and social justice.

Karen Vanessa Varela and **Katherine García** are students in the bachelor’s degree programme in English language teaching at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. They are members of the “semillero” second language teaching and learning, culture, and social justice.

Exploring the Reasons Behind Iranian TEFL Graduate Students' Academic Failure

Explorando las razones detrás del fracaso académico de los estudiantes iraníes de posgrado en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera

Minoo Alemi

Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch, Iran

Atefeh Rezanejad

Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Bijan Marefat


Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran


This cross-sectional study explored the reasons behind academic failure among Iranian students of teaching of English as a foreign language. Interviews were used to collect data from 56 graduate students (19 men and 37 women) and three officials of the university. Results indicated that four main factors led to the academic failure of the students, namely, (1) the student, (2) the professor, (3) the university, and (4) the source materials. Moreover, the results of chi-square tests indicated that no significant relationship existed between the gender and age of the students and their academic failure. Finally, a number of guidelines to prevent academic failure in this context are presented.


Keywords: academic failure, graduate students, Iran, reasons, teaching of English as a foreign language

Este estudio interdisciplinar exploró las razones detrás del fracaso académico entre los estudiantes iraníes de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. El principal instrumento utilizado para la recolección de información fue la entrevista y los datos se obtuvieron de 56 estudiantes graduados (19 hombres y 37 mujeres) y tres miembros oficiales de la universidad. Los resultados indicaron que cuatro factores principales condujeron al fracaso académico de los estudiantes; (1) el estudiante, (2) el profesor, (3) la universidad y (4) los materiales utilizados. Además, los resultados de pruebas chi cuadrado indicaron que no existía una relación significativa entre el género y la edad de los estudiantes y su fracaso académico. Finalmente, se presentan una serie de pautas para prevenir el fracaso académico.

Palabras clave: enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, estudiantes de posgrado, fracaso académico, Irán, razones

Minoo Alemi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9703-831X> · Email: alemi@sharif.ir

Atefeh Rezanejad  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3271-4273> · Email: atefeh_rezanejad92@atu.ac.ir

Bijan Marefat  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0615-134X> · Email: bijan.marefat@iseikco.com

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Alemi, M., Rezanejad, A., & Marefat, B. (2021). Exploring the reasons behind Iranian TEFL graduate students' academic failure. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 151–166. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.89251>

This article was received on July 18, 2020 and accepted on March 9, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Higher education in graduate levels has always been accompanied with different vicissitudes and the students in these levels confront different challenges before being able to accomplish their degree. Interestingly, there is a general implicit assumption that those entering higher education will also be able to successfully finish the course, as they were permitted to enter it (Ajjawi et al., 2019; Fraser & Killen, 2003). The concept of academic failure is of significant importance since it should not be regarded as a personal problem, but a social one which will lead to a great loss in educational expenses, the general progress, as well as the motivation of the students (Hazavehei et al., 2006). To stress the significance, Ajjawi et al. (2019) call it a “world-wide problem.” In fact, academia plays a very important role in the success or failure of the students (Nkhoma et al., 2019). Accordingly, identification of academic failure in the early stages of education has been brought into the limelight (Sarraf et al., 2019).

The point is that, in some cases, there is a lack of correlation between the real capacities and talents of the students and their academic achievement level, in which it is necessary to provide the students with some guidance and help to overcome their challenges, as failure may mostly be due to improper instructional procedures or teaching methods (Kochhar, 2000). Whatever the reason, because of the great impact of pupils' achievements on the whole society in general (Ulriksen et al., 2010), more careful attention needs to be paid to this concept, its reasons, and also some solutions to eradicate the dilemma. Against this backdrop, the present study focused on Iranian teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) graduate students who are experiencing more difficulty in their studies (due to studying in a non-English context) and have an important responsibility in educating EFL students. The issue gets more prominence noting that nearly 10% of TEFL students experience academic failure

every semester and, unfortunately, most of them quit education. These facts motivated us to conduct this study and explore the reasons behind academic failure among the Iranian graduate students of TEFL. In the next stage of the study, we also conducted interviews with some university officials to investigate a set of practical procedures to solve the problem.

Literature Review

The concept of academic failure is complex and multidimensional and it may hinge upon numerous factors and reasons. Generally, academic failure is defined as a lack of success in the educational process which may lead to numerous personal as well as social losses. Lots of different factors have been cited as having an impact on the academic success or failure of university students, namely gender (Pirmohamed et al., 2017), economic and financial issues (Roman, 2014), different class times (Beşoluk et al., 2011; Enright & Refinetti, 2017), lack of adaptability (Collie et al., 2017), the students' communication skills (Abdullah, 2005), as well as limited technology and internet use (Torres-Díaz et al., 2016).

As academic failure is a common phenomenon happening to different students in academia, different scholars have investigated the issue from diverse perspectives and in a variety of educational contexts. In the following section, we present a brief chronological review of some previous studies on the notion of academic failure in the university context.

Wimshurst and Allard (2008) examined academic failure among 12,093 students in the Faculty of Arts of an Australian university during the educational years of 1998 to 2000. To be more specific, they made a distinction between failure in reaching an acceptable grade and failure in the submission of projects. The results of their study indicated that male students, younger ones, and also those with lower scores on the entrance exam were among the majority of the failed ones. They also asserted that more than anything else,

personal and organizational factors were the most leading factors influencing academic failure.

Moreover, Najimi et al. (2013) explored, through a questionnaire, the reasons behind academic failure among 280 Medical Sciences students from Isfahan University in Iran during the educational year 2009. The results of their study indicated that more than anything else the students believed that failure was rooted in inadequacies in the curriculum regarding the students' needs and educational conditions. Other influential factors were the educator, the learning environment, family, and socioeconomic conditions. They also reported a significant relationship between the gender of the students and some factors. However, no relationship was observed insofar as their ages, careers, or marital statuses and their attitudes. In the same vein, Lancia et al. (2013) conducted a retrospective observational study on 1,006 Italian nursing students starting their education at university in five different educational years. The aim was to explore the predicting factors in the success or failure of these students. More specifically, the impact of their grades in the upper-secondary levels and their entrance exam scores were observed. The results indicated that the students who failed had the lowest upper-secondary diploma grades. The results also showed that most of the failed students were men.

Moreover, Sibanda et al. (2015) stressed the significance of observing both success and failure reasons and concepts through a validated questionnaire distributed among 94 entrepreneurship second year undergraduate students in South Africa. The questionnaire included 38 items on factors related to academic success and 41 items on academic failure. The results indicated that regular study and class attendance were the main reasons for success and a noisy lecture environment was the top reason for failure. Mansur et al., (2017) utilized social network analysis in order to discover the interrelationships between different aspects influencing the academic success or failure of 20 sample students.

The results indicated that there were strong interactions among the students and, more than anything else, study time and the absence from classes had the strongest effect on the students' failure.

In another study, Nkhoma et al. (2019) identified the reasons behind underperformance of the students in a university in Southeast Asia. The data were collected from 968 letters written by students who were at risk of failure. The results of their study revealed five main reasons for the academic failure of the students. The causes included the students' learning skills, issues with the assessment, problems in time management, the university courses and, finally, the students' family.

Finally, in one recent study, D'Uggento et al., (2020) focused on the influence of economic status and financial problems of 7,485 university students in Italy. The main aim was to explore the impact of tuition fees on the academic achievement of the students. Two groups were involved: Those who had economic problems and did not have to pay tuition fees and those who had to pay the fees. The results indicated a significant difference between the two groups and the group exempt from tuition fees outperformed the other one.

As the review of the related studies shows, academic failure is an important issue which has recently been greatly noticed by academics, as it will lead to personal and social drawbacks. Academia agree that some fundamental steps need to be taken in order to root out this issue to prevent greater societal losses in the future. Thus, the issue of academic failure and achievement at university level needs more investigation. Due to the multidimensional nature of academic failure (Fullana-Noell, 1992), this need further extends to specific educational and cultural contexts and among different fields of study. To the best of our knowledge no other study has investigated the issue of academic failure at university level among Iranian graduate students of TEFL. Accordingly, and due to the importance of this issue, the present study was set to probe the Iranian graduate TEFL students' possible reasons behind academic failure

and the possible solutions to eradicate the problem. Consequently, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the possible factors which influence Iranian TEFL graduate university students' academic failure?
2. Do these possible factors influencing TEFL graduate university students vary according to gender?
3. Do these possible factors influencing TEFL graduate university students vary according to age?
4. What strategies can be implemented to reduce academic failure among Iranian TEFL graduate university students?

Method

Participants

There were two main groups of participants in the current study. First, a total of 56 students (19 men and 37 women, with an average age of 27) were selected based on convenience sampling (a type of non-probability sampling method) and availability. They were in fact TEFL graduate students with academic failure experience from one of the universities of Tehran (Islamic Azad University). As the rules and regulations in the Iranian universities say, any student whose scores fall below the standard (grade point average = 12 out of 20) for three semesters throughout his or her educational period will be sent to the university educational commission in order to be judged about his or her academic status. These students were in fact regarded as those with academic failure in the present study.

Second, three university officials took part in this study. They were interviewed to investigate their points of view regarding the sources of academic failure of students and the different procedures to be implemented in order to root out the problem. The first official was the head of the TEFL department at the aforementioned university. She was in fact an associate professor who had more than 20 years of teaching experience in higher

education in the field of TEFL and was completely aware of the typical reasons of academic failure among the Iranian university students. The other two officials were head of the Education center and the deputy manager who were also in close contact with the majority of the students and, based on their work experience (25 years and 17 years, respectively), had valid information on the reasons behind academic failure.

Data Collection Instruments

This study mainly drew on a semi-structured interview in order to collect more comprehensive and detailed data on the reasons behind academic failure among Iranian graduate TEFL students. Semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate data collection procedure with the accessible graduate students who had experienced academic failure at university (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In fact, we used a preplanned list of questions, and we also asked further questions to elaborate for more information (see Appendix). To facilitate the process of data collection, the confidential educational files of the failed students were carefully studied. Later, the main outline of the interview was decided upon. It needs to be mentioned that the interview questions were also cross-checked by some psychologists and language experts to add to their validity. The interviews were conducted in the students' first language (Persian) and later the answers were translated into English.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were kindly asked to introduce themselves and talk briefly about themselves and their educational background. Later they were invited to share their own opinions and attitudes toward their academic failure through some series of short questions and answers between the interviewer and the students. Each interview took between 15 to 20 minutes and was recorded with the interviewees' permission for later analyses. Later the interviews were transcribed and sent for content analysis.

Moreover, it needs to be pointed out that a similar protocol to the one used for the semi-structured inter-

views with the students was applied in conducting the interviews with the three official members. After setting an appropriate time, they were kindly asked to meet in the head of the department's room. The interview was conducted in the form of a focus group and they were asked to share their views on the students' academic failure. The interview lasted for about an hour and half and was led by one of the researchers. It was recorded and later transcribed for more comprehensive analysis. The interview was conducted in Persian and later the transcriptions were translated into English.

Data Analysis

This study followed a qualitative research technique. The content analysis procedure was used in order to analyze the collected data. In this regard, conceptual content analysis (also known as thematic analysis) was manually employed to examine and quantify the presence of the contributing elements related to the concept of academic failure. To put it differently, we read and reviewed the interview transcripts many times; this way, we could create the initial codes which were revised some more by us and two other coders (a professor and an associate professor of TEFL at the university) to ensure their validity and reliability.

Due to the nature of qualitative studies and the fact that codes are emergent, and based on Dörnyei's (2007) suggestion, we did not have any specific taxonomy in mind. This allowed for iterative revisions in the process of data analysis. Different coders independently labelled these segments and the intercoder reliability analysis was conducted using spss and Cohen's kappa statistic was calculated. The results showed a kappa statistic of 0.97 ($p < 0.001$), which indicated an almost perfect intercoder agreement (von Eye & Mun, 2005). Also, the frequencies and percentages of the different observed codes were reported. Moreover, in order to inspect any significant relationship between the graduate university students' gender or age and their academic failure, the statistical procedure of chi-square was utilized.

Results

The first research question in this study was: "What are the possible factors which influence Iranian TEFL graduate university students' academic failure?" The results of the interviews indicated that, generally, the Iranian TEFL graduate students considered four main factors affecting the academic failure of the students. As depicted in Table 1, the majority of the participants ($n = 39$, 69.64%) generally thought that the *student factor* (including four subfactors) was the most important one.

To clarify our findings, some examples of the comments by the participants are provided below. Excerpt 1 illustrates Subfactor 4, *family problems*, whereas Excerpt 2 illustrates Subfactor 3, *economic and occupational problems*.

Excerpt 1

You know, I like my major and studies. I always wanted to be successful in teaching English and everyone told me I can do it very well. But, unfortunately, recently I have been facing some personal problems in my family and you know, my mind is so engaged. I can't concentrate. (Female student, 36 years old)¹

Excerpt 2

My job is another important thing. I work every day for about nine hours, and I just need this money. I HAVE TO work...sometimes I had to skip some classes because of my job. (Male student, 32 years old)

The findings also indicated that the next mostly mentioned factor was the *professor factor* (with seven subfactors) stated by 53.57% ($n = 30$) of the participants. Excerpt 3 illustrates Subfactor 2, *inappropriate teaching method*, whereas Excerpt 4 illustrates Subfactor 3, *unknowledgeable instructors*.

Excerpt 3

Not only me, but also most of my friends, well, we try so much to understand the lesson, but we really can't. I mean, we listen to the lesson, we study hard, but we can't still

¹ All excerpts have been translated from Persian by the authors.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Factors Affecting Academic Failure

Main factors	Subfactors	Frequency	Percentage
Student factor	1. Lack of interest & adequate preparation	15	26.78%
	2. Low linguistic knowledge & irrelevant BA degree	10	17.85%
	3. Economic & occupational problems	8	14.28%
	4. Family problems	6	10.71%
	Total	39	69.64%
Professor factor	1. Lack of proper behavior from instructor	14	25%
	2. Inappropriate teaching method	10	17.85%
	3. Unknowledgeable instructors	2	3.57%
	4. Assigning non relevant term projects	4	7.14%
	Total	30	53.57%
University factors	1. University administrators and their behavior	4	7.14%
	2. Managerial programming	3	5.35%
	3. Classroom facilities and equipment	3	5.35%
	4. Accurate and good classes schedules	4	7.14%
	5. Internet availability	3	5.35%
	6. Tuition fees	6	10.71%
	7. The library and educational resources	2	3.57%
	Total	25	44.64%
Sources factor	1. Relevance of the source materials	4	7.14%
	2. The size and bulk of the reading materials & projects	5	8.92%
	3. New or old teaching materials	2	3.57%
	Total	11	19.64%

figure out the content of the book. I think the professors need to teach better. (Male student, 32 years old)

Excerpt 4

Yes, I agree. Unfortunately, some of our professors, of course just some of them, can't properly answer our questions in the class. (Female student, 29 years old)

Moreover, 44.64% ($n = 25$) of the participants believed that different issues related to *the university* can affect their academic success or failure. To be more specific, the university factor itself included seven subfactors and below some interview excerpts are provided to clarify the point. Excerpt 5 illustrates Subfactor 5, *internet availability*, whereas Excerpt 6

illustrates Subfactor 7, *the library and educational resources*.

Excerpt 5

As far as I know, the other universities have free internet services for the students, but here, I don't know why we always have connection problems. As an MA student I need to search a lot and update my knowledge. (Male student, 30 years old)

Excerpt 6

We have a library, yes, but I can't find every book that I need there. Sometimes I have to go to some other nearby universities or finally just buy them in the market. (Male student, 31 years old)

Furthermore, the least mentioned factor was related to the source materials. By and large, 19.64% ($n = 11$) of the participants mentioned this point. Excerpt 7 illustrates Subfactor 2, *the size and bulk of the reading materials & projects*, whereas Excerpt 8 illustrates Subfactor 3, *new or old teaching materials*.

Excerpt 7

This term we had a lesson named as testing, and we had to read about an overall of 500 pages, can you believe it?! It was too much really. [sic] (Female student, 28 years old)

Excerpt 8

Another problem that I have is that some older professors introduce us some very old resources, I mean some outdated books, and we don't like to read them, because...well, they are not interesting anymore. [sic] (Female student, 27 years old)

The second research question in this study was: "Do these possible factors influencing TEFL graduate university students vary according to gender?" Since most of the graduate students of TEFL (more than 70%) were women, there was no equilibrium between women and men in this study. Thirty-seven women and 19 men participated in the interviews. Thus, the data obtained from 17 male students were compared to data of 17 female

students who were selected randomly and analyzed by SPSS. The report with the results and analysis is as follow:

Table 2 shows the frequency of main factors in interviews across gender. As can be seen, the most important factors were the students ($n = 34$, 33.33%), the professor ($n = 28$, 27.5%), university ($n = 22$, 21.6%), and sources ($n = 18$, 17.6%). In addition, it needs to be pointed out that the results of the Chi-square test ($\chi^2(3) = 3.50$, $p = .95$) of independence showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender and academic failure.

The third research question in this study was: "Do these possible factors influencing TEFL graduate university students vary according to age?" The age range of the participants was between 22 and 50 years. To facilitate the data analysis, it was divided into three groups of 22–30 as the first group, 30–40 as the second group, and more than 40 as the third age group.

Table 3 shows the frequency of the main factors of academic failure mentioned by the participants in the interviews across different age groups (i.e., 20–30, 30–40, and above 40). Regarding *student*, the most frequently mentioned factor ($n = 34$, 33.3%), was found nine (26.5%) times in the 20–30 group, 17 (50%) times in the 30–40 group, and eight (23.5%) times in the above-40

Table 2. Student, Professor, University, and Materials Sources and Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Women	Men	
Main reported factors	Student	Count	17	17	34 (33.3%)
		% within Main	50	50	100
	Professor	Count	16	12	28 (27.5%)
		% within Main	57.1	42.9	100
	University	Count	12	10	22 (21.6%)
		% within Main	54.5	45.5	100
	Sources	Count	10	8	18 (17.6%)
		% within Main	55.6	44.4	100
Total	Count	55	47	102 (100%)	
	% within Main	53.9	46.1	100.0	

Table 3. Student, Professor, University, and Materials Sources and Age Crosstabulation

			Age			Total
			20–30	30–40	+40	
Main factors	Students	Count	9	17	8	34 (33.3%)
		% within Main	26.5	50.0	23.5	100
	Professor	Count	6	15	7	28 (27.5%)
		% within Main	21.4	53.6	25.0	100
	University	Count	7	9	6	22 (21.6%)
		% within Main	31.8	40.9	27.3	100
	Sources	Count	3	11	4	18 (17.6%)
		% within Main	16.7	61.1	22.2	100
Total	Count	25	52	25	102 (100%)	
	% within Main	24.5	51.0	24.5	100	

group. Also, with regard to *sources*, the least frequently mentioned factor ($n = 18, 17.6\%$), was found three (16.7%) times in the 20–30 group, 11 (61.1%) times in the 30–40 group and four (22.2%) times in the above-40 group. In addition, it needs to be pointed out that the results of the Chi-square test of independence ($\chi^2 (6) = 2.05, p = .91$) indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the age of the participants and their academic failure.

The fourth research question in this study was: “What strategies can be implemented to reduce academic failure among Iranian TEFL graduate university students?” In order to answer the last research question and figure out some fundamental solutions to the problem of academic failure among TEFL graduate students, three official workers were interviewed. The results of the interviews and their mentioned guidelines are summarized here in this section. An excerpt of this focus-group interview is presented below (for the sake of anonymity they are presented as A, B, and C, and it needs to be noted that they are our own translation).

A: Yes, as Dr. x said we have lots of economic problems currently in our country. Everything is getting more and more expensive every day and our students need

to work in order to be able to pay the tuition fees and this is not easy for them to work and study at the same time. I heard many times that some students can’t attend classes on time because of their job.

C: Yeah, economic problems cannot be denied, of course. Especially in the case of male students who are also married and have a family of their own.

A: Exactly.

B: I agree with you, but don’t forget that we are not talking about kids in primary school, we are discussing the issue concerning university students in higher levels, so in my idea our students need to accept the responsibility of their education more fully. . . What I am going to say is that, as far as I can see, most of the students don’t have enough motivation to continue their studies. They feel they have no future as there is a lot unemployment in the society. We need to boost their motivation to study and be present in academic contexts.

A: Yeah, sure.

C: You are right. They are not very motivated. But what can we do? I feel it’s like something intrinsic.

B: Well, the teacher, the class, the environment, they are very important. Our students mainly need to feel and get that motivation from their professors.

After the interviews were conducted, we decided to present the results in the form of some readily accessible and easily applied guidelines so that the academics would easily be able to implement them. It needs to be noted that the extracted guidelines were later sent to the three official members to be cross-checked. Accordingly, they all agreed on and favored these concluding 13 items. These guidelines are as follows and are presented in the order in which they were raised in the discussion:

1. It would be better to accept and enroll students in the graduate courses with similar degrees in the undergraduate levels.
2. Universities may limit the accepted students to those with only top scores.
3. As most of the students at graduate levels are married or work full-time jobs, considering some classes on weekends (Thursday and Friday in Iran) may seem a good idea, so that all students would be able to attend the classes.
4. The students at any level of education need to be encouraged not to lose motivation. In this regard, it would be better to reward the students with high scores and remind them of the long path they have taken.
5. As many students mentioned that financial problems are a key factor in academic failure, the universities need to facilitate and help the new students with their registration process, especially during the first semester.
6. The universities need to employ experienced, responsible, and pleasant professors who will actively assist the students in finishing their degrees.
7. Training teachers on how to care for the students' needs is of significant value too. Teachers need to be taught the main elements of fruitful tutoring.
8. Professors need to be more cooperative, kind, and treat all students equally.
9. The assignments and term projects are also a very important issue. University professors need to take care to assign appropriate, related, and useful

term projects; ones which will lead to students' real engagement and learning.

10. Universities need to provide the students with the required modern pedagogical facilities.
11. Different parts of the university (such as library, café, or labs) need to be equipped according to the main needs of the students so that they would feel comfortable in the educational milieu.
12. The university tuition needs to be decreased and students with financial problems should be identified and supported.
13. With regard to teaching materials, the sources need to be interesting, manageable, up-to-date, and newly published. This will lead to more active participation of the students in class activities.

Discussion

The present study aimed at identifying the main reasons behind academic failure among the Iranian TEFL graduate students who have experienced it. The careful content analysis of the interviews indicated that, generally, four main factors, namely, *the student*, *the professor*, *the university*, and *the sources*, pertain to the issue. It needs to be noted that each of these factors included some subfactors. Moreover, no significant relationship was observed between the gender and age of the participants and their academic failure.

With regard to the observed factors in the failure or success of the students, our results are in line with Wimshurst and Allard (2008), who also reported that the student factor accounted for 15% of failure among Australian students. Their results also indicated that the course or the source factors accounted for 32% of the academic failure rate. Almuammria (2015) also reported that some factors such as the learner, family, and the educational context can affect the academic achievements of the students. By the same token, Sibanda et al., (2015) also pointed out that those factors related to the student himself/herself (e.g., regular studies, hard work, and regular attendance in classes) were

among the highest rated factors in the success of the students. Similarly, Ajjawi et al., (2019) and Brooker et al. (2017) also stated that students' lack of skills in time management to properly complete their term projects and studies on time was a main reason for their academic failure.

Moreover, the economic and occupational problems brought up in the present study ($n = 8$, 14.28%), were also pointed to in the study done by Sahragard and Ansarpour (2014) on 170 Iranian TEFL students. In addition, nearly 25% ($n = 14$) of our participants argued that family and financial problems may lead to academic failure. This brings to the fore the different responsibilities that both male and female students may experience during higher education besides their personal life. This finding resonates with Ajjawi et al. (2019), who also reported higher rates of failure among students who led complex personal or occupational lives. Our findings are further in tandem with Naylor et al. (2018) and O'Shea (2015), as they have also found that managing a life with complex identities will lead to higher rates of academic failure.

However, the current study's results are not in accordance with Sibanda et al. (2015). In their study, they found that the relationship between the teacher and the students were among the least rated factors. However, in the present study more than half of the participants ($n = 30$, 53.57%) claimed that the instructors can be an important factor in the academic failure or success of the TEFL graduate Iranian students. This may in fact be rooted in the specific socio-cultural backgrounds of the students in different countries. Similarly, Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi (2011) stated that the teacher, teaching materials, and the educational facilities, are the main factors which may cause demotivation and lead to academic failure among the Iranian students at university level. Nevertheless, our results run counter to those of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) in which the teacher was reported to be the prominent factor of demotivation/academic failure,

while in this study it was placed second as the reasons for academic failure.

Furthermore, in line with our study, the results of the study by Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2014) indicated that the university and the class environment were among the leading factors in the academic performance of the students. Some other factors, reported in the present study, such as the student and occupational problems were also reported by Aydin (2012). Additionally, with regard to the other factors, Roman (2014) also reported that economic status and financial issues were significant factors in the academic failure of the students of Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Furthermore, concerning source factors, it was observed that nearly 9% ($n = 5$) of the students thought that many students fail different courses because of the number of projects, too much homework, and, accordingly, the stress arising from them. This finding is in line with Naylor et al. (2018) who also reported the same results regarding the workload put on the students' shoulders among the Australian first-year university students.

As mentioned before, this study also sought to investigate whether these possible factors influencing Iranian TEFL graduate university students vary according to gender. The results, however, indicated that there was no significant relationship between the two variables. The results of the present study are consistent with some previous studies (e.g., Muhonen, 2004; Rastegar et al., 2012) which also reported no significant differences between men and women concerning their academic failure. In fact, what needs to be mentioned is that generally female students outnumber the male ones in graduate levels in Iran and this may be the reason for having more failed female students in the department.

On the contrary, the results of our study run counter to those of Wimshurst and Allard (2008), who reported that the majority of failed students were men, and this was justified by their lack of motivation and engagement

in the course. Similarly, McInnis and Hartley's (2002) study also indicated that younger male students were less engaged with the teaching material during the course. The results of the studies done by McLaughlin et al. (2010) as well as Mulholland et al., (2008) also indicated that, generally, female students are more successful in graduating within the official educational semester. Lancia et al. (2013) also reported that the majority of failed nursing students were male students. In the same vein, Izadi Sabet et al. (2015) also argued that there were more cases of academic failure among men rather than women in the Iranian medical universities. However, our results indicated no statistically significant relation between gender and academic failure. Similarly, Mozahem (2019) also argued that course withdrawal rates among engineering courses and among male students in bachelor level are higher. In the same way, D'Uggento et al. (2020) also reported that Italian female students were more likely to successfully complete their academic courses.

Another section of this study was concerned with whether these possible factors influencing Iranian TEFL graduate university students vary according to age. We wanted to figure out if any relationship exists between age and the academic achievements of the Iranian graduate students in TEFL. The results displayed that there was no significant relationship between the age of the students and their academic success or failure. As all of the participants were from graduate level, it sounded logical that they had reached an acceptable degree of sensibility and intelligence; one which could justify the significance of higher education and academic advancements. The results of our study are in tandem with Dante et al. (2011) and Bulfone et al. (2011), who also reported that there was no significant relationship between the students' ages and their academic failure. This lack of any relationship could be due to the educational level of the students. Nevertheless, the current study's findings contrast with the study by Mulholland et al. (2008), as they reported that there was a significant relationship between the

age of the university nursing students and their level of academic achievement. Similarly, Prymachuk et al. (2009) also stated that a strong relationship was found between age and the possibility of academic failure. In this regard, academic failure was more prevalent among younger students, which may of course be justified on the grounds of the increased ability level of older students in comparison to the younger ones.

The final aim of the current study was to figure out some practical guidelines that can easily be applied in the academic context in order to reduce academic failure rates. The results of the interviews with the official workers at university showed some interesting and viable techniques to be implemented. The point is that, just as Azari et al. (2015) argue, the future consequences of academic failure are so great that there is a more than ever need to solve the issue through conducting workshops or educational courses for those students who are at risk of failing, and perhaps also with professors to make them aware of these problems, as they play a significant role. We hope that the results of the current study will remind academia of the significance of raising awareness of the professors and also of the students regarding the negative personal and social consequences of academic failure and the factors and possible solutions.

Conclusion

This cross-sectional study aimed at investigating the reasons behind academic failure among Iranian graduate TEFL students. The results of this study indicated that, overall, four main factors were regarded as important in the academic failure of the students, namely, the student, the professor, the university, and the sources materials. Moreover, it was found that no significant relationship existed between the gender and age of the students and their academic failure. As the results of the current study showed, there is no single reason for the academic failure of the graduate students and numerous factors play a role. This further proves the

complex nature of the phenomenon and the necessity of dealing more meticulously with the issue.

The results of the current study can have important implications for academics not only in the field of TEFL but in any other field of study as academic failure has become very common in that many students are experiencing it, which has an impact on university dropout rates (Ajjawi et al., 2019; Li & Carroll, 2017). We would argue that in any educational context or level, a better understanding of the influential factors on the academic success or failure of the students can lead to a redirection in the instructional procedures, which in itself may later lead to improvements in the students' education and a whole different society. The main goal is in fact the long-term success of the students. It seems that the first step in this regard is raising the awareness of students and professors to the main reasons for low achievements at university level. Hopefully, by knowing the reasons and causes of failure, both groups will be more capable of dealing with the issue and overcoming the challenges of eliminating failure. Moreover, as argued by some scholars (e.g., Hai-tao et al., 2020; Karaci, 2019; Sheng-dong, 2011), an important procedure to be taken in order to root out academic failure is related to its prediction. More and more educational contexts are becoming cognizant of the fact that early predictions of the students' failure would definitely inhibit the issue to some extent and assist both the instructors and the students in taking follow-up actions. In this regard, it is highly recommended that universities devote more attention to the students' academic status, trace their failure and success from the beginning, and accordingly take any necessary follow-up step.

Just like any research study, this study has its own limitations too and caution must be exercised when generalizing its results. The present research was only focused on the academic failure of TEFL MA students in one of the universities in Iran. We also investigated the relationship between academic failure and the variables

of gender and age. Moreover, academic failure was investigated based on the reported results from the students and the professors, but not from their actual performance. Future interested researchers may explore the topic in a wider context and with a higher number of participants. In addition, there is a need to investigate the effects of more variables such as ethnicity, financial status, and family background. Also, similar studies may be conducted across different fields of study and among the students of different levels (i.e., BA and PhD) as well as different fields or areas of knowledge. Moreover, another interesting line of research, mostly neglected, would be to explore the students' personal and emotional responses to academic failure and the consequences afterward.

References

- Abdullah, A. (2005). Some determinants of student performance in Financial Management introductory course: An empirical investigation. *Journal of King Saudi University (Administrative Sciences)*, 18(1), 1–26.
- Ajjawi, R., Dracup, M., Zacharias, N., Bennett, S., & Boud, D. (2019). How do students adapt in response to academic failure? *Student Success*, 10(3), 84–91. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v10i3.1403>
- Al-Jamal, D. A., & Al-Jamal, G. A. (2014). An investigation of the difficulties faced by EFL undergraduates in speaking skills. *English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n1p19>
- Almuammria, M. (2015). The impact of the environment in enhancing the academic achievement of students. *Scientific Library: Beirut*, 13–19.
- Aydin, S. (2012). Factors causing demotivation in EFL teaching process: A case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(51), 1–13. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss51/1>
- Azari, S., Baradaran, H. R., & Fata, L. (2015). Causes of academic failure of medical and medical sciences students in Iran: A systematic review. *Medical journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 29(1), 302–307.

- Beşoluk, Ş., Önder, İ., & Deveci, İ. (2011). Morningness-eveningness preferences and academic achievement of university students. *Chronobiology International*, 28(2), 118–125. <https://doi.org/10.3109/07420528.2010.540729>
- Brooker, A., Brooker, S., & Lawrence, J. (2017). First year students' perceptions of their difficulties. *Student Success*, 8(1), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v8i1.352>
- Bulfone, G., Predan, S., Zanini, A., Farneti, F., Quattrin, R., & Brusaferro, S. (2011). Predictors of nursing student success in an Italian school of nursing. *Igiene e Sanità Pubblica*, 67(2), 137–147.
- Collie, R. J., Holliman, A. J., & Martin, A. J. (2017). Adaptability, engagement and academic achievement at university. *Educational Psychology*, 37(5), 632–647. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2016.1231296>
- Dante, A., Valoppi, G., Saiani, L., & Palese, A. (2011). Factors associated with nursing students' academic success or failure: A retrospective Italian multicenter study. *Nurse Education Today*, 31(1), 59–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2010.03.016>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Longman/Pearson.
- D'Uggento, A. M., D'Ovidio, F. D., Toma, E., & Ceglie, R. (2020). A framework for detecting factors influencing students' academic performance: A longitudinal analysis. *Social Indicators Research*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02334-7>
- Enright, T., & Refinetti, R. (2017). Chronotype, class times, and academic achievement of university students. *Chronobiology International*, 34(4), 445–450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07420528.2017.1281287>
- Fraser, W. J., & Killen, R. (2003). Factors influencing academic success or failure of first-year and senior university students: Do education students and lecturers perceive things differently? *South African Journal of Education*, 23(4), 254–263.
- Fullana-Noell, J. (1992). Revisió de la recerca educativa sobre les variables explicatives del rendiment acadèmic: Apunt per a l'ús del criteri de “modificabilitat pedagògica” de les variables [Review of educational research on the explanatory variables of academic performance]. *Estudi General*, (12), 185–200. <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/EstudiGral/article/view/43691>
- Hai-tao, P., Ming-qu, F., Hong-bin, Z., Bi-zhen, Y., Jin-jiao, L., Chun-fang, L., Yan-ze, Z., & Rui, S. (2020). Predicting academic performance of students in Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools with graph convolutional network. *Neural Computing and Applications*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-020-05045-9>
- Hazavehei, S. M. M., Fathei, Y., & Shamshirei, M. (2006). Study on the causes of students' academic probation in Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, 2001–2002. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, 3(1), 33–42.
- Izadi Sabet, F., Ghavami, H., Hesam, M., Abbasian, M., Goghataei, M. J., Abbasnejad, A. A., Salehian, M., & Emadi, A. (2015). Factors affecting academic failure in region II medical universities students. *Journal of Paramedical Sciences*, 6(2), 53–58.
- Kaivanpanah, S., & Ghasemi, Z. (2011). An investigation into sources of demotivation in second language learning. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 89–110.
- Karaci, A. (2019). Intelligent tutoring system model based on fuzzy logic and constraint-based student model. *Neural Computing and Applications*, 31(8), 3619–3628. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-017-3311-2>
- Kochhar, S. K. (2000). *Educational and vocational guidance in secondary schools*. Sterling Publishers.
- Lancia, L., Petrucci, C., Giorgi, F., Dante, A., & Cifone, M. G. (2013). Academic success or failure in nursing students: Results of a retrospective observational study. *Nurse Education Today*, 33(12), 1501–1505. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.05.001>
- Li, I. W., & Carroll, D. R. (2017). *Factors influencing university student satisfaction, dropout and academic performance: An Australian higher education equity perspective*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University.

- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mansur, A. B. F., Yusof, N., & Basori, A. H. (2017). Comprehensive analysis of student's academic failure classification through role-sphere influence and flow betweenness centrality. *Procedia Computer Science*, 116, 509–515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2017.10.031>
- McInnis, C., & Hartley, R. (2002). *Managing study and work: The impact of full-time study and paid work on the undergraduate experience in Australian universities*. Department of Education, Science and Training.
- McLaughlin, K., Muldoon, O. T., Moutray, M. (2010). Gender, gender roles and completion of nursing education: A longitudinal study. *Nurse Education Today*, 30(4), 303–307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.08.005>
- Mozahem, N. (2019). Course withdrawal: A comparison of business and engineering students in a private university. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 11(4), 828–843. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-11-2018-0225>
- Muhonen, J. (2004). *Second language demotivation: Factors that discourage pupils from learning the English language* [Master's thesis]. University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Mulholland, J., Anionwu, E. N., Atkins, R., Tappern, M., & Franks, P. J. (2008). Diversity, attrition and transition into nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 64(1), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04758.x>
- Najimi, A., Sharifirad, G. H., Mohammad Amini, M., & Meftagh, S. D. (2013). Academic failure and students' viewpoint: The influence of individual, internal and external organizational factors. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 2(22). <https://doi.org/10.4103/2277-9531.112698>
- Naylor, R., Baik, C., & Arkoudis, S. (2018). Identifying attrition risk based on the first year experience. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(2), 328–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1370438>
- Nkhoma, C., Dang-Pham, D., Hoang, A.-P., Nkhoma, M., Le-Hoai, T., & Thomas, S. (2019). Learning analytics techniques and visualisation with textual data for determining causes of academic failure. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 39(7), 808–823. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2019.1617349>
- O'Shea, S. (2015). "I generally say I am a mum first... But I'm studying at uni": The narratives of first-in-family, female caregivers transitioning into an Australian university. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 8(4), 243–257. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038996>
- Pirmohamed, S., Debowska, A., & Boduszek, D. (2017). Gender differences in the correlates of academic achievement among university students. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 9(2), 313–324. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-03-2016-0015>
- Prymachuk, S., Easton, K., & Littlewood, A. (2009). Nurse education: Factors associated with attrition. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65(1), 149–160. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04852.x>
- Rastegar, M., Akbarzadeh, M., & Heidari, N. (2012). The darker side of motivation: Demotivation and its relation with two variables of anxiety among Iranian EFL learners. *ISRN Education*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/215605>
- Roman, M. D. (2014). Students' failure in academic environment. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 114, 170–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.679>
- Sahragard, R., & Ansaripour, E. (2014). Demotivating and remotivating factors among MA students of TEFL: An Iranian case. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 2(1), 88–105.
- Sarra, A., Fontanella, L., & Di Zio, S. (2019). Identifying students at risk of academic failure within the educational data mining framework. *Social Indicators Research*, 146(2), 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1901-8>
- Sheng-dong, L. (2011). The research and design of monitoring-early warning system for college students' school work. *Modern Educational Technology*, 21(10), 106–108.
- Sibanda, L., Iwu, C. G., & Benedict, O. H. (2015). Factors influencing academic performance of university students. *Demography and Social Economy*, 2(24), 103–115. <https://doi.org/10.15407/dse2015.02.103>
- Torres-Díaz, J. C., Duarte, J. M., Gómez-Alvarado, H. F., Marín-Gutiérrez, I., & Segarra-Faggioni, V. (2016). Internet use

- and academic success in university students. *Comunicar: Revista Científica de Comunicación y Educación*, 24(2), 61–70. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C48-2016-06>
- Ulriksen, L., Madsen, L. M., & Holmegaard, H. T. (2010). What do we know about explanations for drop out/opt out among young people from STM higher education programmes? *Studies in Science Education*, 46(2), 209–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057267.2010.504549>
- von Eye, A., & Mun, E. Y. (2005). *Analyzing rater agreement: Manifest variable methods*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Wimshurst, K., & Allard, T. (2008). Personal and institutional characteristics of student failure. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(6), 687–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930701772911>

About the Authors

Minoo Alemi is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch. She is the associate editor of *Applied Pragmatics* and sits on the editorial boards of many journals. Her areas of interest include L2 pragmatics, technology enhancement education, teacher education, and ESP. She has also published over 100 papers in different journals.

Atefeh Rezanejad holds a PhD in TEFL from Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. She has taught English since 2003 and currently she is instructing students in various university courses in applied linguistics. Her areas of interest include intercultural language learning, pragmatics, teacher educations, and sociolinguistics.

Bijan Marefat holds an MA in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch, Iran. He has taught English for more than 30 years and his main areas of interest include pragmatics, ESP, and textbook evaluation.

Appendix: Interview Questions

1. Please tell me a little about yourself.
2. What is failure in your opinion? How about academic failure?
3. Have you ever failed? Tell us about a time when you failed?
4. How did you deal with your academic failure? How did you handle your failures?
5. Why do you think you failed? What was/were the reason(s)?
6. How do you think you can prevent academic failure?
7. What is/are your suggestion(s) for reducing academic failure?
8. Is it possible to stop academic failure completely?

Tutors' and Tutees' Behaviors, Attitudes, and Perspectives Regarding EFL Peer Tutoring in Higher Education in Mexico

Comportamientos, actitudes y perspectivas de tutores y tutorados hacia la tutoría entre pares en un contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera en educación superior en México

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar


Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

This article reports on the findings of a mixed methods research study on tutors' and tutees' behaviors and attitudes during the tutoring sessions and their perceptions about English language peer tutoring at a bilingual, international, and sustainable university in central Mexico. Observation, peer assessment, and semistructured interviews results suggest that tutees and tutors asked and answered questions and had a positive attitude towards error correction in almost all the sessions. Likewise, they reveal that participants clarified doubts, seemed motivated, motivated their peers, and had a constructive attitude towards teaching and learning from a peer most of the time during the tutoring. Furthermore, results indicate that the participants were positive about the experience, the sessions, their peers, and the influence in their learning.

Keywords: English language learning, higher education, peer tutoring

Este artículo reporta los resultados de una investigación de métodos mixtos sobre el comportamiento y la actitud de tutores y tutorados durante las sesiones de tutoría y sus percepciones sobre la tutoría entre pares para el aprendizaje del idioma inglés en una universidad tecnológica bilingüe, internacional y sustentable en el centro de México. Los resultados obtenidos mediante observaciones, evaluación de pares y entrevistas semiestructuradas sugieren que los tutorados y tutores realizaron y respondieron preguntas y estuvieron dispuestos a corregir errores en casi todas las sesiones, así como, que los participantes aclararon dudas, parecían motivados, motivaron a sus compañeros y tuvieron una actitud positiva hacia la enseñanza y aprendizaje entre pares, la mayor parte del tiempo durante las tutorías. Además, los resultados indican que los participantes apreciaron positivamente la experiencia, las sesiones, a sus compañeros y la influencia en su aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje del inglés, educación superior, tutoría entre pares

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4856-0408> · Email: janeth.saguilar@alumno.buap.mx

This article is based on the master's thesis completed by Sanchez-Aguilar (2020).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Sanchez-Aguilar, J. (2021). Tutors' and tutees' behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives regarding EFL peer tutoring in higher education in Mexico. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 167–182. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.87744>

This article was received on May 28, 2020 and accepted on March 9, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

The language education field has taken on a significant change to a more learner-centered approach in order to better promote the varied dimensions of learning (Matukhin & Bolgova, 2015). Teaching and learning a second language should not always follow a linear approach, with the teacher at one end and the student at the other. LoCastro (2003) highlights that other learners are one of the main sources of information that language learners are exposed to. Vygotsky claims that learning is socially and culturally promoted and constructed among students, and between teacher and students (as cited in Razia, 2012).

Learning in collaboration is not a new idea, and the concept of tutoring is probably as old as civilization itself, yet it was not until the 1700s when it began to be used academically (Topping as cited in Kalkowski, 1995). In the 19th century, British educational reformer Joseph Lancaster empowered the initiative of developing children's tutoring skills by allowing them to become involved in his "monitorial system"; a controversial and revolutionary yet cost-cutting system that helped many poor children to learn to read and write and to be able to monitor other kids after that (Aldrich, 1998). Peer tutoring is now one way cooperative learning is used in the education field since it is recommended by UNESCO as a highly effective practice for inclusive teaching (Duran, 2006).

There has been a significant increase of peer tutoring programs in higher education worldwide (Chen & Liu, 2011). According to Topping (1996), this is due to the need to address low academic performance and to the cost-effectiveness of the peer tutoring strategies. This study aimed to investigate the participants' behaviors and attitudes in an English as a foreign language (EFL) peer tutoring experience in higher education and to explore the impact of peer tutoring on students' English learning and socio-effective outcomes. For this purpose, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the tutors' and tutees' behaviors and attitudes during the tutoring sessions?
2. What are the tutors and tutees' perceptions about English language teaching (ELT) peer tutoring?

Literature Review

The definition of peer tutoring has evolved as more approaches and perspectives have emerged. According to Topping (1996), "archaic definitions of peer tutoring perceived the tutor as a surrogate teacher, in a linear model of the transmission of knowledge, from teacher to tutor to tutee" (p. 322). Similarly, Damon and Phelps (as cited in Kalkowski, 1995) claim that a succinct definition of peer tutoring involves an expert child instructing another novice child. However, the notion of experts and novices has been discussed in today's educational contexts. Thus, more recent studies relate peer tutoring to mutual help. In his notion of learning by teaching, Topping (2005) highlights that peer tutoring "involves people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by doing so" (p. 631). From the point of view of Chen and Liu (2011), peer tutoring "is a kind of peer-mediated, peer-assisted learning, employing problem solving and systematic teaching strategies to help the disabled student" (p. 2). For Duran et al. (2015) peer tutoring is a way of learning among students, usually organized in pairs in which the tutor learns by offering pedagogic help to the tutee who learns through the adjusted and permanent help provided by the tutor.

Types of Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring encompasses a variety of approaches or models and these will be explored in the following sections.

Cross Age Tutoring

This approach is characterized by joining students of different ages. Robinson et al. (2005) mention that this form of peer tutoring "involves students at different

grade level[s], with the older student acting as a tutor for the younger student(s)” (p. 329). Similarly, cross age tutoring often involves dyads where tutors are entitled and expected to organize work, ask questions, encourage interactions, and facilitate better study habits (Hott & Walker, 2012). During cross age tutoring the position of tutor and tutee do not change, with the tutor usually having higher skill levels.

Peer Assisted Learning

According to the University of the West of England in Bristol (n.d.), peer assisted learning (PAL) is an educational assistance scheme where students are trained to assist other students, an activity which provides opportunities for lower year students to consolidate their own understanding of the discipline within a collaborative environment and supports students with their transition to university. A main characteristic of PAL is that learners can function as tutors or tutees at different times since the pairs or teams typically work at the same proficiency level (Hott & Walker, 2012).

Cooperative Learning

Topping (2005) refers to cooperative learning as a working together activity within a small group that “is likely to involve the specification of goals, tasks, resources, roles and rewards by the teacher, who facilitates or more firmly guides the interactive process” (p. 632). Topping also points out that cooperative learning “often requires training to ensure equal participation and simultaneous interaction, synergy and added value” (p. 632). According to Yusnani (2018), cooperative learning aims to transform classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences to direct students’ diversities towards cognitive, behavioral, and social interdependence.

Reciprocal Peer Tutoring

Falchikov (2001) describes reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) as a form of peer tutoring where

randomly selected pairs of students test each other in preparation for a class test. RPT enables each student to play the role of the tutor and tutee, and thus reap the benefits derived from teaching, and being taught by another student. (p. 20)

For Hott and Walker (2012) RPT utilizes a format that encourages teaching materials and evaluation of peers.

Academic, Social, and Affective Benefits of Peer Tutoring

Research on peer tutoring techniques suggests significant improvements in academic achievement in the targeted area and cognitive gains for both tutors and tutees (Duran, 2016; Falchikov, 2001; Kalkowski, 1995; Nguyen, 2013; Topping, 2005). Similarly, Green (2011), regarding the pedagogical advantages of collaborative learning techniques, refers to improved performance and increase in student retention which refers to the successful completion of tasks and/or students’ engagement in their studies. Kalkowski (1995), in her descriptive analysis of research findings, suggests that tutors and tutees have reported the benefits of tutoring in mathematics, language arts, reading, and sciences. Falchikov (2001) identified academic outcomes such as better performance, and metacognitive awareness such as learning how to learn. Likewise, Nguyen (2013) claims that peer tutoring as a supplement to traditional instruction promotes higher-order thinking since it encompasses “explaining concepts in detail, high level questioning, and the use [of] supportive communication skills” (p. 3). Comfort and McMahon (2014) analyzed the effect of peer tutoring on academic achievement. They demonstrated that the peer tutored group achieved significantly higher grades in comparison to those who were not peer tutored for both tutees and tutors.

The benefits of peer tutoring in the education field are not limited to the academic aspect. Many positive outcomes have been documented on the social and affective sides. Kalkowski (1995) highlights

improvements in self-esteem, social skills, attitude towards school, and school attendance. Compiling some studies and their sources, Vincent (1999) enlists common effects found in peer tutoring programs on the tutor and the learner including higher academic achievement and improvements on motivation, use of instructional time, self-direction and independence, attitude towards tutored subject area, and increased self-confidence. Topping (2005) indicates that affective changes in attitude to school, the teachers, the subject, the peer, and the self might be found in peer tutoring programs. According to Falchikov (2001), the different peer tutoring approaches appear to have non-academic benefits in terms of affect, motivation, cooperation, and confidence. While examining the benefits of peer tutoring based on existing research, Nguyen (2013) suggests that the gains of peer tutoring strategies are also reflected in positive effects on social, self-control, and behavioral outcomes. Also, that “training students in peer tutoring strategies can help students take responsibility for their learning and academic failures” (p. 3). According to a manual for the implementation of peer tutoring by the Ministry of Public Education in Mexico (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2014), peer tutoring improves attitude and readiness toward learning, fosters the tutor and tutee personal development, and helps to strengthen the learners’ identity.

Related Research

While the literature on peer tutoring in the classroom is quite broad, research on this strategy in the field of foreign language in higher education is not extensive. In a program conducted at a university in Japan, Bradford-Watts (2011) concluded that despite the obstacles encountered, students are able to learn and share what they have learned with their peers and that they can also develop interesting and interactive classes for their peers. Through participant observation and interviews in a case study in Malaysia, Sharif et al. (2012) suggest that the nature of the activities used

in peer tutoring, which are not threatening and are less intimidating compared to the more rigid class environment, can encourage students to put the language into practice. In an action research study in Colombia, Viáfara and Ariza (2008) explored students’ and teachers’ perceptions in order to uncover the limitations of an existing peer tutoring program. They found that the main issues were teachers’ and students’ lack of time, lack of trust among teachers and students, students’ fear, and students’ uncertainty about the aspects to work on. Huerta et al. (2010) implemented a peer tutoring program in Oaxaca, Mexico, highlighting the encouragement of students’ participation in their learning, the increase of tutors’ teaching skills, and more opportunities for the tutors to improve their level of English; the authors concluded that the participants’ and the teachers’ self-esteem was benefited.

Studies on the behaviors and attitudes of participants towards peer tutoring in higher education are scarce. McKellar (1986) studied behaviors used in peer tutoring while learning Esperanto and examined the relationship of those behaviors to the degree of learning achieved. She revealed that tutors’ most frequent verbal behavior was “reading information from the study guide with minimal alteration or rewording” (p. 165). This author also found that it was common for tutors to give tutees incorrect information regarding rules, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Regarding tutees, she found that their most frequent verbal behavior was to say words or sentences at the tutors’ request and that “the only behavior predictive of tutee test scores was the tutee’s asking for clarification of information” (p. 166) given that the more tutees asked for clarification, the higher their scores was.

Madaio et al. (2017) investigated the extent in which interpersonal closeness among participants affected “tutors’ use of indirectness with feedback and instructions and the impact of those uses on tutees’ problem-solving” (p. 1). They found that friend tutors use less indirect instructions and less positive feedback

to their tutees compared to stranger tutors. However, it was stranger tutees who succeeded more at solving problems. In a similar study in which Madaio et al. (2018) examined the impact that rapport, self-efficacy, and prior knowledge have on the teaching and learning process and outcomes of peer tutoring; they found that tutors in high-rapport pairs offered more help and encouraged more their tutees to explain their problem-solving reasoning process than low-rapport pairs.

The research on peer tutoring for English learning over the last decades has contributed to better understanding of learning-by-teaching. The evidence suggests that peer tutoring schemes today can be structured to provide benefits to all participants in a number of important areas such as academic improvement, self-esteem, and confidence. Yet, more research is needed on EFL peer tutoring in the Latin American contexts.

Method

To explore participants' behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions during and towards a peer tutoring experience, a mixed methods research approach was employed in this study. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), mixed methods research design involves philosophical assumptions that guide the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. For these authors the "premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p. 5). Integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in this study would provide deeper answers to the research questions and thus a richer picture of the EFL peer tutoring experience.

Setting

The research took place at a bilingual, international, and sustainable university in a semirural area in central Mexico. This institution belongs to the bilingual, interna-

tional and sustainable (BIS) model in higher education. The Ministry of Public Education in Mexico describes the BIS as a cutting-edge model in higher education in Mexico since it responds to international trends and is unique in Latin America. BIS universities follow a bilingual pedagogical scheme where courses are mostly offered in the foreign language. This implies that the beginning students are immersed in an intensive English program in which they have five-hour English classes daily for about four months during their first semester and continue reinforcing their language training throughout the entire career. This study was developed with the help of participants from the immersion course of this university.

Participants

Seven tutees and five tutors participated in the research: two trios (one tutor, two tutees) and three dyads. The participants were seven women and five men with ages from 18 to 23 years. The peer tutors were students from the third or Quarter 3 semester who were selected by the institution, specifically by the English coordinator based on their English language proficiency level, their interpersonal abilities, and their interest and agreement in becoming tutors. Tutees were students from the immersion course or Quarter 0 in which students do not take any content class and thus are grouped by their language level rather than their area of interest. They were selected by their immersion English teachers on their low level and low performance of English, and their interest in participating in the program.

Procedure

The research followed three stages. The first stage focused on exploring the participants' initial opinions about peer tutoring. This diagnostic phase contributed to direct the tutorial sessions based on students' perceptions; the outcomes obtained gave insights to better understand what the other instruments should explore. The model of peer tutoring employed in the study was

cross age. The outcomes obtained during this stage as well as results from previous studies in the field led to integrating the guidelines, approaches, materials, and tutors' training preparation for the tutoring sessions. Since this study is part of a broader research on the impact of peer tutoring among university students learning EFL, only the implications of Stage 2 and 3 are addressed in this paper.

In Stage 2, the tutor-tutee working teams and pairs were formed and schedules for the tutoring sessions were arranged. The tutoring sessions were arranged in two different schedules due to the tutors' classes and school activities. After the peer tutoring organization was established, participants' behaviors and attitudes were observed and documented while they worked and socialized. The observations were carried out semi-structured, implementing an observation checklist and note instrument (see Appendix) during the tutoring sessions. Creswell (2003) claims that observations, whether unstructured or semistructured, allow the researcher to take notes on the behavior and activities of participants. Black (2003) states that when observing activities of individuals, a checklist can provide the researcher with the guidance required to ensure the obtainment of pertinent events and ignore irrelevant ones.

The data from the observations were supplemented by tutors' and tutees' assessment of their peers to obtain information on the participants' behaviors and attitude during the tutoring sessions. To this end, a peer assessment instrument was developed and provided for the participants at the end of the sessions. In both cases, a Likert scale was used for the assessment of tutors and tutees. Due to unexpected school activities, some participants had seven sessions while others had six, from which it was possible to observe five. Meetings between tutors and tutees were held once a week for one hour.

In Stage 3 a semistructured interview was used to investigate students' perceptions towards peer language

learning. Turner (2010) considers that interviews provide in-depth information on perspectives and experiences. Participants were interviewed after the implementation of all the sessions. Both the tutors and tutees were presented with a consent form before their first tutoring sessions to inform them about the observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

From the five observed sessions of the five working teams, a total of 20 peer tutoring interactions were analyzed. It is worth saying that *interaction* refers to the peer tutoring sessions the teams had. To analyze and describe the data gathered through observations, certain steps were followed. Firstly, the observation checklist data were analyzed to obtain frequency of the behavior of tutors and tutees during the tutoring sessions. Secondly, the data gathered in the observation notes were scrutinized to find major themes.

Regarding the participants' assessment data, the process of data analysis was ongoing as the tutors' and tutees' assessments were collected and analyzed after each session. As there were pairs as well as trios participating in the peer tutoring sessions, a total of 40 evaluations of tutors were collected and analyzed, and a total of 28 assessments of tutees were collected and analyzed.

Regarding the semistructured interviews, 11 were conducted in Spanish from which a total of 135.48 minutes were transcribed. Then transcripts were classified and summarized according to tutors' and tutees' perceptions about peer tutoring for English language learning.

Results and Discussion

The findings are presented with reference to the research questions of the study: tutors' and tutees' behaviors and attitudes during the tutoring sessions and participants' perceptions about ELT peer tutoring.

Participants' Behaviors and Attitudes

Tutors' and tutees' behaviors and attitudes during the tutoring sessions are first presented and discussed in terms of observation data. Then, the findings from the peer assessment instrument are offered and discussed.

Table 1 presents the results obtained during the tutoring sessions and through the observation checklist and notes data. Tutors and tutees asked and answered questions in 20 interactions. During the observations, correction occurred in 19 out of the 20 interactions in which participants showed a positive attitude towards errors. Positive attitudes in this study refers to participants being kind when correcting and being corrected as well as comfortable in accepting mistakes and a willingness to correct them. It was also found that both tutors and tutees clarified doubts and showed motivation in 18 of the sessions. Participants had a positive attitude towards peer tutoring in 17 out of the 20 interactions. For tutees, it was found that they were interested in the activities in 17 interactions while tutors showed understanding of the content in 17 of the 20 interactions. Motivation and attitudes towards peer tutoring are not observable per se. The actions that were observed to interpret as motivation were tutors' motivating and encouraging words to their peers and tutees' expressions

of coziness and contentment when praised or motivated. Regarding positive attitudes towards peer tutoring, it was based on participants' friendly relationship, good rapport, and initiative to extend their session as well as tutors' preparation and tutees' attention and comfort to learn from their peers.

The findings from the observations suggest that tutors were constantly encouraging their tutees to ask them questions, a gesture which gave the tutees the confidence to solve their doubts in all the sessions. Although tutors appeared to ask more questions than tutees, tutees looked comfortable asking questions in relation to the topics and clarification of instructions. These findings are in line with Duran's (2016) argument that in learning-by-teaching techniques, tutors ask questions to introduce the topic and to direct tutees' train of thoughts. Correction occurred in 19 out of the 20 sessions in which participants showed a positive attitude towards errors. It was observed that tutors tried to make their peers identify and correct their mistakes, and when correcting they were kind and patient; furthermore, tutees were not bothered by the corrections and in fact took their peers' advice. Topping (2000) points out that peer tutoring can be effective in different ways, including more questioning, more modeling, and more self-correction.

Table 1. Behaviors and Attitudes During the Tutoring Sessions

Element Team	Asking and answering questions	Positive attitude towards errors	Clarification of doubts	Motivation in the team	Positive attitude towards tutoring	Tutees' interest in the activity	Tutors' understanding of the content
No. of sessions in which the elements were observed							
Trio 1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Trio 2	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
Pair 1	2	2	2	0	0	1	2
Pair 2	4	4	3	4	4	4	2
Pair 3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3
Total	20	19	18	18	17	17	17

Clarification of doubts occurred in most of the interactions in which tutors provided explanation of the topics and modeled the activities for their tutees; the tutors also clarified their tutees' doubts regarding vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and instructions for activities. Clarification of doubts was observable not only from tutors to tutees; for example, in the trios, tutees also provided explanations and examples to other tutees for better understanding of instructions, syntax, and pronunciation. Likewise, the results indicated that motivation was observable in most of the interactions. During the sessions, tutors often motivated and encouraged their peers to learn and use the language while others praised and acknowledged their tutees' improvement. Topping (2005) claims that tutors' enthusiasm and competence can influence tutees' confidence and that reciprocal responsibility can help motivation in the pair. Similarly, Topping (2000) states that in peer tutoring techniques, both the tutor and tutee can learn to give and receive praise.

The results also show that participants had a positive attitude towards the tutoring in most of the interactions. Tutors seemed to enjoy teaching their peers; for example, most of them shared a learning technique or some advice about learning English with their peer tutees, and occasionally spent more than the allotted time. Tutees seemed comfortable learning from their peers and paid attention to their explanations, advice, and comments. Both tutors and tutees created a good relationship with team peers and even with tutors and tutees from other

teams. These outcomes are aligned with Almassaad and Alotaibi's (2012) claim that students can accept peer tutoring for learning processes. Finally, it was revealed that tutors showed understanding of the content in a similar number of interactions as tutees showed interest in the activity. In this regard, it was observed that tutors were familiar with the content of the session in most of the interactions despite facing occasional issues with vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Most of the time tutees seemed engaged in the activities and appeared to enjoy the games, especially in the trios. However, in some sessions two tutors were found to have difficulties in understanding the content of the lesson, particularly when they did not review the topic and content before the tutorial session. Results in this regard suggest that tutors' understanding of the content influenced tutees' interest in the activity. In the next section the results from the participants' assessment will be provided in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 presents the assessment of tutors in terms of behaviors and attitudes. The outcomes indicate that tutees perceived that their tutors gave them confidence to ask them questions most of the time. Similarly, tutees considered that their tutors usually helped them clarify their doubts, encouraged and motivated them to learn, helped them identify errors, knew the content of the lesson, and showed a positive attitude towards teaching.

Table 3 reveals that tutors perceived that their tutees responded positively to correction most of the time and usually responded to the help they provided

Table 2. Behaviors and Attitude: Assessment of Tutors

Your tutor....	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Almost never	Never
Gives you confidence to ask them questions	38 (95%)	2 (5%)			
Helps you clarify doubts	34 (85%)	6 (15%)			
Encourages and motivates you	32 (80%)	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)		
Helps you identify errors	36 (90%)	4 (10%)			
Knows the content of the session	31 (77.5%)	8 (20%)	1 (2.5%)		
Shows a positive attitude towards teaching	37 (92.5%)	3 (7.5%)			

Table 3. Behaviors and Attitudes: Assessment of Tutees

Your tutee(s)....	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Almost never	Never
Asks questions	14 (50%)	5 (17.9%)	7 (25%)	2 (7.1%)	
Responds to the help you provide them	20 (71.4%)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)		
Seems motivated	16 (57.1%)	5 (17.9%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	
Responds positively to corrections	25 (89.3%)	3 (10.7%)			
Shows interest in the activity	18 (64.3%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	
Shows a positive attitude towards learning	20 (71.4%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)		

and showed a positive attitude towards peer learning. It was also found they considered that tutees often showed interest in the activity, seemed motivated, and asked questions.

The main findings from Table 2 indicate that tutees perceived that tutors gave them confidence to ask questions in almost all the sessions. Also, that tutees perceived that their peers showed a positive attitude in the sessions and helped them to identify their errors most of the time they worked together. The main discoveries from Table 3 show that tutors considered that their peers responded positively to corrections most of the time. The findings from Tables 2 and 3 are similar to the ones obtained from the observation data in relation to confidence provided by the tutors for tutees to ask questions and a positive stance towards errors as the most recurring behavior and attitude of participants during the tutoring sessions. These results are also in line with those in Table 1 in the observations in relation to clarification of doubts, positive attitudes towards teaching and learning, and tutors' understanding of session content.

Participants' Perceptions of EFL Peer Tutoring

In this section participants' perceptions about peer tutoring in English language learning are presented and discussed in two categories: Tutees' Perceptions and Tutors' Perceptions.

Tutees' Perceptions

Thoughts and Experience. Tutees were asked about their thoughts concerning peer tutoring after being tutored by their peers. All of them mentioned help, support, and clarification of doubts: "help and also support because I mean, it strengthens your knowledge" (Tutee-M); "support in doubts, in topics that were not clear to me in class" (Tutee-s).

When asked to share their experience of peer tutoring, all tutees expressed liking it and said they would recommend peer tutoring for language learning to other students: "I liked it and I would like to repeat the experience again if possible" (Tutee-c); "I would recommend it...we as beginners we like these types of support to improve the language" (Tutee-s).

The data from the participants show that they conceived peer tutoring as highly supportive in solving their doubts. So, they perceived it as an experience where the topics already studied in class, questions and doubts were explained in detail.

Feelings During the Sessions. All participants reported positive feelings during the tutorial sessions: "With confidence also I feel that there is trust because if I was wrong, well there was no problem" (Tutee-M); "above all, I felt a lot of confidence" (Tutee-A).

¹ Tutees were interviewed in Spanish. Their answers have been translated for publication purposes.

The results indicate that six tutees felt confident and comfortable during the sessions as they received individual attention and support from someone who was more at their level in comparison to a teacher. Their opinions suggest that in tutoring sessions, tutees seem to be under less pressure of committing mistakes and that they are more open to learning as a result.

Being Helped by a Peer. When exploring tutees' feelings about being helped by a classmate, they reported feeling good, motivated, and relaxed: "Well, it makes me feel more motivated to continue, that I can improve more, they give me confidence as well" (Tutee-E). "I felt good because I had never had a tutor before, it was good because we understood each other better than with an adult" (Tutee-C).

Tutees' words show that they do not feel intimidated by their peers and that students can enjoy being involved in peer tutoring interactions.

The Influence of Peer Tutoring in Their Learning. Participants were questioned about their perceptions on the influence of peer tutoring in their learning of English: "It helped me more in, in pronunciation. It helped me in grammar, in how to structure sentences" (Tutee-E). "In vocabulary and pronunciation" (Tutee-M). "Some words I didn't know how to pronounce, and she explained me how to pronounce...also in grammar, how to structure" (Tutee-Y).

Tutees' answers indicate that peer tutoring influenced their English learning especially in pronunciation and grammar topics. Also, improvement was perceived by some tutees in writing, listening, and vocabulary. These outcomes support Nguyen's (2013) conclusion that peer tutoring is an effective strategy to promote academic success. The findings also lend support to Topping's (1996) acknowledgement of the effectiveness of peer tutoring techniques in higher education for students' academic gains.

Affective and Social Gains. Other than non-academic benefits, participants reported positive influence, mainly in their confidence, but they also

reported benefits in motivation and communication, and to a lesser degree, in socialization improvement: "Also promoting confidence because well, I barely speak with people and that I was helped, it also did me good" (Tutee-C); "you learn to socialize more, and it makes you learn faster by being with a person who perhaps understands you better than a teacher" (Tutee-S).

The outcomes in this study support Falchikov's (2001) claim that peer tutoring provides confidence, affection, and motivation. They also support Nguyen's (2013) and Rubio's (2009) arguments that peer tutoring helps to develop and improve social skills.

Opinions About the Tutors and Suggestions for the Program. Tutees were also asked to give their opinions about their tutors and all of them provided positive comments, such as: "She came and yet she had classes all day, she came with a good attitude" (Tutee-M); "sometimes she had doubts about the topic" (Tutee-S); "very sociable and motivating" (Tutee-E); "she taught us with kindness" (Tutee-Y); "her way of teaching was excellent" (Tutee-A).

The above participants highlighted their tutors' positive attitude and abilities to teach and share. However, two tutees added some lack of content understanding from their tutors: "Sometimes she had doubts about the topic" (Tutee-S); "with some things she also got confused" (Tutee-E). These findings are similar to those obtained through observations and peer assessments in the sense that two tutors showed some lack of understanding in some topics and their tutees could notice it.

Tutees were also asked to give comments and suggestions to improve the program. They all recommended having more sessions while one tutee added the inclusion of readings and listening activities. No other comment was given for improvement of the tutoring. However, they suggested that future tutees have a positive attitude in the sessions, be committed to learn, and be disciplined and constant.

Tutors' Perceptions

This section provides tutors' perceptions of their EFL peer tutoring experience.

Thoughts and Experience. Tutors were asked about their thoughts concerning peer tutoring and their experience tutoring their classmates. Two participants mentioned the following: "a way to support each other" (Tutor-κ);² "communication among friends" (Tutor-Ν).

After the experience, the tutors had different definitions of peer tutoring which were highly related to their own experience tutoring their peers. For instance, half of the tutors defined it as mutual learning and support as they explained that peer tutoring helped tutors and tutees to recall topics and practice the language. Another tutor described it as communication among friends, giving her perception of her and her tutees as not being acquainted and being distracted as a result. Another participant defined it as mere clarification of doubts since she expressed her tutee needed a lot of help and that she was not really prepared for that and it got her confused as a result.

When asked about their experience as tutors their opinions varied. They mentioned liking tutees' interest in learning, finding it difficult at the beginning, rewarding, and being double-edged: "It was rewarding because there was an improvement indeed" (Tutor-Λ); "Yes, I think I would help [future tutors] a lot and at the same time it would help students from Quarter ο" (Tutor-Ν).

Despite the differences, all the participants agreed they would recommend other students to act as tutor as they perceived it to be beneficial for both tutees and tutors and as an aid for teachers not only for language learning but for learning other subjects as well.

Feelings During the Sessions. When exploring tutors' feelings during the sessions, they mostly reported feeling good about teaching their peers: "I felt very excited. When I taught a new topic and they understood

it and they did the exercises well...it feels great that they do learn and that you can share what you know with someone else" (Tutor-κ). "I was nervous at the beginning but, I felt good in the next sessions" (Tutor-Ρ).

These results indicate that despite feeling nervous or frightened at the beginning, tutors enjoyed the tutorial sessions with their peers as they got to know each other better and developed confidence working together and became more self-confident in their tutoring skills after some time.

Feelings About Helping Others. Tutors were also asked about their feelings about helping their peers. Most of them expressed feeling good, excited, and happy to help their classmates in their learning (see the previous excerpt by Tutor-κ); "for me it's super cool, it makes me feel good morally and as a person to contribute with something" (Tutor-Λ).

The tutors' comments reveal that they felt excited and fulfilled to be part of their peers' learning. Topping (2005) argues that peer tutoring influences the development of a cultural norm of helping and caring.

The Influence of Peer Tutoring in Their Peers' Learning. Most tutors considered the tutorial sessions helped their tutees to improve their pronunciation while the rest considered the tutoring influenced their tutee's grammar advancement: "I think they did improve a lot in their pronunciation" (Tutor-κ). These findings echo tutees' perceptions on improved pronunciation and grammar topics as the items most influenced by the peer tutoring experience.

Gains for Tutors. All the tutors mentioned acting as tutors for their peers helped them to recall and practice grammar topics and clarify doubts to themselves: "I feel it did help me a lot to practice again topics that I had not seen in a long time" (Tutor-κ); "when communicating, it helped me because I am not as shy as before to express myself in English" (Tutor-Ρ).

These outcomes support Viáfara's (2014) findings that peer tutoring helps tutors to increase their knowledge of English. Additionally, some of the participants

² Tutors were interviewed in Spanish. Their answers have been translated for publication purposes.

mentioned improved communication skills as well, which lend support to Sharif et al.'s (2012) conclusion that the benefits of peer tutoring are transferable to social and communication skills outcomes also for tutors.

Opinions About the Tutees and Suggestions for the Program. When asked about their opinions concerning their tutees, four participants had different thoughts: "They were very eager to learn, and that was quite motivating for me" (Tutor-K); "they showed a lot of interest and that encouraged me to continue teaching them" (Tutor-N); "I feel he needed to study more" (Tutor-L); "nervousness doesn't help her...she would get distracted" (Tutor-R).

The findings revealed that half of the tutors perceived a lot of interest in their tutees and felt more motivated to teach them as a result, while the others expected more engagement and participation from their peers for more improvement and a more suitable experience. Interestingly, the tutors who emphasized tutees' weaknesses were the ones perceived by their tutees as showing some lack of content understanding. Topping (2005) claims that "the helper's modelling of enthusiasm, competence and the possibility of success can influence the self-confidence of the helped, while a sense of loyalty and accountability to each other might help to keep the pair motivated and on-task" (p. 637). It is possible that tutees' engagement was influenced by their tutors' doubts and that tutors' perceptions of tutees was influenced by both tutees' engagement and tutors' teaching skills.

Similar to tutees, when asked to give comments to enhance the tutoring sessions, all tutors suggested longer sessions as they would need more time to accomplish their teaching goals. Tutors' and tutees' recommendations indicate that more tutoring time would have been of greater benefit for both participants.

Despite the limited number of sessions and tutors' issues with vocabulary, pronunciation, instructions, and grammar, the findings from the observations, peer assessment, and interviews reveal that apart from

providing learning opportunities for both tutors and tutees, the peer tutoring experience encouraged self-confidence, fostered good relations among students, and influenced participants' learning engagement. Therefore, structured and organized peer tutoring can be a good strategy to support English language learning in higher education in Mexico, particularly at BIS universities.

Conclusions

This study explored the behaviors and attitudes of tutors and tutees during cross-age tutoring sessions and their perceptions about peer tutoring for English learning at a BIS university in Mexico by means of observation, peer assessment, and interviews. Results from observation and peer assessment indicate that tutees and tutors showed positive behaviors and attitudes during the tutoring sessions and that those behaviors and attitudes significantly contributed to a favorable teaching-learning experience. The findings from the interviews showed that both tutors and tutees perceived peer tutoring for English learning as a rewarding learning experience at academic and affective level.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these results. First, it appears that peer tutoring positively influenced participants' confidence and social and communication skills as it seemed to reduce the distance between students, promoting interaction among them. This highlights the importance of non-academic skills at any educational level as the study revealed that achieving learning outcomes was related to improvements in affective and social skills. Secondly, the results suggest that the peer tutoring experience fostered a non-threatening atmosphere where posing and asking questions, clarifying doubts, and self-correcting became easier. This indicates that by including peer tutoring strategies in the classroom, teachers can take advantage of students' pedagogical skills to provide more learning opportunities and to improve students' English language self-perception.

These findings provided evidence of the effectiveness of peer tutoring in an EFL setting. Yet, there are a number of limitations to consider. For instance, organizing and structuring the tutoring sessions in this study were time-consuming. Similarly, this study was limited by the number of training sessions tutors had, which highlights the importance of tutors' training for a successful implementation. For peer tutoring effectiveness to be maximized, I recommend that tutors and tutees possess interest and engagement in working with their peers as well as tutors' adequate tutoring and language skills. Another constraint was the number of sessions, which were relatively few. Further research may benefit from a larger number of participants and sessions. Another possibility of further research that would contribute to a fuller understanding of ELT peer tutoring in BIS and higher education contexts would be to examine ELT peer tutoring at different proficiency levels or by incorporating a different model, such as PAL, to focus on the impact on tests. Additionally, comparing the performance among trios and pairs and its influence on students' behavior, attitude, and academic improvement may be of benefit.

In English language learning, it is desirable to increase competence, while reducing language anxiety, in ways that promote self-confidence and communication skills among students. This may be effective by increasing the use of peer tutoring techniques in the classroom. I believe that the use of peer tutoring techniques in higher education can be particularly beneficial in large classrooms with no possibility of personalized attention or individual support, especially for those students with learning disadvantages.

The results in this study contribute to a better understanding of students' behaviors and attitudes in collaborative learning strategies and their pedagogical implications for teachers and students. However, research is still needed on peer tutoring for English learning in Mexico and other countries of Latin America, particularly on the topic covered in this paper, that is, students' behaviors and attitudes towards peer learning.

References

- Aldrich, R. (1998, May 22). *Joseph Lancaster and improvements in education* [Invited lecture given at the University of London Institute of Education]. <https://bit.ly/3lQz7xI>
- Almassaad, A., & Alotaibi, K. (2012). The attitudes and opinions of tutees and tutors toward using cross-age online tutoring. *Psychol Research*, 2(4), 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5542/2012.04.004>
- Black, T. R. (2003). *Doing quantitative research in the social sciences: An integral approach to research design, measurement and statistics*. SAGE.
- Bradford-Watts, K. (2011). Students teaching students? Peer teaching in the EFL classroom in Japan. *The Language Teacher*, 35(5), 31–35. <https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT35.5-3>
- Chen, C., & Liu, C.-C. (2011). A case study of peer tutoring program in higher education. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 11, 1–10.
- Comfort, P., & McMahon, J. J. (2014). The effect of peer tutoring on academic achievement. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 6(1), 168–175. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-06-2012-0017>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE.
- Duran, D. (2006). Tutoría entre iguales, la diversidad en positivo [Peer tutoring, diversity in positive]. *Revista Aula de Innovación Educativa*, (153–154), 7–11.
- Duran, D. (2016). Learning-by-teaching: Evidence and implications as a pedagogical mechanism. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54(5), 476–484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1156011>
- Duran, D., Flores, M., Mosca, A., & Santiviago, C. (2015). Tutoría entre iguales, del concepto a la práctica en las diferentes etapas educativas [Peer tutoring, from concept to practice in the different educational stages]. *Experiencias Educativas*, 2(1), 31–39.
- Falchikov, N. (2001). *Learning together: Peer tutoring in higher education*. Routledge Falmer.

- Green, P. (2011). *A literature review of peer assisted learning (PAL)*. National HE STEM, University of Bath. <https://bit.ly/3bvxbwC>
- Hott, B., & Walker, J. (April, 2012). *Peer tutoring*. Council for learning disabilities. <https://bit.ly/31XLJuU>
- Huerta, V., García, M., & Velasco, K. (2010). *La tutoría entre iguales: una metodología para mejorar el nivel de los estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca* [Peer tutoring: A methodology to improve the level of students of the BA in foreign languages, Paper presentation]. VI Foro de Estudios en Lenguas Internacional (FEL 2010).
- Kalkowski, P. (1995). *Peer and cross-age tutoring*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://bit.ly/3bv9AVP>
- LoCastro, V. (2003). *An introduction to pragmatics: Social action for language teachers*. The University of Michigan Press.
- Madaio, M. A., Cassell, J., & Ogan, A. (2017, June). *The impact of peer tutors' use of indirect feedback and instructions* [Paper presentation]. 12th International Conference of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning.
- Madaio, M. A., Peng, K., Ogan, A., & Casell, J. (2018, June). *A climate of support: A process-oriented analysis of the impact of rapport on peer tutoring* [Paper presentation]. 12th International Conference of the Learning Sciences.
- Matukhin, D., & Bolgova, D. (2015). Learner-centered approach in teaching foreign language: Psychological and pedagogical conditions. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 206, 148–155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.10.044>
- McKellar, N. A. (1986). Behaviors used in peer tutoring. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 54(3), 163–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1986.10806416>
- Nguyen, M. (2013, January 7). *Peer tutoring as a strategy to promote academic success* [Research brief]. <https://bit.ly/3bAGoyw>
- Razia, R. (2012). *The effect of peer tutoring on student achievement in the subject of English at secondary level in the light of Vygotsky's theory* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Robinson, D. R., Schofield, J. W., & Steers-Wentzell, K. L. (2005). Peer and cross-age tutoring in math: Outcomes and their design implications. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17(4), 327–362. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-005-8137-2>
- Rubio, L. P. (2009). *La tutoría entre pares como apoyo al proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes de primer ingreso: ¿Aprendizaje mutuo?* [Peer tutoring to support the learning process of first-time students: mutual learning? Conference session]. x Congreso Nacional de Investigación Educativa.
- Sanchez-Aguilar, J. (2020). *Peer tutoring in language learning in higher education: The impact at a bis university* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2014, August 1). *Manual para implementar la tutoría entre pares (alumno–alumno) en planteles de educación media superior* [Manual to implement peer tutoring (student–student) in high schools]. <https://bit.ly/3brAwG6>
- Sharif, N. M., Zakaria, M. H., Mansor, W. F. A. W., Nordin, N. A., Fong, N. S., & Mustafa, H. R. (2012). Peer-tutoring and tertiary ESL learners. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 441–447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.288>
- Topping, K. J. (1996). The effectiveness of peer tutoring in further and higher education: A typology and review of the literature. *Higher Education*, 32(3), 321–345. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138870>
- Topping, K. J. (2000). *Tutoring*. International Academy of Education.
- Topping, K. J. (2005). Trends in peer learning. *Educational Psychology*, 25(6), 631–645. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410500345172>
- University of the West of England. (n.d.). *Get support from PAL*. <https://bit.ly/3enYh5y>
- Turner, D. W., III. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754–760

- Viáfara, J. J. (2014). EFL student teachers' learning in a peer-tutoring research study group. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 16(2), 201–212. <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2014.2.a05>
- Viáfara, J. J., & Ariza, J. A. (2008). Un modelo tutorial entre compañeros como al apoyo de aprendizaje autónomo del inglés [A peer-tutoring model as support to autonomous English learning]. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 13(19), 173–209.
- Vincent, S. (Ed.). (1999). *The multigrade classroom: A resource handbook for small, rural schools. Book 7: Planning and using peer tutoring*. Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Yusnani. (2018). Theoretical perspectives on cooperative learning. *KNE Social Sciences*, 3(4), 976–986. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i4.2005>

About the Author

Janeth Sanchez-Aguilar has been an EFL teacher since 2010 with experience teaching children and adults. She holds an MA in English language teaching from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Her research interests include professional development, learning strategies, and applied linguistics.

Appendix: Observation Checklist and Note Instrument

Elements	Trio 1	Trio 2	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Notes
1. Asking and answering questions						
2. Clarification of doubts						
3. Motivation in the team						
4. Positive attitude towards errors						
5. Understanding of the content						
6. Interest in the activity						
7. Positive attitude						

Pedagogical Practicum and Student-Teachers Discursively Conceived in an ELT Undergraduate Program

**Práctica pedagógica y docentes en formación concebidos discursivamente
en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés**

Edgar Lucero

Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez


Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia


The research study shows how pedagogical practicum is conceived, and how student-teachers are constructed as language teachers, within the discourses spoken in the initial meetings and institutional documents of pedagogical practicum in an English language teaching undergraduate program in Bogotá, Colombia. The discourses were analyzed under the principles of ethnography of communication and linguistic ethnography. This study affords insights into a contributory conception of pedagogical practicum and into an institutional image and a teacher's figure of student-teachers. Pedagogical practicum contains several academic, professional, and experiential aspects that configure this space with established (pre-) requisites, tasks, and roles for student-teachers; these aspects in turn start constructing these individuals with particular manners of must-be and must-do.

Keywords: discourse, initial teacher education, pedagogical practicum

El presente estudio muestra cómo la práctica pedagógica se concibe y cómo los docentes en formación se construyen como docentes de idiomas, en los discursos dichos en las reuniones iniciales y en los documentos institucionales de ese espacio, en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés en Bogotá, Colombia. Los discursos se analizaron siguiendo los principios de la etnografía de la comunicación y la etnografía lingüística. El estudio presenta como resultado una concepción contributiva de la práctica pedagógica y una imagen institucional con una figura de profesor para los docentes en formación. La práctica pedagógica contiene diferentes aspectos académicos, profesionales y experienciales que configuran este espacio con (pre)requisitos, tareas y roles para los docentes en formación; estos aspectos a su vez empiezan a construir a estos individuos con unas maneras particulares de deber-ser y deber-hacer.

Palabras clave: discurso, formación inicial docente, práctica pedagógica

Edgar Lucero  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2208-5124> · Email: elucero@unisalle.edu.co

Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1063-6235> · Email: ancortes@unisalle.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Lucero, E., & Cortés-Ibañez, A. M. (2021). Pedagogical practicum and student-teachers discursively conceived in an ELT undergraduate program. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 183–198. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.89212>

This article was received on July 16, 2020 and accepted on March 10, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

This study corresponds to the second stage of a wider research project that seeks to display how pedagogical practicum (only “practicum” henceforth) serves as a subject to nurture preservice teachers in English language teaching (ELT) undergraduate programs in Colombia.¹ The first stage of this project showed valuable insights from mentor teachers (Lucero, 2015) and preservice teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019) about the way they lived the practicum in an ELT undergraduate program in Colombia. These insights have led us, now as a research group, to explore the discourses that take place in the communicative events of practicum in varied ELT undergraduate programs in the country. Knowledge about this matter can elucidate how English student-teachers are educated during practicum in our country.

With this second stage, we commit now to offer an understanding about the way practicum is conceived, and the way student-teachers are constructed in the communicative events occurring in this space in ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia. We believe that part of what English teachers are nowadays started out via the way they were constructed from the held conceptions about what practicum and student-teachers should be when they were in these undergraduate programs.

As part of this second stage, in this article we describe the discourse that takes place in the initial meetings with the coordinators, practicum advisors, cooperating teachers, and student-teachers at the beginning of practicum in an ELT undergraduate program in Bogota, Colombia. This description helps shed light on how practicum is conceived, and how student-teachers start being constructed as language teachers within the discourses spoken in these meetings.

The insights from these two stages have led us to reflect on the conception of three terms in the whole research project. First, we have moved from using the terms of practicum supervisors or mentor teachers to using practicum advisors, preferably. This move responds to abandoning a vision of those teacher educators who accompany practicum as supervisors or mentors who are knowing in the field, who give and transmit knowledge and skills, manage student-teachers’ training, follow-up on them in terms of their attendance at schools, hold advisory meetings, and evaluate student-teachers by using established or pre-designed checklists (Dakhiel, 2017; Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Macías & Sánchez, 2015). We prefer to adopt the vision of practicum advisors as one of those who create empathy and dialogue for pedagogical guidance, offer emotional support and professional socialization, develop teaching knowledge and practices collaboratively, foster student-teachers’ self-construction and esteem, and promote reflection on what is done, how, and why for language education (Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Clandinin et al., 2009; Liu, 2014; Quintero-Polo, 2016).

Second, we have moved from using the term of preservice teachers to using student-teachers in preference. This move avoids seeing them as loaded with instructional roles, commanded to do conventional tasks, susceptible to being observed and shaped, and having been trained for service purposes in the work market (Ripski et al., 2011). We have opted to use the term student-teachers, since they come to practicum holding varied domains and senses of self-awareness, as well as holding constructed thoughts, knowledges, values, feelings, dispositions, and behaviors (Schussler et al., 2010). Something similar happens with the term pedagogical practice; thus, we have decided to use pedagogical practicum instead. The former tends to imply training, repetition, effectiveness, and transmission (Crookes, 2003). The latter encompasses personal and contextual characteristics, educational backgrounds, and creation

¹ The project is pursued by the research group *Language and Discursive Practices in Contexts of Education*.

of subject matter knowledge; this term also stresses the importance of experiences, skills, knowledges, and dispositions of all its participants (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Liu, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

The concepts in this section mostly come from local knowledge as we have been building the study from the situated experiences that we have lived as teacher educators during the practicum of ELT undergraduate programs in Bogota. With this, we do not want to say corresponding knowledge that comes from other countries, usually some in North America or Europe, is invalid for the study. We acknowledge this fact, but this time we look for epistemological coherence in the understanding of these concepts for a study that has been born and situated in Bogota, Colombia.

Initial Teacher Education

In Colombia, Decree 1278 of 2002, *Estatuto de Profesionalización Docente* (Teacher Professionalization Guidelines), establishes that curricula of initial teacher education (ITE) programs must sustain pedagogy, evaluation, and research as the pillars to articulate disciplinary and academic contents with teaching contexts, realities, and learners' needs for education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2014; Restrepo-Gómez, 1994; Rincón-Zabala, 2016). This articulation in turn allows the diversification of practicum and its guidelines into methodological, institutional, and instructional notions (Gelvez-Suarez, 2007; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). By considering these principles, Colombian education faculties prompt understanding ITE as the curricular implementation for student-teachers' pedagogical, academic, and socio-affective developments. This implementation is later consolidated in the spaces of practicum (Resolution 2041 of 2016; Londoño-Orozco, 2009; MEN, n.d., 2014; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). Thus, practicum, as a subject of professional training, helps to a great extent to educate,

construct, and constitute student-teachers as teachers in the ITE programs.

In the ELT field, specifically, ITE is part of the undergraduate programs in this matter. Since 1994, with the passing of National Law of Education 115, MEN mandated an emphasis on professional development to achieve the specifics of the National Law which encompass the establishment of foreign language teaching methods and approaches and the fostering of teachers' exercise of autonomy with those teaching methods (González-Moncada, 2010). Colombian education faculties then began adopting these aspects for their ELT-program curricula; aspects that the MEN has reinforced with the National Bilingual Program since 2004 (Colombia Aprende, n.d.). Therefore, in these programs ITE seeks to foster student-teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge, the learning of English to improve life quality, the development of consistent standards for ELT, and the enhancement of ongoing professional development (González-Moncada, 2010; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2009; Mora et al., 2019; Usma-Wilches, 2009).

Pedagogical Practicum

In consonance with Zuluaga (1979, 1999), de Tezanos (2007), Fandiño-Parra and Bermúdez-Jiménez (2015), Londoño-Orozco (2009), Moreno-Fernández (2015a), Ortega-Valencia et al. (2013), practicum refers to situated experiences of teaching that are verbalized through pedagogical discourse. Besides, practicum may also occur outside classrooms since it is also a complex historical event that prompts a pedagogical analysis of context-situated knowledges. The authors explain that practicum should go beyond transmission or explanation of contents and skill sets; practitioners should be more active to confront the long-term educational issues of contexts and communities for their transformation.

In the Colombian ELT field, practicum is a professional and academic space in which student-teachers, from their experiences and knowledges, are expected

to give their first classes as language teachers (Esteve, 1998; Posada-Ortiz & Garzón-Duarte, 2013). Student-teachers, on the one hand, put in practice and try out the compendium of knowledge learned throughout their major during practicum (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Chaves-Varón, 2008). On the other hand, in this space, student-teachers internalize and construct pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017; Quintero-Polo, 2019).

In brief, practicum is concerned with knowing, doing, and relating (de Tezanos, 2007; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Zuluaga, 1999). While student-teachers give their lessons and construct themselves as language teachers, they put in practice and build their disciplinary, professional, pedagogical, content, and experiential knowledges.² Student-teachers do this by receiving the support, accompaniment, and advice of their practicum advisors, cooperating teachers, and peers. A functional relationship should be created between student-teachers and their practicum advisors, as well as with the practicum context, so that student-teachers' knowledges, skills, and attitudes about ELT are potentiated (Samacá-Bohorquez, 2018).

For most student-teachers in practicum, this is the time to have real experiences of teaching English. The role that different types of knowledge, but particularly experiential and pedagogical knowledge, have in student-teachers during practicum scaffolds their figures as mediators of English teaching, learning, and assessment (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017). Reflection for awareness of how student-teachers construct their pedagogical knowledge and their figures as language teachers collaboratively are also part of the experiences to live during the practicum (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019;

Samacá-Bohorquez, 2008, 2012; Quintero-Polo, 2019; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020).

Student-Teachers

Commonly known as preservice teachers, student-teachers are those individuals majoring in education to be teachers. ELT student-teachers in Colombia are referred to as skilled practitioners with knowledge, wisdom, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, interests, and roles towards teaching (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Olaya & Gómez-Rodríguez, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017).

Student-teachers are object and subject of the relationship among knowledge, teaching, and policing. They are expected to show accepted or pre-established practices of teaching and to accumulate knowledge of language education in those practices under the light of curricula. They may assume themselves as figures of knowledge and power from those practices and from the roles and tasks that appear in language education discourses. This recently-advocated issue states that ELT student-teachers in Colombia become subjects throughout the historical modes of what it is to be an English teacher, socially, academically, and politically (Davila, 2018; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero-Nieto, 2018; Méndez-Rivera, 2018; Méndez et al., 2019). From this perspective, student-teachers may be subjectified and objectified in the ELT field by dividing practices, expecting/expected behaviors and attitudes, and desired discourses and modes. In brief, these discourses and modes of subjectification and objectification are connected to the conceptualizations of who an English teacher should be and do in varied contexts and according to curricula. In this way, English (student) teachers are turned into subjects; this transformation defines how they relate to themselves and to teaching knowledge, practices, and discourses.

² We recognize the fact that other knowledges can also be part of language teachers. See a discussion about this matter in Castañeda-Londoño (2018, 2019).

When English student-teachers constitute themselves, or are constituted by ELT knowledge, practices, and discourses, practicum is constituted too. Therefore, a reciprocity appears, student-teachers constitute practicum as this space constitutes them. Naranjo (2010) exposes the need to go beyond established knowledge, practices, and discourses to allow (student) teachers to discover themselves. ITE programs and their spaces of practicum should generate processes that lead student-teachers to be aware of themselves and their own teacher knowledge, practices, and voices (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020).

Discourse(s)

As a first statement, following van Dijk (1997), we understand discourses as specific forms of social interaction, forms that stand for a complete communicative event in a social situation. Thus, discourses are social practices that occur in multiple social events (Saville-Troike, 2003; Rampton et al., 2015). As a second statement, pursuant to Gee (2005), discourses are multifaceted and complex social acts in which meaning is emitted, gathered, and appropriated. In these two statements, in consonance with Díaz-Villa (2001), we see that a piece of discourse can be constituted by other discourses and, at the same time, be the source for constructing other discourses (we perceive that this happens during practicum).

Discourses are therefore the result of social dynamics, of interactions among its participants, and of relations between texts and contexts. By considering all this, we understand that discourses open spaces for the (re)production of coexisting and competing discursive conventions and frameworks that (re)construct and transform realities and subjects in each context (Méndez-Rivera, 2012).

We acknowledge the fact that discourses are the result of socio-historic conditions of production, are

potentially ideological (Fairclough, 2006, as cited in Chacón-Chacón & Chapetón-Castro, 2018, p. 4), exert power and maintain control (Bernstein, 1998, as cited in Escobar-Alméciga, 2013, p. 50), and are not neutral since their participants and texts play a role in their distribution and circulation (Guerrero-Nieto, 2010).

In the Colombian ELT field, discourse has been studied from different angles (see a profiling done by Castañeda-Peña, 2012). Specifically, with respect to practicum, scholars as Guerrero-Nieto (2010) and Camargo-Cely (2018) have demonstrated that discourses from the Colombian language policies point towards what English (student) teachers must be and know about didactics and learning theories and the way this must be known. These discourses serve as foundations to construct teachers as subjects during practicum. Apart from these two studies, little has been explored about how other discourses happen or are produced in the contexts of practicum, or in ITE, of ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia. These other discourses may also reveal further discursive conventions, frameworks, ideologies, and practices occurring throughout time in these contexts.

Research Design

This study took place in an ELT undergraduate program in Bogota. We considered the discourses that took place in the initial meetings of practicum held by the program and the discourses written in the official documents of the program for practicum.³ The data of this study consisted of audio recordings of two initial meetings with two coordinators and 23 practicum advisors, and of two initial meetings held with the two coordinators, the 23 practicum advisors, and all student-teachers (around 200). Each meeting lasted about one hour. These meetings were recorded in two

³ A consent letter, issued by the directors of the program, allowed recording these meetings, previous agreement with the individuals involved in the study, and getting access to the official documents of the program.

subsequent academic semesters. We also recorded four initial meetings at different schools where practicum was going to take place. The respective school's cooperating teachers and the assigned practicum advisors (around five each), with their student-teachers (around 14), attended these four meetings. We transcribed each recorded meeting.

We, the researchers of the study,⁴ used field notes as understood by Martínez (2007) and Moreno-Fernández (2015a) to register statements occurring during the meetings as covert participants. We took notes in relation to what was said, and how it was expressed, about the practicum and student-teachers. We contrasted the field notes with the recordings and transcripts.⁵

The official documents consisted of the master document of the undergraduate program and its practicum regulations, seven syllabi, and eight institutional signed agreements. To frame the discourses worth for the study, we carried out an initial documentary analysis in two phases. The first, the formal analysis phase, corresponded to an external view of each document and its identification of the conventions proposed by Moreno-Fernández (2015b, pp. 99–101), to wit: type of document, date of publication, author, and thematic content for the study. We classified the documents in line with these conventions. The second, the internal analysis phase, involved working deeply on the thematic content of each document in the search of keywords, statements, and descriptions to establish what is said about the practicum and student-teachers in the documents. To do so, we concentrated on three questions of analysis: (a) What is a student-teacher during practicum? (b) What must/should a student-teacher do in this space? (c) How is practicum defined and what are

its goals? We identified this throughout the thematic content of each document.

To analyze the discourses in the meetings and documents, we designed a study that combines the ethnography of communication with the linguistic ethnography. According to Hymes (1996), Cameron (2001), and Flórez-Romero (2004), ethnography of communication combines the sociocultural relationships that are expressed through language and the linguistic view of it as a system of cultural behaviors in a context. That is, the emphasis is placed on the interdependence between the language use, sociocultural activities, and the context in which they occur (Duff, 2002). With this approach we examined, firstly, the interactional and discursive conventions within the discourses of those meetings and documents; secondly, how these conventions conceive practicum and construct what student-teachers should be.⁶

The linguistic ethnography allowed us to analyze the ways practicum and student-teachers were discursively conceived and constructed when those discourses were communicated in the meetings and through the documents. Shaw et al. (2015) say that linguistic ethnography aims to understand how social and communication processes work in a specific context. As a matter of fact, with this approach, we were able to understand, firstly, *what* was said, *how*, and *why*, about the practicum and student-teachers in the meetings and documents; thus, we placed emphasis on the complexity of the discourses and the ideological meanings presented in them.

Insights

In this section, we present the insights from the analysis of the discourses spoken in the above-mentioned meetings and documents of practicum. These look for discerning how practicum is conceived, and how

4 In total, we were four researchers collecting and analyzing data for the study. We four belong to the program but from different departments.

5 We took the field notes separately, then contrasted and analyzed them with the revision of two external colleagues to avoid bias. These two colleagues are also language teachers and practicum advisors.

6 The results about this issue will be published in a forthcoming article.

student-teachers start being constructed as language teachers in them.

How Is Practicum Conceived?

In the discourses, practicum is conceived as a space that takes place only when its participants gather to do what they are expected to do in it. The general elements of educational guidance imply that student-teachers are the school's instructors and advisors. The student-teachers become responsible for their students' education concerning English teaching, learning, and assessment; they do so by the execution of the corresponding curriculum of this language and the school rules in general. The relevant elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment refer to preparing, conducting, and collaborating with the school and the cooperating teachers in the planning, development, and evaluation of English classes, activities, and examinations.

Practicum is not plainly a content subject, neither is it an academic space per se that holds a set of pre-established and sequenced contents. Instead, it is a space in which general elements of educational guidance and relevant elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment converge for practicum advisors and student-teachers to work with. We present examples of these elements in Excerpt Set 1.⁷

We highlight the fact that these discourses overlook the contexts where the practicum is going to take place. Along the same lines, we knew that the student-teachers and practicum advisors were given minimal elements to understand the overall content of the practicum documents.

The discourses about practicum also indicate that student-teachers can only start it when they have completed a set of subjects and requisites within the

undergraduate program. These subjects can be about English, pedagogy, (language) didactics, history of education, and (language) teaching methods, among others. The requisites can cover a standardized-exam score of at least a B1-level of English proficiency, the completion of required subjects, language or content examinations, and a certification of health insurance.

Excerpt Set 1

In the initial meetings at the university

"Practicum is not only giving a class; it is about the educational and instructional tasks that practicum advisors and student-teachers have to do at the institutions."
"Practicum is the space for practicum advisors to teach student-teachers how to teach a language and manage groups of students."

In the initial meetings at the schools

"Practicum is a chance to learn about how to be a teacher in real situations and contexts."
"Practicum offers you a chance to know what you are going to face as official teachers."
"In practicum, student-teachers can grasp what to be a schoolteacher is."

In the institutional documents

"Practicum looks for the interrelations among agents, cultural contexts, discursive forms, and teaching beliefs."
"Teacher education is central to practicum; in this space disciplinary, professional, and research knowledges in the field of pedagogy take place."

In the analyzed discourses, academic, professional, and experiential aspects for practicum are also prominent. We present examples of these aspects in the following Excerpt Set 2.

⁷ We translated the quotes listed in all these excerpt sets. The quotes were spoken by the practicum coordinators of the program in the initial meetings at the university and by the cooperating teachers who oversee the practicum at the schools.

Excerpt Set 2

In the initial meetings at the university	<p>“The university has offered student-teachers a set of contents and strategies that should be put in practice during practicum.”</p> <p>“Practicum advisors need to document with observations and tutorials how student-teachers progress as teachers.”</p> <p>“Each school can be different; student-teachers have to act accordingly.”</p>
In the initial meetings at the schools	<p>“During practicum, student-teachers can put in practice everything that has been learned during the major.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers are expected to know about how to teach the language didactically and ludically.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers are now the ones responsible for how children learn the language at the school.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers could share their new knowledge with the more experienced homeroom teachers at the school.”</p>
In the institutional documents	<p>“Before starting practicum, the program has offered a set of knowledge about pedagogy, language sciences, language didactics, and education.”</p> <p>“With this knowledge, student-teachers are expected to problematize how different theories of language teaching are related to language pedagogy.”</p> <p>“Practicum empowers student-teachers as competent L2 users-speakers with the capacity to solve their students’ language-based problems.”</p>

As follows, we show each prominent aspect from these examples. *Academic aspects* include elements

as contents, means, processes, and actions that the ELT undergraduate program has offered to student-teachers in its curricula before starting the practicum. The program expects that student-teachers can put into practice, during practicum, all that has been taught thus far in the major. These academic aspects are closely connected to disciplinary, professional, and research knowledges in the general field of education and in the specific areas of English teaching, learning, and assessment.

Professional aspects are about what a language teacher is and how teaching a language should occur. During practicum, student-teachers are expected to start their experiences of teaching English. In all those experiences, student-teachers should consolidate their knowledges and practices related to English teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as their understandings about how to plan lessons, manage classrooms, and be a language teacher. These professional aspects turn into the realization of the academic aspects during practicum.

Equally, these professional aspects are closely connected to *experiential aspects*, since knowledge and experience are mutually constructed during practicum. Practicum advisors and cooperating teachers demand varied tasks in this space, such as lesson planning and delivery, materials design, grade reports, reading assignments, progress documenting, and so on. Consequently, experiential aspects refer to the individuals, situations, and artifacts with which student-teachers live their experiences as teachers during practicum. All these elements interact and interrelate one to another as well as with the socio-cultural aspects, discursive practices, and beliefs about education in the practicum context.

All of these discourses make it clear how practicum is conceived. As this is not a content-subject as such, student-teachers are not expected to consider it as lesson deliveries. Instead, this is a space in which student-teachers enter after completing a set of

requirements in order to put into practice what has before been taught and learned about education in general and English teaching, learning, and assessment in particular. Practicum is also a space for the student-teachers to consolidate those learnings and to construct themselves as English teachers, both from selected texts and experiences in context as well as from practicum advisors' or cooperating teachers' guidance about their performance as (language) teachers. This is particularly a contributory conception of practicum.

We discuss the fact that this conception little accounts for inspecting how student-teachers come into practicum; for example, what their feelings, emotions, attitudes, fears, expectations, and beliefs are about education, language teaching, and socio-cultural aspects of practicum contexts, as well as what being a language teacher is and what it represents. This contributory conception of practicum largely assumes that student-teachers are already charged with and prepared to receive contents, knowledges, and ways of teaching, all of which must be put in practice within the practicum tasks for constant reformulation and broadening. This contributory conception also presumes that practicum advisors and cooperating teachers should be there to guarantee this widening and experience. We advocate for more awareness of how student-teachers can start consolidating their knowledges and selves as language teachers collaboratively in close consideration with their personal and contextual characteristics, educational backgrounds, experiences, skills, and dispositions.

It is in the convergence of all these aspects and elements that student-teachers are conceived as English teachers. As practicum is a space to perform what was taught and learned about language education, and to broaden this knowledge, student-teachers are conceived of as performers or implementers of practicum tasks. This opens our next insights.

How Do Student-Teachers Start Being Constructed as Language Teachers?

In the initial meetings of practicum and in the official documents of the program for practicum, in plain words, student-teachers are conceived of, firstly, as individuals who carry an institutional image and a teacher's figure; secondly, and consequently, they are conceived of as student-teachers who must play a series of roles and do a series of tasks during practicum.

Carrying an institutional image demands of student-teachers to be the image of the university at the school where practicum takes place, and, at the same time, the image of the school in the English classes they give over there. In the analyzed discourses, these institutional images require that student-teachers embody the knowledges, behaviors, attitudes, discourses, and practices representative of the undergraduate program and of the school. The knowledges cover topics related to methods, approaches, strategies, and techniques of language teaching. The expected behaviors and attitudes should reflect qualities imparted in the program about what a competent teacher is, such as how to mediate, give advice, receive support, and manage students and classes. The discourses and practices should follow what a professional teacher from the university is when delivering lessons, motivating students to learn and do their assignments, and talking about lesson planning and delivery.

The analyzed discourses also affirm that representing the figure of a teacher demands from student-teachers to know, act, and do what is expected from a teacher at school, as well as from a language teacher and a language user or speaker in the classroom. This figure requires that student-teachers know processes and protocols (including the normativity, curricula, syllabi, etc.) for situations that may happen during practicum. It also requires that they perform as (language) teachers do in class; for instance, managing classrooms, knowing how to learn the language, and how to plan,

explain, practice, assess, and give language contents; and knowing how to listen, guide, and give advice to educate students. This teacher's figure also demands that student-teachers perform well in practicum by giving reasons of lesson planning and by taking part in reflections; student-teachers must also perform well around the school by supervising during breaks, reporting grades, and helping during school events. The teacher's figure as a language user or speaker demands that student-teachers be skilled and proficient speakers of the language they teach, know lots of vocabulary and cultural issues of that language, and prove their mastery of language abilities.

We present some examples of these discourses in the following Excerpt Set 3.

This conception of student-teachers carrying an institutional image and a teacher's figure overshadows them as thinkers of themselves about what type of (language) teachers they expect to be. The discourses that we encountered in the data indicate that the undergraduate program, the practicum and school coordinators, as well as the practicum advisors are the ones who more prominently define what images and figures student-teachers must represent during practicum. A great number of demands and requirements to sustain the established images and figures are loaded onto the student-teachers' shoulders. Thus, they must simply assume these demands and requirements and look for performing and broadening the established images and figures already mentioned.

Excerpt Set 3

	Student teachers must be...	Student teachers must...
In the initial meetings at the university	<p>"The image of the university."</p> <p>"One who knows about the language to teach."</p> <p>"Not the students' friends but the teacher's image that students are going to keep in mind."</p> <p>"Patient, tolerant, but firm and strict at the same time."</p>	<p>"Start recognizing themselves as teachers of languages."</p> <p>"Do the teaching tasks well, so that they can dignify the profession."</p> <p>"Do the tasks that practicum demands."</p> <p>"Plan and perform exemplary lessons."</p>
In the initial meetings at the schools	<p>"The ones who start having the power of knowledge and education."</p> <p>"The mediators, educators, advisors, concealers, and class managers."</p> <p>"The teacher of a language, although not yet a homeroom teacher."</p> <p>"The support of the homeroom teacher in the language lessons."</p>	<p>"Know all the institutional documents of practicum and the school."</p> <p>"Know all the processes and protocols to follow when different situations happen at school."</p> <p>"Know the class, so that lesson planning is more fruitful and lesson giving easier."</p>
In the institutional documents	<p>"The knowers of how to integrate and teach communicative elements of the language."</p> <p>"The knowers of how to connect language, culture, and individuals in the context."</p> <p>"Pedagogical actors, critical subjects, L2 users, and competent professionals."</p>	<p>"Tackle pedagogical and didactic problems in the students' language construction."</p> <p>"Analyze and reflect on processes and knowledge of language teaching and learning."</p> <p>"Comply with the demands and responsibilities of the practicum."</p> <p>"Develop their communicative, pragmatic, and discursive skills."</p>

As a result of this conception, they are also conceived as student-teachers who must play a series of roles and do a series of tasks during practicum. *Mentioned roles* as educators, researchers, advisors, concealers, mediators, and language knowers are noticeable in the analyzed discourses. *Tasks* as lesson planning and delivery, reporting students' performance, observing and reflecting are also salient. Together, ELT student-teachers are the ones who know about the language and how to teach it, with everything that this fact implies, simply because this is what the program has taught them to do. The analyzed discourses insinuate that student-teachers must be conscious of everything that they are at the point of starting practicum: a language teacher who is in the final stage of his/her process of ITE, who starts his/her (language) teaching experiences and practices, and who is not yet a school teacher (or an in-service teacher), but is expected to be and act as one. Notwithstanding this premise, the analyzed discourses state that the way student-teachers are expected to be and act may vary in line with the particularities and requirements of the practicum contexts.

Giving more detail to these roles and tasks, we classified them into five types of must-be and must-do, which may converge or diverge indistinctively according to each practicum context:

1. *Academic*: lesson planning, school teacher's support for language (teaching), administering language teaching, learning, and assessment resources and materials.
2. *Teaching*: didactic and content knowledge, lesson delivery, identification of students' language-learning problems, implementation and evaluation of language teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies and strategies.
3. *Research*: reflective observation and analysis of teaching/pedagogical experiences, well-supported solutions for language teaching, learning, and assessment difficulties.

4. *Legal*: knowledge and actions corresponding to institutional language curricula, normativity, and protocols.
5. *Personal*: knowledge and actions that student-teachers must prove about their own self (self-control and self-management), and historical, life, and teacher consciousness.

In the analyzed discourses, discontinuities about language education and (language) teacher construction from self-awareness and self-reflection are little considered. As we have exposed thus far, the encountered discourses are majorly composed of large sets of statements about what practicum is and what a student-teacher must be and do in it. In our point of view, these statements standardize, on the one hand, a series of actions and skills necessary for performing during practicum. On the other hand, these statements look to reach the compliance of roles and tasks that student-teachers must play and do in this space and in the practicum contexts. Along the same line of thought, these statements becloud the discourse about knowing-to-be and knowing-to-do and impose a discourse of must-be and must-do. The rational construction of teacher educators is mostly transformed into an instituted, demanded, and even inflicted way of being and doing at the start of practicum.

All in all, in the analyzed discourses, we can say that student-teachers are initially constructed as subjects with an idealized profile of a series of expected roles and pre-established tasks for practicum. Equally, we can say that the analyzed discourses point to an efficient subject able and ready to perform well the expected roles and pre-established tasks as a student-teacher at the start of practicum. These insights leave us with several uncertainties, to wit: (a) How do student-teachers receive these discourses and assume these roles and tasks when they start practicum? (b) How do they really assume, re-configure, or (re)create these roles and tasks throughout practicum? (c) What type of student-teacher

subjects do they construct from the assumed roles and tasks during practicum? Why? These are questions we hope to answer in a subsequent study with other ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia.

Conclusions and Implications

In our interest to offer an understanding about the way practicum is conceived, as well as the way student-teachers are constructed in this space in ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia, we have started exploring the discourses that take place in the communicative events of this space. In the study presented in this article, which can be replicated in other undergraduate programs, we have explored the discourses that take place in the initial meetings of practicum in an ELT undergraduate program. These discourses conceive of practicum and construct student-teachers in specific manners.

We have shown how practicum is a space in which elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment converge for their realization by student-teachers under practicum advisors' monitoring and accompaniment. As part of ITE, practicum fosters student-teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge primarily, then established conventional standards for English education consistent with the aims that MEN pursues for this phase; practicum is a space for the student-teachers to consolidate those learnings and to construct themselves as English teachers. A set of requisites is necessary to start practicum so that student-teachers can put in practice what has before been taught and learned in the ELT undergraduate program.

We believe that all this propounds a contributory conception of practicum; a situation that can likely happen in other undergraduate programs, too. The ideological meanings presented in the analyzed discourses seem to impose the idea that student-teachers accumulate a series of knowledges that enable them to teach the language in determined contexts; later, they

internalize and construct more pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process. We invite ELT undergraduate programs to think of practicum as a space in which its participants relate to themselves, to each other, to the contexts, and to (English) teaching knowledges, practices, and discourses in a more collaborative, dialogical, reflective, and transformative manner.

With respect to English student-teachers, we have shown that they are conceived of as individuals who are weighted with an institutional image and a teacher's figure, whose roles and tasks must be carried out as expected by institutional documents of practicum and practicum coordinators and advisors, as well as cooperating teachers at schools. By striking this, student-teachers tend to be subjectified as a particular type of English teachers and objectified as a person for doing determined tasks. The desired images and figures seem to be immersed in the understandings of the statements encountered in the institutionalized documents and discourses of practicum.

The fact that English student-teachers put into practice the set of knowledges learned throughout their major during practicum is paramount, so is the fact that they must internalize and construct more pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process. Opportunities for the student-teachers to generate processes that lead them to be aware of themselves as language teachers and of their own knowledges, practices, and voices are scarce, almost inexistent at the start of practicum. We are convinced that these opportunities can help scaffold their selves as language teachers, and make them aware of how they can construct their knowledges during practicum.

References

- Aguirre-Sánchez, I. (2014). Exploring pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about their roles in an elementary school classroom in regard to pedagogical and emotional aspects

- of students. *HOW*, 21(1), 26–41. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.21.1.13>
- Camargo-Cely, J. P. (2018). Unveiling EFL and self-contained teachers' discourses on bilingualism within the context of professional development. *HOW*, 25(1), 115–133. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.391>
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. SAGE Publications.
- Castañeda-Londoño, A. (2018). Towards the exploration of English language in-service teachers' ecologies of knowledges. In H. A. Castañeda-Peña (Ed.), *ELT local research agendas 1* (pp. 159–219). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.
- Castañeda-Londoño, A. (2019). Revisiting the issue of knowledge in English language teaching: A revision of literature. *Gist, Education and Learning Research Journal*, 18(1), 220–245. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.452>
- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2012). Profiling academic research on discourse studies and second language learning. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.3810>
- Castañeda-Peña, H., Rodríguez-Urbe, M., Salazar-Sierra, A., & Chala-Bejarano, P. A. (2016). Narrative events of pre-service teachers at the end of their teaching practicum with regard to their pedagogical advisor: Learnings reported. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 35(68), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.syp35-68.neps>
- Castañeda-Trujillo, J. (2019). Los profesores de inglés (re) clamando por un cambio en el concepto de formación inicial de profesores. *Enletawa*, 12(1), 62–79.
- Castañeda-Trujillo, J. E., & Aguirre-Hernández, A. J. (2018). Pre-service English teachers' voices about the teaching practicum. *HOW*, 25(1), 156–173. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.420>
- Castellanos-Jaimes, J. (2013). The role of English pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in teacher education programs. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 195–206.
- Chacón-Chacón, A., & Chapetón-Castro, C. M. (2018). Trazos para comunidades discursivas académicas dialógicas y polifónicas: tensiones y desafíos de la lectura y la escritura en la universidad. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 37(73), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.syp37-73.tcda>
- Chaves-Varón, O. (2008). Formación pedagógica: la práctica docente en la licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad del Valle. *Lenguaje*, 36(1), 199–240. <https://doi.org/10.25100/lenguaje.v36i1.4865>
- Clandinin, D. J., Downey, C. A., & Huber, J. (2009). Attending to changing landscapes: Shaping the interwoven identities of teachers and teacher educators. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(2), 141–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660902806316>
- Colombia Aprende. (n.d.). *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*. <http://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/es/colombiabilingue/86689>
- Crookes, G. (2003). *A practicum in TESOL: Professional development through teaching practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dakhiel, M. A. (2017). Essential characteristics of EFL practicum supervisors from their perspective. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(6), 1021–1029. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2017.050615>
- Davila, A. (2018). Who teaches the teachers? Analyzing identities of English language teacher educators at English language teaching education programs. In H. A. Castañeda-Peña (Ed.), *ELT local research agendas 1* (pp. 223–246). Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.
- de Tezanos, A. (2007). Oficio de enseñar-saber pedagógico: la relación fundante. *Revista Educación y Ciudad*, 12, 8–26.
- Decreto 1278 de junio 19 de 2002 [Decree 1278], Presidencia de la República de Colombia (2002). https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-86102_archivo_pdf.pdf
- Díaz-Villa, M. (2001). *Del discurso pedagógico: problemas críticos*. Magisterio.
- Duff, P. A. (2002). The discursive co-construction of knowledge, identity, and difference: An ethnography of communication in the high school mainstream. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 23(3), 289–322. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/23.3.289>

- Escobar-Alméciga, W. Y. (2013). Identity-forming discourses: A critical discourse analysis on policy making processes concerning English language teaching in Colombia. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 45–60.
- Esteve, O. (1998). *Nuevas perspectivas en la formación de profesorado de lenguas: hacia el "aprendizaje reflexivo" o "aprender a través de la práctica"*. <https://bit.ly/387IYx5>
- Fajardo-Castañeda, J. A., & Miranda-Montenegro, I. R. (2015). The paradox of the practicum: Affinity to and resistance towards teaching. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 20(3), 239–341. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v20n3a04>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J., & Bermúdez-Jiménez, J. (2015). Práctica pedagógica: subjetivar, problematizar y transformar el quehacer docente. In R. M. Páez-Martínez (Ed.), *Práctica y experiencia: claves del saber pedagógico docente* (pp. 29–54). Ediciones Unisalle.
- Flórez-Romero, R. (2004). La etnografía de la comunicación. *Revista Areté*, 4(1), 15–24.
- Gee, J. P. (2005). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Gelvez-Suarez, H. (2007). *De las prácticas docentes distributivas a las prácticas docentes investigativas*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional, República de Colombia.
- Gómez-Vásquez, L. Y., & Guerrero-Nieto, C. H. (2018). Non-native English speaking teachers' subjectivities and Colombian language policies: A narrative study. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 20(2), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n2.67720>
- González-Moncada, A. (2010). English and English teaching in Colombia: Tensions and possibilities in the expanding circle. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of world Englishes* (1st ed., pp. 332–351). Routledge.
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. (2010). The portrayal of EFL teachers in official discourse: The perpetuation of disdain. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 12(2), 33–49.
- Guerrero-Nieto, C., & Quintero-Polo, A. (2009). English as a neutral language in the Colombian national standards: A constituent of dominance in English language education. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 135–150.
- Hymes, D. (1996). *Ethnography, linguistics, narrative inequality: Toward an understanding of voice*. Taylor and Francis.
- Ley 115 de febrero 8 de 1994 [Law 115], Congreso de la República de Colombia (1994). https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-85906_archivo_pdf.pdf
- Liu, S.-H. (2014). Excellent mentor teachers' skills in mentoring for pre-service teachers. *International Journal of Education*, 6(3), 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v6i3.5855>
- Londoño-Orozco, G. (2009). Hacia una pedagogía de la educación superior: indagación sobre el aprendizaje y la reflexión sobre la práctica docente. *Revista de la Universidad de La Salle*, 50, 24–32.
- Lucero, E. (2015). Reflections upon a pedagogical practice experience: Standpoints, definitions, and knowledge. In R. M. Páez-Martínez (Ed.), *Práctica y experiencia: claves del saber pedagógico docente* (pp. 143–168). Ediciones Unisalle.
- Lucero, E., & Roncancio-Castellanos, K. (2019). The pedagogical practicum journey towards becoming an English language teacher. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 21(1), 173–185. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v21n1.71300>
- Macías, D. F., & Sánchez, J. A. (2015). Classroom management: A persistent challenge for preservice foreign language teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 17(2), 81–99. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v17n2.43641>
- Martínez, L. A. (2007). La observación y el diario de campo en la definición de un tema de investigación. *Perfiles Libertadores*, 4(80), 73–80.
- Méndez, P., Garzón, E., & Noriega-Borja, R. (2019). English teachers' subjectivities: Contesting and resisting must-be discourses. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n3p65>
- Méndez-Rivera, P. (2012). Discourse: Space for the constitution of the subject. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14(1), 180–193. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.3828>
- Méndez-Rivera, P. (2018). Problematizing English language teachers' subject constitution. In H. A. Castañeda-Peña

- (Ed.), *ELT local research agendas I* (pp. 205–221). Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (n.d.). *La práctica pedagógica como escenario de aprendizaje*. https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-357388_recurso_1.pdf
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2014). *Lineamientos de calidad para las licenciaturas en educación*. https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-357233_recurso_1.pdf
- Mora, R. A., Chiquito, T., & Zapata, J. D. (2019). Bilingual education policies in Colombia: Seeking relevant and sustainable frameworks for meaningful minority inclusion. In G. Guzman-Johannessen (Ed.), *Bilingualism and bilingual education: Politics, policies and practices in a globalized society* (pp. 55–77). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05496-0_4
- Moreno-Fernández, P. J. (2015a). Las experiencias pedagógicas de cuatro maestros que hacen maestros. In R. M. Páez-Martínez (Ed.), *Práctica y experiencia: claves del saber pedagógico docente* (pp. 99–118). Ediciones Unisalle.
- Moreno-Fernández, P. J. (2015b). *Manual de investigación en educación: Talleres de trabajo*. Ediciones Unisalle.
- Naranjo, C. (2010). *Cambiar la educación para cambiar el mundo*. Ediciones La Llave.
- Olaya, A., & Gómez-Rodríguez, L. F. (2013). Exploring EFL pre-service teachers' experience with cultural content and intercultural communicative competence at three Colombian universities. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(2), 49–67.
- Ortega-Valencia, P., López-Cardona, D., & Tamayo-Valencia, A. (2013). *Pedagogía y didáctica: aproximaciones desde una perspectiva crítica*. Editorial Universidad de San Buenaventura.
- Posada-Ortiz, J. Z., & Garzón-Duarte, E. (2013). Bridging the gap between theory and practice in a BA program in EFL. *HOW*, 21(1), 122–137. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.21.1.19>
- Quintero-Polo, A. H. (2016). Creating a pedagogical space that fosters the (re)construction of self through life stories of pre-service English language teachers. *HOW*, 23(2), 106–124. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.293>
- Quintero-Polo, A. H. (2019). From utopia to reality: Transformation of pedagogical knowledge in English language teacher education. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 21(1), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v21n1.70921>
- Rampton, B., Maybin, J., & Roberts, C. (2015). Theory and method in linguistic ethnography. In J. Snell, S. Shaw, & F. Copland (Eds.), *Linguistic ethnography: Interdisciplinary explorations* (pp. 14–50). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137035035_2
- Resolución 2041 del 3 de febrero de 2016, Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2016). https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-356144_recurso_1.pdf
- Restrepo-Gómez, B. (1994). La evolución de las facultades de educación. *Revista Educación y Pedagogía*, 5(10–11), 317–318.
- Rincón-Zabala, C. (2016). Tendencias temáticas e investigativas en las facultades de educación en Colombia. *Revista Papeles*, 8(15), 10–20.
- Ríos-Beltrán, R. (2018). La práctica pedagógica como herramienta para historiar la pedagogía en Colombia. *Pedagogía y Saberes*, 49, 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.17227/pys.num49-8168>
- Ripski, M. B., LoCasale-Crouch, J., & Decker, L. (2011). Pre-service teachers: Dispositional traits, emotional states, and quality of teacher-student interactions. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 38(2), 77–96.
- Samacá-Bohorquez, Y. (2008). Formative evaluation in discussion tasks: Learning to listen to pre-service teachers' voices. *Enletawa*, 1, 141–153.
- Samacá-Bohorquez, Y. (2012). On rethinking our classrooms: A critical pedagogy view. *HOW*, 19(1), 194–208.
- Samacá-Bohorquez, Y. (2018). Delving into pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university mentors' positionings in the initial English teaching practicum. In H. A. Castañeda-Peña (Ed.), *ELT local research agendas I* (pp. 183–201). Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

- Saville-Troike, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470758373>
- Schussler, D. L., Stooksberry, L. M., & Bercaw, L. A. (2010). Understanding teacher candidate dispositions: Reflecting to build self-awareness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(4), 350–363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487110371377>
- Shaw, S., Copland, F., & Snell, J. (2015). An introduction to linguistic ethnography: Interdisciplinary explorations. In J. Snell, S. Shaw, & F. Copland (Eds.), *Linguistic ethnography: Interdisciplinary explorations* (pp. 1–13). Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137035035_1
- Suárez-Flórez, S. A., & Basto-Basto, E. A. (2017). Identifying pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL and their potential changes. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 19(2), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v19n2.59675>
- Ubaque-Casallas, D. F., & Aguirre-Garzón, E. (2020). Re-signifying teacher epistemologies through lesson planning: A study on language student-teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 22(2), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v22n2.80687>
- Usma-Wilches, J. A. (2009). Education and language policy in Colombia: Exploring processes of inclusion, exclusion, and stratification in times of global reform. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), 123–141.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse as social interaction*. SAGE Publishing.
- Zuluaga, O. L. (1979). *Colombia: dos modelos de su práctica pedagógica durante el siglo XIX*. Centro de investigaciones educativas, Facultad de Educación, Universidad de Antioquia.
- Zuluaga, O. L. (1999). *Pedagogía e historia: la historicidad de la pedagogía, la enseñanza un objeto de saber*. Siglo del Hombre Editores.

About the Authors

Edgar Lucero is currently a PhD candidate in Education, ELT emphasis, at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia. He is a full-time teacher educator in the Education Sciences Faculty at Universidad de La Salle, Colombia. His research interests are in classroom interaction and language teaching didactics.

Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez is a full-time teacher educator in the Education Sciences Faculty at Universidad de La Salle, Colombia. She holds an MA in Teaching and a BA in Spanish, English, and French from Universidad de La Salle.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the participation of teacher educators Guillermo Hernández Ochoa and Ángela Gamboa González, Universidad de La Salle, Colombia, as part of the research group *Language and Discursive Practices in Contexts of Education*.

Language Pedagogy and Teacher Identity: A Decolonial Lens to English Language Teaching From a Teacher Educator's Experience

Pedagogía de la lengua e identidad docente: una lente decolonial para la enseñanza del idioma inglés desde la experiencia de un formador de maestros

Diego Ubaque-Casallas


Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

This paper describes a narrative study that emerged from various conversations with an English language teacher at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. This research is based on intersectional narratives to locate the intersections between English language pedagogy and the identities of English language teachers. Second, the study examined discourses that can construct English language pedagogy and teachers' identities by avoiding simplistic generalizations and essentialisms. Findings suggest that although there are still colonial roots that repress other ways of being and doing, English language pedagogy goes beyond the instrumental sense of teaching. As such, English language pedagogy is about transformation as it is never static because it is an extension of identity.

Keywords: colonialism, English language teaching, intersectional narratives, narrative, pedagogy

Este artículo describe un estudio narrativo que surgió de varias conversaciones con un profesor de inglés en una universidad pública de Bogotá, Colombia. En primer lugar, esta investigación se basa en narrativas interseccionales para localizar las intersecciones entre la pedagogía del idioma inglés y las identidades de los profesores de inglés. En segundo lugar, el estudio examinó los discursos que pueden construir la pedagogía del idioma inglés y las identidades de los profesores al evitar generalizaciones y esencialismos simplistas. Los hallazgos sugieren que todavía existen raíces coloniales que reprimen otras formas de ser y hacer. Sin embargo, la pedagogía del idioma inglés va más allá del sentido instrumental de la enseñanza. Como tal, la pedagogía del idioma inglés trata sobre la transformación, esta nunca es estática ya que es una extensión de la identidad.

Palabras clave: colonialismo, enseñanza del idioma inglés, narrativa, narrativas interseccionales, pedagogía

Diego Ubaque-Casallas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8116-9163> · Email: dfubaquec@udistrital.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Ubaque-Casallas, D. (2021). Language pedagogy and teacher identity: A decolonial lens to English language teaching from a teacher educator's experience. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90754>

This article was received on September 26, 2020 and accepted on March 16, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Pedagogy is a critical category in education. One can find the following notions: place-based pedagogy (Calderon, 2014); queer pedagogies (Sumara & Davis, 1999); inquiry-based pedagogies (Huber, 2006); multiliteracies pedagogies (Reyes-Torres & Portalés-Raga, 2020); and community-based pedagogies (Sharkey et al., 2016), among many more. One can also find scholars who write about andragogy and pedagogy, the former being “the methods and approaches used in adult education and [that] is directed towards self-actualization, gaining experience, and problem-solving” and the latter, “an education method in which the learner is dependent on the teacher for guidance, evaluation, and acquisition of knowledge” (Murray, 2018, p. 32).

Although pedagogy is an essential category in English language teaching (ELT), its understanding in this field is closer to Murray’s (2018) conceptualization. For instance, English language pedagogy (ELP) has functioned as an umbrella term to plan how teachers should utilize knowledge in teaching. There have been linguistic and social aspects of the English language that have been incorporated to the notion of pedagogy through theories, methods, approaches, techniques, and strategies (see Richards, 2015). Moreover, the English language’s global importance as a communication tool for the knowledge economy and knowledge-skills (Robertson, 2005) has maintained what Flores and Rosa (2015) refer to as imperial projects and economies evidencing how English is planned to be taught. As a result:

The ELT field has seen one method after another rollout of Western universities and through Western publishing houses to spread out all over the world. On each occasion, teachers in other countries and other cultures have been assured that this one is the correct one and that their role is to adapt it to their learners or their learners to it. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 20)

Similarly, identity is a central category in ELT. For instance, several studies have been conducted to docu-

ment English language teachers’ identities (ELTIS) and how they are constructed (see Salinas & Ayala, 2018; Costa, 2019). However, identity continues to be seen and researched within what Mignolo (2009) labels as the colonial difference. For Mignolo:

The colonial difference operates by converting differences into values and establishing a hierarchy of human beings ontologically and epistemically. Ontologically, it is assumed that there are inferior human beings. Epistemically, it is assumed that inferior human beings are rational and aesthetically deficient. (p. 46)

In this respect, the ELT field has witnessed how colonial constructions of ELTIS have been combined with factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, language, and others (Pennycook, 1998). However, these dynamics have also been a piece of the puzzle in the globalizing agenda as a neoliberal resource planned and executed by those who have maintained instruction on teaching methodologies (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) as a unique mechanism to exist and know in the field.

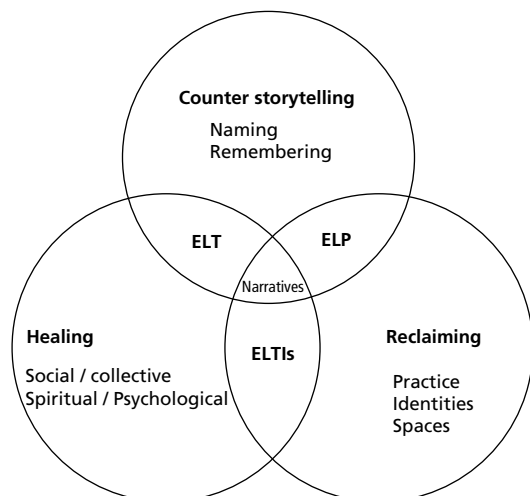
Therefore, this manuscript seeks to locate the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIS through personal experience and, as well, examine dominant discourses that can construct them. Additionally, I aspire to reclaim and relocate ELP and its “ethical goal that goes into the construction of intersubjective meanings” (Granados-Beltrán, 2018, p. 175).

Theoretical Considerations

The rationale underpinning this theoretical section draws on Zabala’s (2016) decolonial strategies for education: counter storytelling, healing, and reclaiming. I choose to resort to the decolonial strategies Zabala constructs as “a particular kind of border thinking, a reenvisioning from the margins” (p. 2) to rethink what we understand as ELP and identity. With this framework, I aim to name hegemonic notions of ELP to position my own “geo-political and body-political location” (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5) as a teacher-researcher. Moreover,

I attempt to explain how ELP intersects with ELTIS in the ELT field. Figure 1 illustrates how each element in it interlocks in a dynamic rather than linear relationship; “each is a dimension of the other” (Zabala, 2016, p. 2).

Figure 1. Intersectional Narratives: A Theoretical Framework Based on Zabala’s (2016) Decolonial Strategies for Education



English Language Pedagogy

ELP is a remnant of coloniality. In particular, ELP in ELT has separated the subjects from their bodies and their geographical location regarding the teaching practice (see Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2021). This attempt is evident in the insertion of the notion of competence as the only discourse mostly reproduced in teaching and teacher education (Biesta, 2012). This unidirectional/dimensional discourse is what has caused that “English language teaching and learning identities are more oriented towards that goal of identifying decontextualized forms of being in the field of teaching” (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 18). For instance, Grosfoguel (2010), when discussing coloniality, claims that:

By breaking the link between the subject of enunciation and the ethnic/racial/sexual/gender/epistemic place, Western philosophy and science manage to create a myth about a real universal knowledge that masks, that

is, conceals not only the speaker but also the epistemic, geo and body-political place of the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks. (p. 387)

Such a separation has adopted a homogeneous epistemology on language teaching and learning (Mastrella-de-Andrade & Pessoa, 2019) that has even reached the research-based dimension.

In this respect, Lopes (2013) argues that “the research on foreign language teaching-learning and acquisition is still based on the search for identifying patterns of how to teach well—to detect what teachers do, or could do, efficiently that leads to student success” (p. 954). Without a doubt, in Colombia, this argument is supported by the inventory of BA graduate projects in education programs where “featured causality, technicality, and language instrumentality” (Granados-Beltrán, 2018, p. 189) are the most common approaches to research. Nevertheless, this study is interested not in pointing to the evident but to reclaim ELP capability of leading towards unlearning, learning, and relearning (Escobar-Gómez, 2019). *Otherwise*,¹ ELP is understood

as something given, as in handed, revealed; as in breaking through, transgressing, disrupting, displacing, inverting inherited concepts and practices, those psychic, analytic, and organizational methodologies we deploy to know what we believe we know to make different conversations and solidarities possible; as both epistemic and ontological project bound to our beingness. (Alexander, 2006, p. 22)

Therefore, if we think of ELP otherwise, as Mignolo and Walsh (2018) define it, the otherwise becomes “the ongoing serpentine movement toward possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living” (p. 81); a movement only possible if those who enact ELP name it, reclaim it, and commit to “changing, disrupting, and dismantling the hegemonic relations”

¹ This refers to the possibilities to construct and display strategies that are not nested in colonial/modernity frames.

(Pennycook & Makoni, 2020, p. 31) that have hindered alternative ways of doing and being (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) in ELT.

English Language Teaching and Teachers' Identity(ies)

This study conceives ELT as the field in which instructional and procedural applications of theoretical knowledge about language teaching are regulated. As teachers' target language proficiency and their beliefs about language learning are significant factors determining their classroom teaching practices (Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2006), the ELT field seems to be a colonial construction as well. According to Canagarajah (1999), there has been an evident hegemonic influence of native speakers; "in fact, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, and testing experts are predominantly from the Center [industrialized English-speaking countries]" (p. 85). Such a perception is the challenge ELT faces. This implies that theories and practices in ELT are not just the results of colonial powers but also the product of colonial ideologies (Pennycook, 1998) that have become the unique knowledge teachers are to utilize to make sense of their teaching. This tendency has not only made teachers "static and unwitting in their own epistemic beliefs" (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020, p. 132), but has also caused an evident subalternization of knowledge and ways of being within the field.

In ELT, much of the related literature, mostly published in English, covers the term *knowledge* from its singularity (Castañeda-Londoño, 2019). This corresponds to a universalized understanding of knowledge that has become not only standard but also normative and legitimate. This normativization has also affected ELTIS as these have been subjected to "a dominant/colonizing way of existing" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 29) in which English language teachers are the result of what they know. This interwoven relationship, however, is what calls for an epistemological/ontological shift to the *Otherwise*, not just to move away from epistemic

violences (Andreotti, 2011), but to reclaim teachers' agency. Given such a call, identities, in the plural, should be understood as "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices by specific enunciative strategies" (Hall, 2003, p. 4).

Intersectionality in Narratives

For Gill and Pires (2019), "intersectionality works well within the cracks of messy processes of subjectification forged by the modern/colonial project to make more space for inclusive theorizing and practice" (pp. 288–289). Therefore, I would like to resort to intersectionality to allow the recognition of whom we are based on what we do. As "who we are and from where we speak is highly relevant for the intellectual projects we are likely to pursue" (Moya, 2011, p. 79), intersectionality can assist in claiming agency (Stone-Mediatore, 2003) in spaces and territories where colonial histories have been present. Furthermore, suppose intersectionality in narratives is seen as a mechanism to foreground how ELT, ELP, and English language teachers co-exist and intersect, as illustrated in Figure 1. In that case, intersectional narratives are then discursive representations of experience in which there is conceptual integration among those conversing. In fact, intersectional narratives serve this study to ground concepts and interpretations for "knowledge co-creation, in which researchers and participants develop shared understandings and develop new ideas" (Galafassi et al., 2018, p. 9). This is why intersectional narratives in this study comprise a relevant theoretical construct indispensable to investigating epistemological ruptures (Arroyo-Ortega & Alvarado-Salgado, 2016) in ELP.

Consequently, intersectional narratives result from alterative conversations in which subjectivities are dynamic and relational (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019) among those who engage in conversation. Nevertheless, as "implementing narrative intersectionality requires finding ways of exploring and analyzing the

material, structural and political realities that infuse and shape individual stories” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 10), I will, in the methodological considerations, elaborate on how I attempt to engage with intersectionality as praxis through narrative research.

Method and Data Analysis

This study adopts a narrative research methodology, that is, narrative inquiry. Regarding this methodology, it is “an umbrella term for a mosaic of research efforts, with diverse theoretical musings, methods, empirical groundings, and/or significance all revolving around an interest in narrative” (Smith, 2007, p. 392). This means that narrative inquiry helps intersectional narratives to be seen from Andrey’s² conversations to dismantle colonialist remnants in ELP and break with the colonial genealogy in research (Patel, 2016). Consequently, as “the narrative is not exclusive to any scientific tradition, nor to its paradigmatic foundation” (Yedaide et al., 2015, p. 30), a narrative approach to research commits only to the particular location within the global structures (Anzaldúa, 2009) of those who employ it. In that line of argument, I aim to merge intersectional narratives with narrative research as intersectionality commits to “social justice goals, [by] granting epistemic and authoritative privilege to the stories, definitions and perspectives of marginalized persons” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 9) who, like Andrey, have not only suffered “the construction and imposition of terminology [that] reinforce[s] and instill[s] inferiority complex in the minds of the subaltern” (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 78), but who have also been tied to a single type of existence (Castañeda-Peña, 2018); an ontological form of colonization and subalternization that is still reproduced through discourses of professional identity (Block, 2006).

Therefore, four conversations, mostly held in English, were transcribed and converted into hermeneutic units within a twelve-month period to be

further analyzed using Atlas.Ti, a specialized qualitative data analysis software that helped me locate analytical categories and their relationships within the conversations I sustained with Andrey. Although using Atlas.Ti may not fit into the lens of the decolonial attempt this study adopts, I think of this as an opportunity to find a methodological and epistemological rupture in which it “becomes an ethical and political bet of those [like me] who want to rethink the forms [of] traditional research” (Arroyo-Ortega & Alvarado-Salgado, 2016, p. 138), not by denying the use of analytical tools but to imbue them with a different epistemological interest to enunciate otherwise. This is why the analysis of each conversation included Zabala’s (2016) decolonial strategies as a path to understanding how ELP and ELTIS intersect. This process as a whole, far from looking for methodological accountability, intended to work as an angle of analysis to the meanings attributed to the experiences here co-constructed and, in so doing, locate intersectionality in ELP.

Contextualization of the Study

I invited Andrey, an English language teacher and teacher educator who works for a public university in Bogotá, Colombia, to talk about his beliefs and practices about ELP and ELTIS as with him I found a shared interest in conversing about “practices, knowledge, and feelings” (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019, p. 15) within the ELT field. Although his teaching experience in varied educational contexts was pivotal in locating the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIS, his participation in this study was also influenced by his pedagogical experience with different teacher education programs, in which not only has he aimed to educate future English language teachers, but has also tried to challenge imported discourses and models of teaching that, for many years, have influenced Colombian teachers themselves (Muñoz-Giraldo et al., 2002). Therefore, it is a must saying that his voice and experience intersect with my own locus of enunciation as an ELT researcher

² A pseudonym for this study’s participant.

concerned about teacher education. This concern situates this study within a personal attempt to break the hegemonic/colonial chains that still tie ELTIS and ELP in teacher education programs. The aforesaid is fundamental as Andrey and I try “to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation” (Mignolo, 2010, p. 313) when it comes to the construction of these terms in the field.

Findings

Findings begin from the intersectional narratives framework presented in Figure 1. Based on Zabala’s (2016) decolonial strategies for education, I permanently made connections with the literature that I had consulted and that I continued consulting during the analysis stage.

First, I took into consideration that for Zabala (2016), *counter storytelling* is about engaging in dialogue and reflection, a process whereby people name their social worlds as “a deliberate attempt to develop a language of critique that enables colonized peoples to understand their present situation as encircled by colonialism and its structural arrangements and cultural logics” (p. 3). In this respect, the conversations here reported aimed to trigger remembering within/against coloniality.

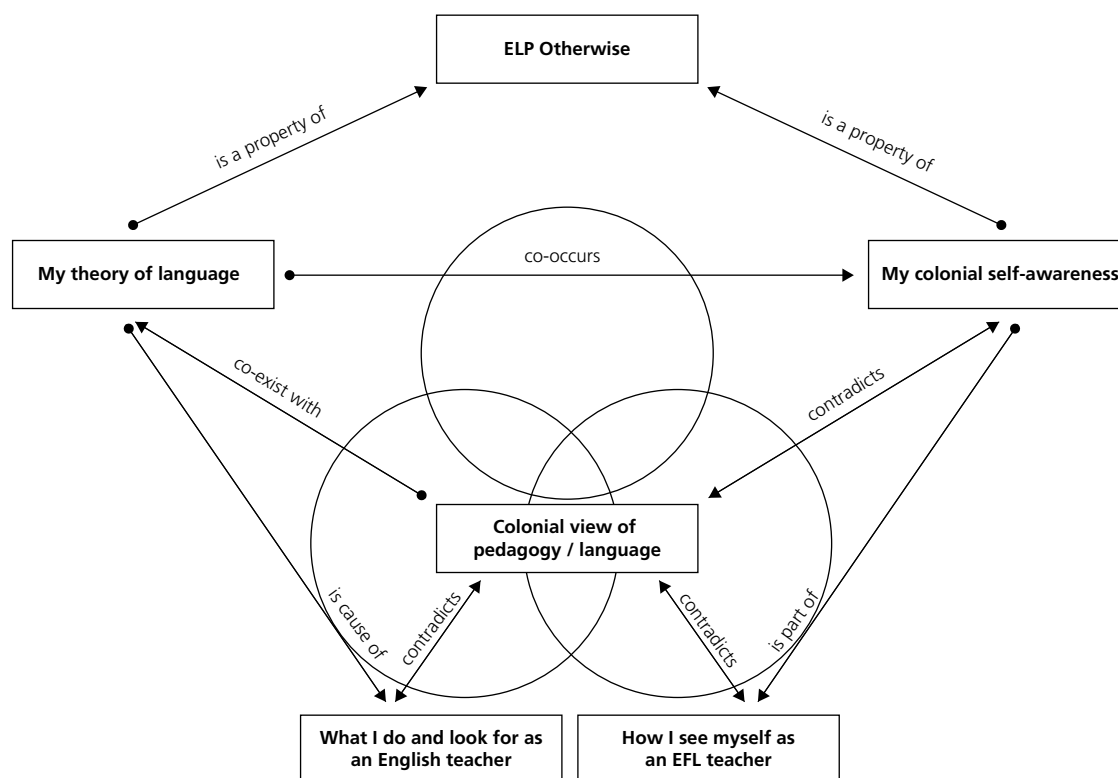
Second, I also considered that for Zabala (2016), to trigger a decolonial methodology in education, it is also relevant, while naming and remembering, to promote *healing*. This is precisely my attempt in this study: to “challenge dominant, Western notions of education as a cognitive activity” (p. 4) in order to recover from any damage English language teachers have been subjected to, either ontologically or epistemologically, as colonized people. As a matter of fact, such an attempt assumes that conversations between Andrey and I were a bridge to (re)connect to ELP and its ethical purpose. Third, I bore in mind Zabala’s notion of *reclaiming*, as this strategy involves “recovering who people are, their practices, and their relation to place

(land, cosmos)” (p. 5). Consequently, as this study intends to locate the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIS, I thought of intersectionality among and within the strategies above to delve into the diverse realities behind individual stories (Chadwick, 2017).

As the above grounded my understanding of Andrey’s conversation, I generated different categories and subcategories that I aim to discuss in this section. Nonetheless, these categories did not follow the qualitative logic applied to preconceived categories or codes to the data (Charmaz, 2006); instead, they emerged from the inspection of conversations as intersectional narrative accounts in which there was co-construction of data between those conversing. In doing so, I acknowledged that my positioning was not intended to elicit information from Andrey, but instead, I was trying to configure his and my subjectivity by engaging in an alterative conversation (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019) in which other knowledges are created. As such, starting from Figure 2, I argue that this intersectional approach proposes conversations from the interaction pertaining to the life experience here reported.

I will now elaborate on some of the categories (see Figure 2) that emerged in the study. These categories will serve to understand ELP and identities, both *Otherwise*, from an intersectional perspective. Therefore, I begin from the assumption that these categories, although differentially experienced, portray experiences that are fluid and mutually constituted.

In this paper, I have stated that ELP is the result of a colonial narrative over teaching. Consequently, although intersectionality has been mainly used to foster theorization of the intersection of multiple inequalities in gender theory (Walby et al., 2012), I believe it can not only assist me in representing other positions, including those who do not exclusively experience an evident marginalization (Bauer, 2014), but it can also become “a tool for capturing actors’ socially-constituted everyday subjective meanings in the context of unequal

Figure 2. English Language Pedagogy: Tree of Relations Among Categories

structural positioning of social categories” (Atewologun & Mahalingam, 2018, p. 150) that, both epistemologically and ontologically, have been present in the ELT field.

My Theory of Language

From Andrey’s conversations, I noticed that how one views language and learning may explain how one approaches teaching. These two views are universal principles in any method. For instance, in any course about methodology in teacher education programs, student-teachers are walked through how a method is composed of a theory of language and a theory of learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They are told that, for example, in the audiolingual method, language is seen from a structuralist perspective. It is seen as a system for the coding of meaning, and learning must be then a process of habit formation, a behavioral approach to learning. This and many other theoretical

principles are transmitted to English language teachers in teacher education programs. This explains, perhaps, why we continue teaching structural drilling exercises for pronunciation practice when we become English language teachers.

Although these theories of language and learning are seen as crucial elements in teaching, it cannot be refuted that both carry colonial legacies that have imposed dominance over ELP, subjugating, at the same time, ELTIS to disciplinary notions. Echoing this, Pennycook (1998) contends that “ELT theories and practices that emanate from the former colonial powers still carry the traces of those colonial histories, both . . . derive from broader European cultures and ideologies that themselves are products of colonialism” (p. 19). Consequently, theoretical constructions of language and learning have maintained an unquestionable dominance over personal constructions of ELP (language-learning) and ELTIS.

For instance, “the term ‘native speaker’ undoubtedly has positive connotations: it denotes a birthright, fluency, cultural affinity, and sociolinguistic competence [and] the term ‘non-native speaker’ carries the burden of the minority, marginalization, and stigmatization” (Braine, 2010, p. 9); with this, we may understand why the notion of method keeps on being a conflicting operating principle in ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) as these continue to be imposed upon nonnative speakers.

Even though English language teachers have kept alive an identity of themselves as subalterns by subduing to theoretical principles about teaching, conversations here documented that personal theories of language can co-exist, but mostly contradict hegemonic theoretical constructions imposed in the ELT field.

I think I started thinking that language, when I was at the university, was about linguistics, full of semantics, syntax. But later, perhaps due to my personality development, the language was a cognitive transformer for me. I began to relate it as with a “Gender Key” as I relate it a lot to gender research. When I no longer lived in the country, I saw it as a matter of social transformation, and now I continue to see it as a matter of social, personal transformation, but from a pedagogy, as I feel that all the exercises that I have to do, at the personal and professional level, have to go for the sake of transforming myself, my environment, in one way or another, the environment of the people who are there. Sometimes I consider that we see language as an exercise in reflection and, for me, it is important that language begins to change and transform the reality of the people who approach it, so I feel that there is a humanizing character and, let’s say there is a rebirth from the point of view from what the language does. Forty years ago the language was, well it still is, a determinant of which culture was more important than the other, but now . . . language and thought go hand in hand and, language transforms the way we think, so if we think differently then we begin to energize that differently since people do something

with the language and change the spaces of others; from pedagogy is from where we begin to transform life from the bottom up. (Andrey)

Despite language being linked to its linguistic system, it is also imbued with other attributes. For instance, from Andrey’s experience, his theory of language co-exists with canonical notions in which language is the linguistic knowledge teachers acquire and develop. However, co-existence between Andrey’s and canonical theories of languages should be seen as an interrelating co-existence in which language is situated in time and space. In fact, Andrey engages in a reflection in which language becomes an element of cognitive transformation. In the literature available, cognitive transformation is guided but not self-initiated. For example, timing on feedback (Mathan & Koedinger, 2005), or even the nature of feedback content (Shute, 2008) have been present. However, for Andrey, his pedagogy is the means to change others’ realities. Consequently, Andrey constructs his theory of language as a personality-driven characteristic that intersects his identity. This intersection is a possibility to not only reclaim his identity but ELP in a field in which linguistic knowledge and procedural skills are valued above all (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012).

Another salient element in Andrey’s conversation is agency. As agency is a fundamental factor for ELTIS, it cannot be ignored, it is an essential element for “reducing inequalities” (Archanjo et al., 2019, p. 73). Andrey’s efforts to not just co-exist with linguistic discourses and theories about language, but to *name* the purpose of his practice as an educator, puts on the table an intersection between language, pedagogy, and identity. In fact, when it comes to English language teachers, Ferrara (2012) claims that they are influenced by epistemology or beliefs about teaching and learning. If English language teachers are static in their views of language, this could overshadow the epistemological/

cognitive justice (De Sousa-Santos, 2009) that should take place in the classroom.

My Colonial Self-Awareness

This category shows how Andrey's theories of language intersect with this identity as both are contingent and relational. In other words, "who we are as humans varies according to who we are talking to, where, and for what purposes" (Vásquez, 2011, p. 539) and involves agency, emotions, meaning systems, and the self (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Paradoxically, in the canonical narrative in ELT and teacher education programs, new external identities are established making teachers abandon their previous ones and adopt the external at the different levels of subjectivity. Language has been used to construct superior notions of self; it is not surprising that nonnative English language teachers have constructed themselves, consciously or unconsciously, as inferior (Pennycook, 1998) compared to native speakers.

Although this native-speaker ideology has been predominant in ELT (Holliday, 2005) and has been as well an axis for forms of expression in the modern/colonial world (Maldonado-Torres, 2011), Andrey reveals that pedagogical practices are embodied as they transit ELTIS. Andrey's purpose to reclaim praxis over colonialist and objectified views of language, in which the latter has been subjected to Western principles regarding English teaching, leverages the intersection above about his purpose in teaching through language. As such, Andrey's theory of language exercised through his ELP serves as a mechanism to expose and transform his own colonial self. According to Castañeda-Peña (2018), "English language teaching and learning identities are more oriented towards that goal of identifying decontextualized forms of being in the field of teaching" (p. 18); however, my conversation with Andrey exposes that one's identity is not limited to ontological forms of colonization and subalternization; instead, it is *healed and reclaimed* when language and identity intersect.

What I Do and Look for as an English Teacher

I believe that what I am looking for is to transform. I don't know if it is a methodology, but I can say it is a kind of pedagogical perspective. It is a transformed pedagogical perspective because I start from the student's need, I start my classes from what the student wants and what the student wants to transform in their practice; I do not start from my needs, or from what I believe. This is a setting in which the learner's need prevails over the need of the person who provides the learning. For example, there are three courses that I teach. First, I plan with the students. I tell them: "Here you have some sheets, you are going to write to me what you want to learn according to what you have transferred in" and from all their university studies. I do this mostly with students who are about to finish their degrees. Second, with the students who are starting, I guide that reading because they do not have all the necessary tools, so I present them some paths and they decide which way they go, but I give them the ability to choose. (Andrey)

Pedagogy is about transformation. Andrey evidences this claim by setting it as an objective of his practice. Such a perspective invites English language teachers to think that ELP requires changes in the relationships between teachers and student-teachers as "openness and transformation in education could also mean what choices are given to the learner in any system of education" (Vambe, 2005, p. 285); choices that are not part of the modern/colonial ELT principles. For Andrey, the ultimate goal is to give back student-teachers' agency. In critical pedagogy, transformation implies a profound shift in perspective (Cranton, 2011) that embraces changes in actions (Mayo, 2004). The literature suggests that agency has mostly been linked to terms such as autonomy (Toohey, 2007), yet, barely has it been thought of as the outcome of ELP.

A glimpse at the literature shows that "agency can be considered a combination of intention and

action that influences experience” (Hadar & Benish-Weisman, 2019, p. 138); such influence and action are self-initiated (Biesta et al., 2015). Similarly, for Priestly et al. (2012), “the extent to which teachers can achieve agency varies from context to context, based on certain environmental conditions of possibility and constraint, and that an important factor in this lies in the beliefs, values and attributes that teachers mobilize” (p. 191). However, from Andrey’s conversation, agency is to be given to student-teachers. This is quite relevant as the curriculum has always imposed a set of fixed knowledge to be learned, resulting in measuring agency through self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001); yet this paradigm is what teaching and learning as a practice of freedom contradict (Freire, 1968/1993), a practice Andrey seems to look for in his teaching.

How I See Myself as an EFL Teacher

Although this paper was not looking for ontological underpinnings of identity, it was impossible to gloss over this finding as identities are “effective pedagogical tools” (Motha et al., 2012, p. 14) and, as such, they shape ELP. The following excerpt from my conversation with Andrey will be used to comment on the argument above.

I have to think about what I am from many perspectives. The first perspective is the system where I am. As you probably know, it is a not very dynamic system, it is a system in which things are not constantly renewed, but it is a system that allows teachers a lot of freedom to be and carry out practices; call them innovative or disruptive practices. In that sense, I see myself as a teacher who tries to make an adaptation of socio-emotional learning. What does that mean? It means that I link to a focus beyond the disciplinary and communicational field. The well-being and understanding of the student, but more from the socio-emotional aspect. So, as an educator, I see myself inside and outside the system, I feel in that constant search to improve practices, to make them better for my students. I am fully aware that the

people, who I am training, will be my colleagues in a very short time. (Andrey)

Andrey’s ontological positioning not only intersects with his ELP, but it also intersects with the institution he refers to as the system. What seems an exciting outcome is that Andrey sees himself as someone who plays in and out of the system. In the ELT field, identities and ELP have been subjected to a top-down approach where “traditional methods of education have not typically aimed to effect constructive social change [and] their practices tend to promote assimilation rather than transformation” (Puett, 2005, p. 264). However, Andrey can make the most of it by acknowledging that although the system may not be as dynamic as it should, it allows English language teachers to innovate and disrupt. Therefore, in the pursuit of improving his practice, Andrey is also subverting relationships between teacher and students, funds of knowledge to be “taught” to student-teachers, and power dynamics. The aforesaid is relevant as “classrooms are host to multiple practices that are simultaneously colonizing and decolonizing” (Motha, 2006, p. 76) and that are, without a doubt, being transgressed by English language teachers and ELP.

Conclusions

As intersectionality modifies how a research problem is conceptualized, investigated, and even how findings are used to advance social justice (Hankivsky, 2012), I believe it is then necessary to say that I first engaged in reflexivity as a means to examine how research processes and knowledge production in this study could reflect my locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2011). With this, I refer to my preconceptions, values, social positions, and interests (Jootun et al., 2009) as a teacher-researcher. Then, I would like to begin by situating Andrey and myself within multiple and shifting dynamics of oppression that are inherent in intersectionality (see Figure 1). This attempt is twofold.

First, I mean to “contend already existing discourses within the educational field which operate inhibiting the emergence of other identities through the colonial mechanisms rooted in global capitalism” (Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020, p. 26); but I also attempt to provide a different glance towards ELP and its existing paradigm in ELT.

In the Colombian ELT, there are still colonial roots that repress other ways of being and doing. Although “the methods used to teach the language were derived from Western culture and systems of knowledge” (Rodrigues et al., 2019, p. 5), English language teachers are transgressing this hegemonic heritage through ELP. Therefore, the conclusions I am drawing from my conversation with Andrey intend to open space to continue reflecting upon the importance of reclaiming ELP in ELT as it may contribute to the “restoring of agency to professionals in the periphery communities” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 540).

First, ELP is about transformation. Pedagogy is never static, nor is it tied to colonial notions about teaching. As such, ELP is embodied, and not only is an extension of ELTIS, but it is also a mechanism to reclaim agency. In this respect, this echoes Walsh (2013), who claimed that it should be understood as “an essential methodology within and for social, political, ontological, and epistemic struggles for liberation” (p. 29). Therefore, what emerged from my conversation with Andrey is that ELP co-exists with colonial views of pedagogy. However, in such co-existence, teachers’ agency challenges decolonial approaches to teaching as ELP reclaims its purpose in liberating practices and individuals by handing over to them different ways of being and doing in the ELT field.

Second, ELP is the result of English language teachers’ theory of language teaching. English language teachers are invited to think about their conceptions of language and critique what its purpose might be in teaching as it has been a source of marginalization in ELT. Then, this study invites English language teachers

to “critique issues of coloniality and inequality affecting not only their educational contexts, but also their lives as subjects” (Granados-Beltrán, 2016, p. 184) since language has been limited to its instrumental application and, as a result, has been stripped of its personal, emotional, and even social dimension. Therefore, although English language teachers have been classified in three domains: as workers, as instructors, and as learners (González et al., 2002), they also possess an agentic dimension that builds them as human beings that engage in teaching and learning through their understanding of language in their teaching practices.

Third, ELP is context related and not dependent. If ELT has kept dominance over methods and methodologies, ELP is a decolonial act as it transgresses hegemonic epistemological, ontological, and methodological legacies. As my conversation with Andrey revealed, teachers’ agency is determinant in co-existing with the top-down approaches and discourses in education. Although those reading this paper may consider a decolonial option is not about co-existing but resisting, I hold the view that in ELT, we cannot ignore that English language teachers must work within institutional discourses about teaching and, as such, any bottom-up approach to dismantle the hegemonic chain must begin from within.

Lastly, discourses about ELP and ELTIS have maintained the colonial architecture in ELT. Although these discourses construct pedagogy as a colonial political praxis (Madge et al., 2009) and identity as a monolithic disciplinary-based category, a final conclusion drawn in this study suggests that Andrey’s critical stance echoes other teachers in the field (see, Castañeda-Londoño, 2019; Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020). They all seem to agree on ELP as a path for teachers to configure “horizons of theorizing, thinking, doing, being, feeling, looking and listening—individually and collectively—towards the decolonial” (Walsh, 2013, p. 67); a path only possible if English language teachers choose to transgress the colonial legacy.

References

- Alexander, M. J. (2006). *Pedagogies of crossing: Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822386988>
- Andreotti, V. (2011). *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230337794>
- Anzaldúa, G. (2009). *The Gloria Anzaldúa reading*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391272>
- Archanjo, R., Barahona, M., & Finardi, K. R. (2019). Identity of foreign language pre-service teachers to speakers of other languages: Insights from Brazil and Chile. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 21(1), 62–75. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.14086>
- Arroyo-Ortega, A., & Alvarado-Salgado, S. V. (2016). Conocimiento en colabor: reflexiones y posibilidades para la construcción de paz [Knowledge in collaboration: Reflections and possibilities for the construction of peace]. *Universitas: Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*, 14(25), 121–148. <https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n25.2016.07>
- Atewologun, D., & Mahalingam, R. (2018). Intersectionality as a methodological tool in qualitative equality, diversity and inclusion research. In L. A. E. Booysen, R. Bendl, & J. K. Pringle (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in diversity management, equality and inclusion at work* (pp. 149–170). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781783476084>
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Bauer, G. R. (2014). Incorporating intersectionality theory into population health research methodology: Challenges and the potential to advance health equity. *Social Science & Medicine*, 110, 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.03.022>
- Beauchamp, C. & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252>
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2012). Giving teaching back to education: Responding to the disappearance of the teacher. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 6(2), 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19860>
- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 624–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>
- Block, D. (2006). *Multilingual identities in a global city: London stories*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230501393>
- Braine, G. (2010). *Non-native speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy, and professional growth*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203856710>
- Calderon, D. (2014). Speaking back to manifest destinies: A land education-based approach to critical curriculum inquiry. *Environmental Education Research*, 20(1), 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865114>
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). Interrogating the “native speaker fallacy”: Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 77–92). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Castañeda-Londoño, A. (2019). Revisiting the issue of knowledge in English language teaching, a revision of literature. *GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal*, (18), 220–245. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.452>
- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2018). Structuralist, poststructuralist and decolonial identity research in English language teaching and learning: A reflection problematizing the field. In Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (Ed.), *ELT local research agendas I* (pp. 17–35). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.
- Chadwick, R. (2017). Thinking intersectionally with/through narrative methodologies. *Agenda*, 31(1), 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2017.1341172>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Costa, P. I. D. (2019). Social interaction and English language teacher identity. *ELT Journal*, 73(2), 235–237. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy052>

- Cranton, P. (2011). A transformative perspective on the scholarship of teaching and learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 30(1), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2011.536974>
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Lieberman, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Teacher education around the world: Changing policies and practices*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203817551>
- De Sousa-Santos, B. (2009). *Una epistemología del sur: la reinvencción del conocimiento y la emancipación social* [An epistemology of the south: The reinvention of knowledge and social emancipation]. Clacso Ediciones.
- Escobar-Gómez, M. (2019). Decolonial responsibility within international higher education: Institutional commitment and resistance strategies. *Voces y Silencios: Revista Latinoamericana de Educación*, 10(1), 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.18175/vysio.1.2019.09>
- Ferrara, S. L. (2012). *Literacy and the inclusive classroom*. Nova Science.
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum. (Original work published 1968)
- Galafassi, D., Daw, T. M., Thyresson, M., Rosendo, S., Chaigneau, T., Bandeira, S., Munyi, L., Gabriellson, I., & Brown, K. (2018). Stories in social-ecological knowledge co-creation. *Ecology and Society*, 23(1), 23. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-09932-230123>
- Gill, A., & Pires, T. (2019). From binary to intersectional to imbricated approaches: Gender in a decolonial and diasporic perspective. *Contexto Internacional*, 41(2), 275–302. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0102-8529.2019410200003>
- González, A., Montoya, C., & Sierra, N. (2002). What do EFL teachers seek in professional development programs? Voices from teachers. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 7(1), 29–50.
- Granados-Beltrán, C. (2016). Critical interculturality: A path for pre-service ELT teachers. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 21(2), 169–185. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v21no2a04>
- Granados-Beltrán, C. (2018). Revisiting the need for critical research in undergraduate Colombian English language teaching. *How*, 25(1), 174–193. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.355>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2010). Para descolonizar os estudos de economia política e os estudos pós-coloniais: transmodernidade, pensamento de fronteira e colonialidade global [Decolonizing political economy studies and post-colonial studies: Transmodernity, frontier thinking, and global coloniality]. In B. de Sousa-Santos & M. P. Meneses (Orgs.), *Epistemologias do sul* (pp. 383–418). Cortez. <https://doi.org/10.12957/periferia.2009.3428>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1), 1–38.
- Hadar, L. L., & Benish-Weisman, M. (2019). Teachers' agency: Do their values make a difference? *British Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 137–160. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3489>
- Hall, S. (2003). Introduction: Who needs identity? In S. Hall & P. Du-Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity*. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221907.n1>
- Hankivsky, O. (2012). Women's health, men's health, and gender and health: Implications of intersectionality. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(11), 1712–1720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.11.029>
- Holliday, A. (2005). *The struggle to teach English as an international language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huber, M. T. (2006). Disciplines, pedagogy, and inquiry-based learning about teaching. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, 2006(107), 63–72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.246>
- Jootun, D., McGhee, G., & Marland, G. R. (2009). Reflexivity: Promoting rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 23(23), 42–46.

- Kamhi-Stein, L., & Mahboob, A. (2006). *TESOL virtual seminar: Teachers' language proficiency in English language teaching*. TESOL.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). A postmethod perspective on English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 22(4), 539–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2003.00317.x>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). Dangerous liaison: Globalization, empire, and TESOL. In J. Edge (Ed.), *(Re) locating TESOL in an age of empire* (pp. 1–26). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2016). The decolonial option in English teaching: Can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 66–85. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202>
- Lopes, C. (2013). Repensando os saberes: mudanças nos paradigmas epistemológicos e a formação de professores de língua estrangeira [Rethinking knowledges: Epistemological paradigm shifts and foreign language teacher education]. *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, 13(3), 941–962. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1984-63982013005000013>
- Madge, C., Raghuram, P., & Noxolo, P. (2009). Engaged pedagogy and responsibility: A postcolonial analysis of international students. *Geoforum*, 40(1), 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.01.008>
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2011). Thinking through the decolonial turn: Post-continental interventions, in theory, philosophy, and critique—An introduction. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(2), 240–270.
- Mastrella-de-Andrade, M. R., & Pessoa, R. R. (2019). A critical, decolonial glance at language teacher education in Brazil: on being prepared to teach. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Linguística Teórica e Aplicada*, 35(3), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-460X2019350306>
- Mathan, S. A., & Koedinger, K. R. (2005). Fostering the intelligent novice: Learning from errors with metacognitive tutoring. *Educational Psychologist*, 40(4), 257–265. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4004_7
- Mayo, P. (2004). *Liberating praxis: Paulo Freire's legacy for radical education and politics*. Sense Publishers.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Coloniality: The darker side of modernity. In S. Breitwieser, C. Klinger, & W. D. Mignolo (Eds.), *Modernologies: Contemporary artists researching modernity and modernism* (pp. 39–49). MACBA.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2010). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality, and the grammar of de-coloniality. In W. D. Mignolo & A. Escobar (Eds.), *Globalization and the decolonial option* (pp. 303–368). Routledge.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822371779>
- Motha, S. (2006). Decolonizing ESOL: Negotiating linguistic power in U.S. public school classrooms. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 3(2–3), 75–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2006.9650841>
- Motha, S., Jain, R., & Tede, T. (2012). Translinguistic identity-as-pedagogy: Implications for language teacher education. *International Journal of Innovation in English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 13–28.
- Moya, P. M. L. (2011). Who we are and from where we speak. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(2), 79–94.
- Muñoz-Giraldo, J. F., Quintero-Corzo, J., & Munévar-Molina, R. A. (2002). Experiencias en investigación-acción-reflexión con educadores en proceso de formación en Colombia [Experiences from reflective action-research in a teacher education program in Colombia]. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 4(1), 66–80.
- Murray, A. (2018). Andragogy vs. Pedagogy: Approaching the adult learner. *Teachers Matter*, 38, 32–33.
- Ortiz-Ocaña, A., & Arias-López, M. I. (2019). Hacer decolonial: desobedecer a la metodología de investigación [Disobeying colonial research methodology]. *Hallazgos*, 16(31), 147–166. <https://doi.org/10.15332/s1794-3841.2019.0031.06>
- Patel, L. (2016). *Decolonizing educational research: From ownership to answerability*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315658551>

- Pennycook, A. (1998). *English and the discourses of colonialism*. Routledge.
- Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the global south*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429489396>
- Priestly, M., Edwards, R., Priestly, A., & Miller, K. (2012). Teacher agency in curriculum making: Agents of change and spaces for maneuver. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 42(2), 191–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2012.00588.x>
- Puett, T. (2005). On transforming our world: Critical pedagogy for interfaith education. *Cross Currents*, 55(2), 264–273.
- Reyes-Torres, A., & Portalés-Raga, M. (2020). A multimodal approach to foster the multiliteracies pedagogy in the teaching of EFL through picturebooks: The Snow Lion. *Atlantis: English Studies*, 42(1), 94–119. <https://doi.org/10.28914/Atlantis-2020-42.1.06>
- Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305>
- Robertson, S. L. (2005). Re-imagining and re-scripting the future of education: Global knowledge economy discourses and the challenge to education systems. *Comparative Education*, 41(2), 151–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060500150922>
- Rodrigues, W., Edviges-Albuquerque, F., & Miller, M. (2019). Decolonizing English language teaching for Brazilian indigenous peoples. *Educação e Realidade*, 44(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-623681725>
- Salinas, D., & Ayala, M. (2018). EFL student-teachers' identity construction: A case study in Chile. *How*, 25(1), 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.380>
- Sharkey, J., Clavijo-Olarte, A., & Ramírez, L. M. (2016). Developing a deeper understanding of community-based pedagogies with teachers: Learning with and from teachers in Colombia. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(4), 306–319. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116654005>
- Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 153–189. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313795>
- Smith, B. (2007). The state of the art in narrative inquiry: Some reflections. *Narrative Inquiry*, 17(2), 391–398. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.17.2.13smi>
- Stone-Mediatore, S. (2003). *Reading across borders: Storytelling and knowledge of resistance*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-09764-4>
- Sumara, D., & Davis, B. (1999). Interrupting heteronormativity: Toward a queer curriculum theory. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 29(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0362-6784.00121>
- Toohy, K. (2007). Conclusion: Autonomy/agency through socio-cultural lenses. In A. Barfield & S. Brown (Eds.), *Reconstructing autonomy in language education: Inquiry and innovation* (pp. 231–242). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230596443_19
- Ubaque-Casallas, D., & Aguirre-Garzón, E. (2020). Re-signifying teacher epistemologies through lesson planning: A study on language student teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 22(2), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v22n2.80687>
- Ubaque-Casallas, D., & Castañeda-Peña, H. (2020). Non-normative corporalities and transgender identity in English as a foreign language student teachers. *How*, 27(2), 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.2.548>
- Ubaque-Casallas, D., & Castañeda-Peña, H. (2021). "I'm here and I am queer." Queer teacher identities in ELT: A Colombian study. *Folios*, 53, 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.17227/folios.53-11291>
- Vambe, M. T. (2005). Opening and transforming South African Education. *Open Learning*, 20(3), 285–293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680510500298816>
- Vásquez, C. (2011). TESOL, teacher identity, and the need for "small story" research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(3), 535–545.
- Walby, S., Armstrong, J., & Strid, S. (2012). Intersectionality: Multiple inequalities in social theory. *Sociology*, 46(2), 224–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511416164>
- Walsh, C. (2013). Introducción. Lo pedagógico y lo decolonial: entretejiendo caminos [The pedagogical and the decolo-

- nial: interweaving roads]. En C. Walsh (Ed.), *Pedagogías decoloniales: prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir* (Vol. 1, pp. 23–68). Ediciones Abya-Yala.
- Yedaide, M. M., Álvarez, Z., & Porta, L. (2015). La investigación narrativa como moción epistémico-política [Narrative inquiry as an epistemic and political drive]. *Revista Científica Guillermo de Ockham*, 13(1), 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.21500/22563202.1685>
- Zabala, M. (2016). Decolonial methodologies in education. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational philosophy and theory*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-532-7_498-1

About the Author

Diego Ubaque-Casallas is a language teacher and teacher educator who currently works at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia). He holds an MA degree in Applied Linguistics to TEFL from the same university.

The Socio-Emotional Influence of Past Teachers on Novice English Teachers' Beliefs

La influencia socioemocional de los docentes anteriores
en las creencias de profesores noveles de inglés

Maritza Rosas-Maldonado

Macarena Durán-Castro

Universidad Andres Bello, Santiago, Chile

Annjeanette Martin


Universidad de los Andes, Santiago, Chile


Teachers' past learning experiences, also referred to as "apprenticeship of observation," can affect their beliefs and, in turn, their teaching practices. This study focused on the apprenticeships of observation of Chilean novice English teachers and sought to identify the possible influence of their past English teachers on their teaching and learning views in an English as a foreign language context. The qualitative multiple case study design gathered the narratives of 18 teachers using an open-ended survey and in-depth interviews. Results showed that the teachers' apprenticeship of observation influenced their socio-emotional and affective views on teaching with a main concern on teacher-student relationships. From a sociocultural perspective, it was found that feelings associated with these experiences helped them understand their own practice.


Keywords: apprenticeship of observation, novice EFL teachers, past English teachers, socio-emotional influence, teacher-student relationships

Las experiencias anteriores de aprendizaje de los y las docentes —"aprendizaje por observación"— pueden afectar sus creencias y su práctica. Este estudio se enfocó en las experiencias vividas por docentes noveles de inglés en Chile y en cómo sus propios docentes anteriores de inglés influyeron en su visión de la enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma. En este estudio cualitativo de casos múltiples se recolectaron narraciones de 18 docentes mediante una encuesta abierta y entrevistas en profundidad. El análisis demostró que las experiencias vividas por los y las docentes influyeron en su visión socioemocional y afectiva de la enseñanza con foco en la relación docente-estudiante. Desde una perspectiva sociocultural, se evidenció que los sentimientos asociados a estas experiencias facilitaron la comprensión de su propia práctica.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje por observación, docentes anteriores de inglés, influencia socioemocional, docentes noveles de inglés como lengua extranjera, relación docente-estudiante

Maritza Rosas-Maldonado  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4652-3600> · Email: maritza.rosas@unab.cl

Macarena Durán-Castro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4645-9381> · Email: m.durncastro@uandresbello.edu

Annjeanette Martin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3083-5319> · Email: amartin@uandes.cl

This paper presents results of the first phase of a three-year research project that was supported by the Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica (CONICYT: the Ministry of Education of Chile) under the Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico (FONDECYT: grant number 11181138).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Rosas-Maldonado, M., Durán-Castro, M., & Martin, A. (2021). The socio-emotional influence of past teachers on novice English teachers' beliefs. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90809>

This article was received on September 29, 2020 and accepted on March 25, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Teachers' conceptions and beliefs regarding what teaching and learning entails is influenced by their own past learning experiences, which serve as an "induction to the methods, norms, and discourse of an education system" (Moodie, 2016, p. 29). This influence has been found to affect the views and practices of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) teachers throughout their careers (Barahona, 2014; S. Borg, 2003; Kuzhabekova & Zhaparova, 2016). In fact, it has been found to be even more influential than teacher education programmes, which may explain the "weak effect" that ESL/EFL teacher education has been found to have on student teachers (M. Borg, 2005; Johnson, 1994; Korthagen, 2010; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Preservice teachers' mental images and memories of how they learned as students have been shown to impact their own visions of teaching. They tend to replicate similar strategies and activities that proved effective or enjoyable as students, or to reject negative teaching models, seeking to provide better teaching than they received. Past teachers' personalities and affective characteristics are also influential, inspiring imitation or rejection of similar dispositions and behaviours in their own classrooms (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Moodie, 2016).

Exploration of ESL/EFL teachers' prior language learning experiences (PLLE), or what has been referred to as an "apprenticeship of observation" (AoO; Lortie, 1975), is crucial in understanding teacher beliefs, practices, and development, as it is one of the main reasons for teachers' inability to modify their views or practices (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Studies of teacher cognition have found that what teachers think, know, and believe greatly impacts their decisions inside the classroom (Barnard & Burns, 2012; S. Borg, 2003). However, the impact of PLLE on teachers' beliefs and the pedagogical decisions they make in the classroom has not been thoroughly studied, particularly in EFL settings (S. Borg, 2006). Additionally, because the focus has been

mostly on preservice teachers, analysis of AoO has been restricted to early teacher education (Kuzhabekova & Zhaparova, 2016). This highlights the need for broader research, particularly regarding the teaching and learning beliefs of novice in-service teachers in an EFL setting (S. Borg, 2009; Kubanyiova, 2014).

In this context, this paper seeks to understand and analyse the phenomenon of AoO by focusing on the impact that past school and university teachers of English have on novice EFL teachers' views about teaching and learning. By doing so, we hope to help English teachers appreciate the importance of reflecting on their pre-existing knowledge of teaching and learning and how it may affect their own practice. Additionally, by analysing novice teachers' beliefs regarding teaching and learning, we seek to encourage EFL teacher education programmes to rethink how future English teachers are learning to teach.

Literature Review

Sociocultural Perspective

This study is framed within a sociocultural perspective of teacher learning and professional development. As with other research in these areas (Golombek & Johnson, 2019; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Kubanyiova, 2012), we adhere to a more inclusive view of teacher cognition, which highlights what teachers think, know, and believe (S. Borg, 2003), but also encompasses the socio-emotional and affective aspects of teaching (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2016; Kubanyiova, 2012; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This broader view of teachers' mental lives recognises, as Vygotsky (1981) argues, that cognition is socially mediated. In other words, higher or complex mental functions originate on the interpsychological plane as people participate in social activities. Through these interactions, knowledge is gained and gradually "internalised" through a transformative process that occurs via "mediation" (Golombek & Johnson, 2019).

This process of mediation in teacher learning is “shaped in and through their experiences as learners, the cultural practices of teacher education, and the particulars of their teaching context, all embedded within larger sociocultural histories yet appropriated in individual ways” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 4). This implies that the pedagogical knowledge, acquired both before and during teacher preparation, is mediated by interactions with others (e.g., teacher educators, tools) in a social environment. Thus, training teachers, according to a Vygotskian perspective, involves engaging in “a three-way conversation that places teachers’ prior experiences as learners and often tacit beliefs about pedagogy into conversation with pedagogical content of the teacher education program and observations of teaching and learning in field placements” (Warford, 2011, p. 252). This suggests that teachers need to negotiate their past experiences, their pedagogical beliefs, and the knowledge received from their language teaching education programme. Given the interplay of aspects that form part of the learning to teach process under a Vygotskian perspective, the phenomenon of AoO is relevant.

Apprenticeship of Observation

Teacher cognition research from a sociocultural perspective has highlighted a gap in our understanding of teachers’ lives. Cognition not only encompasses what teachers believe, think, and know, but also connects to their passions and their “emotional journeys,” and how these influence their teaching practices (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 23). Cognition and emotion form a complex interplay within the process of learning to teach, during which teachers associate emotions with their own learning experiences, which help them to understand their teaching practice (Johnson & Worden, 2014). Teachers’ emotional experiences are triggered by their past experiences and are unique to each individual (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Teachers’ past experiences influence their views on teaching and learning in that

they become default options to which they can revert at crucial moments in their teaching practice (Gray, 2019; Lortie, 1975; Tomlinson, 1999).

Lortie’s (1975) seminal work on what he referred to as “apprenticeship of observation” explained how past experiences provided future teachers with a “frontstage” panorama of what teaching involves. However, this view does not grant the “backstage” perspective, which includes teachers’ private intentions, decision-making process, and personal reflections before, during, and after their classroom performance.

From a sociocultural perspective, parallels can be drawn between Lortie’s concept of AoO in regard to teachers’ lived experiences as learners and Vygotsky’s term *perezhivanie*, which refers to “teachers’ emotional experiences grounded in their schooling histories” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 43). As these scholars explain “[teachers’] mediation is shaped by the complex interplay of cognition and emotion, originating in and reshaped through [teachers’] own *perezhivanie*” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 43).

This may explain why the models or anti-models (Moodie, 2016) imitated or rejected by teachers have been found to be related to emotionally relevant experiences. This was evidenced by Miller and Shifflet (2016), whose participants referred to past teachers—both friendly and unpleasant—as “ghost” teachers, given the persistence of these figures in their memories. In addition to positive models, they found that several participants had had unpleasant learner experiences and referred to some educators as “anti-models” due to the negative attitudes they displayed. The impact of such experiences affected these novice teachers throughout their careers, preventing them from using strategies implemented by these teachers.

Ruohotie-Lyhty and Kaikkonen (2009) also found evidence of the impact of past school teachers on novice language teachers. In their study, images of former teachers who were liked and admired were used as models of “good” teachers, while those they disliked

were considered “failure” models. They wanted to emulate positive characteristics, such as being competent, pleasant yet strict, approachable, fair, and assertive, and to reject interactions characterised by unfairness or miscommunication.

Gray (2019) also evidenced the emotional impact of teachers’ PLLE related to former teachers and their classroom management. The novice teachers Gray worked with recalled negative learning experiences, former teachers who made them feel threatened, insecure, and even broken. However, despite these negative memories, eight of the ten participants used similar classroom management systems in their own practices, illustrating the relevance of their AoO on their approach. Moodie (2016) also found negative PLLE, but these novice EFL teachers decided not to replicate what they had experienced as learners. Indeed, AoO as related to former teachers can be so influential as to provide a source of positive or negative motivation in the kind of educator teachers aspire to become (Furlong, 2013).

Chilean Context

English teaching in Chile, as in other EFL contexts, has undergone curricular changes in an attempt to improve proficiency outcomes. However, low levels of English learning achievement persist as evidenced by the results of standardised English tests (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2015). This may be due to the difficult working conditions of teachers, enduring low salaries, long working hours, and little time for other important teaching-related activities, such as class preparation (Ávalos, 2013).

English teachers experience even greater difficulties than educators in other disciplines as concerns motivating students (Glas, 2013) to participate, interact, and use the language in the classroom (Rojas et al., 2013). This makes it harder to comply with Ministry requirements and meet learners’ diverse needs, driving many teachers to resort to traditional teaching practices (Yilorm-Barrientos & Acosta-Morales, 2016), more

grammar than communication oriented (Barahona, 2015; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019).

Furthermore, there are few instances of systematic reflection and self-inquiry provided by second language teaching education programmes in Chile (Martin, 2016). Given the importance of guided reflection in changing preservice teacher belief systems, this absence may create a greater challenge for future teachers.

Novice English teachers are further hindered by the different types of educational contexts where they work. Public schools are State funded and operated, private-subsidised schools are privately operated but receive both private and State funding, and private schools are privately funded and operated. These contexts differ in available teaching resources, number of students per classroom, number of hours of English instruction, salary and contractual conditions, and curricular requirements.

The Present Study

Considering the interplay of aspects involved in learning to teach and the somewhat adverse teaching scenarios, the core goal of this study is to explore the influence of past school and university teachers of English on novice English teachers’ views on teaching and learning in an EFL context.

Method

Design

A qualitative multiple case study (Stake, 2005) was conducted as part of a larger research project that aimed to explore the phenomenon of AoO and its influence on novice English teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding language teaching and learning. The main research project approach was to study a number of cases jointly to investigate teachers’ mental lives and the emotions and feelings (Kubanyiova, 2012) they experienced as learners. The nature of this phenomenon was well-suited for this research design allowing an in-depth

analysis of novice English teachers' personal accounts from working in three different educational settings.

Participants

Using purposive sampling, the larger study involved 18 novice English teachers (NETs henceforth; 14 women, 4 men) aged from 23 to 35 and working in different educational contexts in the Santiago Metropolitan Region of Chile. The study focused on novice teachers, expecting that memories of their PLLE would be fresher than those of more experienced teachers who have had more opportunities for reflection (Kuzhabekova & Zhaparova, 2016). Teachers from the three types of schools (public, private-subsidised, and private) were included to provide a more complete view of the influence of past experiences on different teaching contexts. All participants graduated from education programmes within the region and were undertaking their first three years of teaching. The paper focuses on the participants' in-depth accounts of how their own teachers influenced their current beliefs regarding teaching and learning English. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

Data Collection

The data for the larger study were collected by means of an online questionnaire and subsequent face-to-face in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was sent to novice English teachers within the Metropolitan Region via social networks and emails directed at teaching programmes, which helped us reach ex-students now working as teachers. The software used for this initial instrument was SurveyGizmo. Once teachers had completed the survey and agreed to participate in the follow-up stages (18 participants in total), they were contacted via email to schedule interviews covering their perceptions and narratives as expressed in the questionnaire. In-depth interviews were conducted individually within a month of questionnaire completion. The whole process took around six months. Both data enquiry

instruments complied with ethical requirements. The design of the instruments is detailed below.

Questionnaire

For the larger project, an initial questionnaire was designed to include a closed-ended section that elicited teachers' general beliefs on teaching and learning English (adapted from A. V. Brown, 2009) and an open-ended section using narrative frames that gathered a brief account of teachers' PLLE in school and university settings (taken from Moodie, 2016). This survey format allowed collection of uniform data in terms of type and degree of specificity and provided an initial encounter with teaching and learning beliefs and PLLE upon which to base the interviews. For the purpose of this paper, only data from the open-ended section of the questionnaire involving teachers' recollections of their PLLE were considered.

Narrative frames are similar to open-response questionnaires (J. D. Brown, 2001) because they elicit detailed data and can guide the respondent towards particular events, such as their experiences as learners (Barkhuizen, 2011). This instrument includes an important "temporal aspect that allows participants to relate past experiences with current or future actions" (Moodie, 2016, p. 32). This instrument also makes it possible to connect diachronic experiences with participants' perspectives (Mackey & Gass, 2005), and functions as a mediational tool by helping teachers to "make their tacit thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, fears, and hopes explicit" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 491). The instrument used seven frames adapted from Moodie (2016) that participants completed online via the SurveyGizmo software platform. Prompts (see Appendix) were adapted to the Chilean context and translated into Spanish, the participants' mother tongue, to favour rich, descriptive responses and piloted with novice English teachers and English teacher-researchers. A response of between 50 and 100 words was required for each prompt in order to provide sufficient data.

Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with the 18 teachers who had completed the questionnaire and expressed willingness to continue in the study. Preliminary data from the questionnaire were used to design interviews unique to each teacher. This face-to-face encounter made it possible to clarify information expressed in the questionnaire, enquire further into participants' PLLE, and confirm preliminary connections between PLLE and beliefs regarding teaching and learning. Each interview lasted one hour and was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed for analytical purposes.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews were examined using theme analysis. Each researcher conducted a preliminary reading of the interviews to familiarise themselves with the content and apply coding to key ideas. The researchers then discussed their coding before classifying the information into broader themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A codebook was created from the data and uploaded into the online analytical application Dedoose for final codification.

For the purposes of this paper, the evidence presented here focused on one main theme, that of "teacher-student relationships," which emerged from working with holistic coding of entire excerpts (Saldaña, 2016). This theme was one of the most frequently appearing, referenced in 66% (12 of the 18 NETS) of the interviews conducted. Within this theme, the most representative aspects that teachers mentioned are presented in the findings. In the following section, the ideas of this theme are illustrated and analysed in selected excerpts (authors' own translations) from participant accounts. Following qualitative procedures, the ideas presented in the findings were not quantified.

It should be noted that, for the present paper, only four of the narrative frames (Items 1–4, see Appendix) used in the second section of the questionnaire were

analysed in conjunction with the interviews as they specifically concerned recollections of English lessons and/or teachers from school and university. As mentioned, the interviews allowed teachers to add depth to those initial narratives. Study trustworthiness was confirmed through data triangulation and peer examination (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the former using the two data sources gathered and the latter through the discussion of key elements during analysis.

Findings

The teachers' reflections on their particular learning experiences, both positive and negative, that will be presented below in the findings have influenced their views on teaching and learning English. As will be shown, their reflections illustrate the impact of their PLLE on their appreciation and concern regarding the importance of building a positive teacher-student relationship.

Socio-Emotional Connection and Support

The participating teachers were primarily concerned with providing socio-emotional support to their students to help them connect to English. They expressed a desire to be close to their students, to support them emotionally and connect individually with them, and show interest and affection for them as human beings. Some also expressed the intention of emphasising students' individual strengths, thus motivating them to learn English. These ideas are reflected in the following excerpt from Lorena, a teacher from a private-subsidised school:

I try to be close to my students, just like my teachers at university were with me; I try to connect with them . . . I don't befriend my students, but [I want] them to see me as somebody they can ask questions, somebody they can trust. You also have to be more affectionate with the younger ones than with the older students because . . . they look to you for emotional support.

Lorena reflected on what is important for her as a teacher, referring to a past experience in which she felt close to her university teachers. Her concern for closeness and emotional support is particularly important within her current school context. Accounts provided by other teachers working in similarly vulnerable contexts suggest that these schools are particularly challenging because teachers often find themselves providing emotional support. Lorena elaborated, recalling a teacher who helped her through personal difficulties while at university:

I experienced all of this at university . . . I was going through a vocational crisis and my Linguistics teacher took me aside because he realised I wasn't OK and we had a long talk . . . In fact, I think it was because of him that I stayed at university, because I was about to walk out . . . It's about more than teaching methodologies.

Lorena connected a particular experience as a university student to her main concern as a teacher today. She recalled a teacher whose approachability, assertiveness, and kindness helped her through a difficult time, and the emotions she felt then still seem to resonate today; she perceived her own teaching as an affective/emotional activity, which she considered just as relevant as classroom teaching strategies.

This theme of connecting with students is further developed by Karina, a teacher working in a private school, who recalled one teacher who established a connection by empathising with students. Karina highlighted how her teacher got to know her students and their interests to motivate them to learn:

I particularly remember this primary school teacher . . . She tried to involve herself in what you liked, to motivate you, because only three hours of English classes a week isn't much time to connect with the students . . . One has to bear in mind that we're working with human beings; it's not like you're working with computers that turn on, store information, and then leave. She was able to achieve that connection. I think she influenced me in that way. (Interview)

Karina recalled and appreciated her teacher's effort (still to this day) and the impact gave rise to the efforts she made to connect with her own students during their few hours of English instruction—three hours per week is typical in many Chilean schools. For Karina, connecting with her students is fundamental, as she views teaching from a socio-humanistic perspective, not merely as content delivery.

Our participants' best memories were of empathetic and trustworthy teachers who were emotionally supportive and involved in their students' interests, motivating them to learn. These learning experiences are now having a positive influence on how these novice teachers relate to their own students (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Moodie, 2016). In both cases above, the teachers related positive feelings that they had experienced as students—emotions that have helped them understand and think about their own teaching (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Johnson & Worden, 2014) as a humanistic and active endeavour, not only a cognitive one. As such, it is connected to the feelings and actions they experienced as students: "As an emotional practice, teaching activates, colors, and expresses teachers' own feelings, and the actions in which those feelings are embedded (i.e., teachers' inner streams of experience)" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838).

Similar to Lorena and Karina's experiences, Daniela, who works in a subsidised-inclusive type of school, commented on the importance of possessing the socio-emotional competencies necessary to establish positive connections with students. She observed that these skills are overlooked or ignored in most teaching programmes; teacher-student closeness is often viewed negatively given the potential problems it could provoke. However, she disagreed with this view, considering emotional support to be of great importance to English teaching.

I think that it has to do with the social skills of each person, because not all teachers have the ability to calm their students down and you don't learn that at university. They teach you methodology, perhaps didactics, but they

don't teach you how to connect with students. In fact, the more distant you are from the student, the better, because that way you're less likely to have problems. I don't share that [view] myself. . . . I think that emotions are a central factor in learning any content or language.

Daniela further elaborated on why she considered teachers' socio-emotional skills as crucial to the learning process. If students are not emotionally well in the classroom, they are less likely to be interested and motivated to learn. This seems to be of particular concern in certain school contexts where it is more difficult to engage and motivate adolescents:

If you're not in a positive frame of mind or you don't feel well, you're not going to learn anything. If you have problems at home and you're sad or frustrated or fed up, especially in high school . . . when you teach in high school, teenagers, even in 8th grade, they're just not interested . . . and there are a lot of personal problems and negative emotions.

Daniela related this view to her time as a student, connecting positive feelings to her learning experiences in which former teachers provided emotional support, helping her overcome teenage motivational issues.

Also, many teachers helped me when I was a teenager and I didn't want anything to do with anything or anybody, . . . I never said that to them, but through their motivation, care... "you can do it"... a hand on your shoulder... "It's OK, if you're not learning, it doesn't matter, it's not the end of the world." It's that calmness, and you say, "they're right"; I think that as a teacher, you have to cross that human-to-human barrier.

Daniela still recalled her former teachers' ability to calm their students, to care for their well-being at a particularly difficult age. These abilities and attitudes still resonate with her today and affect the way she perceives her own teaching. It is clear that this experience has mediated her own learning as a teacher and helped

mould her understanding and approach to teaching, focusing more on her students' well-being than on their academic success (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017).

Building Positive Horizontal Relationships

Related to connection and support, the participating teachers expressed a keen interest in building horizontal relationships, unlike some of the traditional, hierarchical teacher-student relationships they had experienced. Felipe, another teacher in a private-subsidised school, emphasised the importance of horizontal, non-directive teacher-student relationships:

I believe in the social development of the human being; for me, that's the aim, especially in the classroom . . . If we could make students understand that they are important people in a small society and soon in a big society, that would be ideal. I think that comes from my experience at university. Sometimes you perform better when you feel that the teacher's more human, not so distant; that also gives you more confidence to ask them questions, because they're not seen as a distant authority with whom you can't even talk. I think that's why I'm like that.

Connected to his own experience as a university student and the associated positive emotions, Felipe understood teaching as a social activity whose focus should be on equal partnerships between teacher and students. Felipe believed that a classroom environment should be based on non-directive communication (Joyce et al., 2004), which is crucial to students' learning and performance in class and to their future insertion into society.

Felipe mentioned a particular teacher from the university whose way of relating to students made an impact on him.

She is absolutely the best of all the teachers at my university. She really knows her stuff, but she's also the most modest. You can tell that she values all of the students' efforts and relates to them horizontally. You

don't end up seeing her as some distant idol or anything like that, although that happens a lot at university.

Here, Felipe recalled a past teacher who acknowledged and valued the efforts of all students, regardless of status, based on relationships of equality. The positive feelings experienced by Felipe as a student were clearly reflected in the way he thinks about his teaching practice today:

This helps me to appreciate that I am no better than my pupils, that, really, we are all learning. I'm only in my second year of teaching and I'm also learning with them, so I can't feel superior if we're all learning together. I feel that without those role models I might not see it like that.

Felipe's views on equal relationships were shaped by his own learning experiences as he observed and experienced how a particular teacher related to her students (Johnson, 2009). As in the previous cases, Felipe's positive emotions triggered by this lived learning experience clearly influenced his humanistic perspective on teaching, where all students are viewed as equals (Furlong, 2013).

Anti-Model

A less pleasant PLLE was lived by Amanda, a teacher in a private-subsidised school, who recalled one particular past teacher who served as an anti-model that she was determined not to follow.

I remember that she presented this image of a teacher who just doesn't want to teach. I don't know whether that was the reason, or perhaps she was just totally exhausted . . . She did it without any enthusiasm. She would just sit behind her desk all day. The only time she would move would be to write on the board occasionally . . . To me that was precisely what not to do . . . I remember that her voice was, like, flat. That semester was terrible for me; I hated it.

Amanda began her reflection on this past teacher and her learning experience with a strong statement:

"She presented this image of a teacher who just doesn't want to teach." Although she tried to identify the reason for this teacher's behaviour, she firmly believed that it was not an acceptable way of teaching.

From further recollection, it is clear that this past teacher's attitude generated a lack of interest and motivation on the part of her students, and her failure to build a teacher-student relationship was likely mirrored by them.

[The teacher's attitude] takes away all interest, all motivation, seeing the teacher just sitting there, giving her class, and leaving . . . there's no time to get to know each other. I don't even remember her asking me my name or having to introduce ourselves during the first lesson. I remember that at the end of the semester she told us that she was bad at remembering names, but there were only nine of us! (Amanda)

Amanda described what she considered a negative attitude from her former teacher: "seeing the teacher just sitting there, giving her class, and leaving . . . there's no time to get to know each other." Above, Karina referred to an anti-model, which she rejected in her own teaching, and this perspective was evidently shared by Amanda. Amanda connected negative emotions to this past interaction, which helped her form an opposing view of teaching, with an affective/emotional focus:

To be honest, for me it's everything; my relationship with my students is everything. This connection, it's . . . the way I stand in front [of the class], my attitude in school, outside school. Sometimes I'll be waiting for the bus and talking with five 9th grade kids.

Amanda further reflected on how important she now thinks it is to build a teacher-student relationship. She added that such a connection requires a nurturing attitude in all aspects of school life, and that teachers should try to relate to students both in and beyond the classroom.

Amanda's recollections illustrate how negative learning experiences can motivate teachers to turn them into something positive for their own students (Moodie, 2016). Amanda was able to leave behind a "feared vision" of a teacher she did not aspire to imitate and turned it into a "desired vision" of the teacher she is today (Furlong, 2013; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). This further confirms the impact of AoO in shaping teachers' thinking regarding their own practice and how by enquiring further into their PLLE, teacher educators are more likely to understand and help future teachers reshape their attitudes. In Amanda's case, this mediational process occurred through personal reflection on an unpleasant learning experience and the associated negative emotions (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Discussion

The novice teachers who participated in the study showed strong positive and negative emotions associated with experiences lived as students. In the cases analysed here, these experiences reflected the way past English teachers related to them as students. Although a positive teacher-student relationship can be important in any content area, in these specific cases analysed and because they are EFL teachers, they specifically recalled how those relationships impacted their feelings about learning English. These learning experiences helped shape participants' views on teaching and prioritise affective/emotional aspects (i.e., positive teacher-student relationships) in their own practice. This suggests that interactions with former teachers have mediated their process of learning to teach in favour of their own professional development (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Johnson & Worden, 2014). It is clear from their reflections that the teachers understand teaching as primarily an emotional activity in which the teacher-student relationship is central (Hagenauer et al., 2015; He & Cooper, 2011). They are concerned about connecting with their students through approachability and kind-

ness, providing emotional support, and engaging in horizontal relationships. These elements are central to nurturing quality teacher-student relationships that prioritise student well-being over academic performance (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017).

Closer inspection of this shared concern reveals that it has indeed been shaped by interactions with former teachers (Gray, 2019; Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Moodie, 2016; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Kaikkonen, 2009) whose attitudes and behaviours in the classroom inspired these novice teachers to conceive their own teaching practice as humanistic and affect-oriented (Furlong, 2013). Most of what they remember from these former teachers has to do with kindness, creating pleasant learning environments through emotional support and connection, and getting to know their students (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). As in Miller and Shifflet's study, our novice teachers highlight the positive and negative feelings associated with these learning experiences. Similar to the notion of "ghost teachers," they remember specific teachers themselves more clearly than the teaching strategies used. In Amanda's case, the influence of these past teachers was so strong that the associated negative feelings led her to reject the teacher model she observed, transforming it into an anti-model, and a desire to be a different kind of teacher: One who has succeeded in shedding that "ghost" teacher (Miller & Shifflet, 2016) or "failure" model (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Kaikkonen, 2009).

This suggests that teacher models—informed by teachers' AoO—can influence novice teachers' views of their practice, especially those former teachers who are emotionally meaningful to them, either positively or negatively (Davin et al., 2018; Gray, 2019; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). In fact, prior teacher models can act as a "frame of reference" for novice teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 224).

It is worth considering that the impact of teachers' AoO on their beliefs may be perceived more clearly in novice teachers who may have yet to analyse their

prior views of teaching and learning (S. Borg, 2006; Freeman, 2002; Lortie, 1975). However, other factors may also influence these teachers' perspectives. The position of a novice teacher is challenging given the unfamiliar reality and struggles they face (Farrell, 2012; He & Cooper, 2011; Korthagen, 2010). The novice teachers analysed here show a desire to get to know their students and to understand their learning and emotional needs as a means to connect with them and engage them in the learning process (Curry et al., 2016; He & Cooper, 2011).

Finally, the school context also plays a role in the humanistic and affective teaching perspective of these novices. In two of the cases presented here, Lorena and Daniela make it clear that the teacher-student relationship was fundamental in their specific educational contexts and teaching levels. Lorena felt that she must support her students emotionally based on the vulnerability of their context. For Daniela, working with teenagers meant that she had to connect with them in order to motivate them to learn. They were each influenced by their specific teaching contexts (Flores & Day, 2006; He & Cooper, 2011) and the additional challenges associated with teaching English in Chile, particularly in terms of motivation when compared to other disciplines (Glas, 2013).

Conclusion

Although each of the participating teachers experienced different past learning situations in different contexts, one resulting belief was shared by all of them: the importance of building and nurturing a positive teacher-student relationship. Learning experiences involving certain past teachers appeared to be strong enough to impact their current views on teaching and their understanding of how to be a "good" teacher. These novice teachers' humanistic and affective perspective on teaching is important, as it confirms that they view teaching not only as a cognitive activity, but also as an emotional process (Hargreaves, 1998). This in turn

confirms what the sociocultural perspective proposes in relation to the learning to teach process: "It is not merely what teachers saw and did as learners that influences their thinking about teaching and learning, it is the emotional experiences [*perezhivanie*] associated with their schooling histories that play a central role in understanding teaching activity" (Johnson & Worden, 2014, p. 128).

The present study calls on EFL teacher education programmes to rethink how future English teachers learn to teach. We believe that preservice teachers' impressions of teaching—derived from their AoO—should be acknowledged, as these inform interpretations that they believe to be true (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Such impressions must be analysed reflectively and critically as part of the process of learning to teach within the second language teacher education agenda (Wright, 2010). As Johnson and Golombek (2018) propose:

Establishing a sense of teachers' *perezhivanie* can help teacher educators understand teachers' past (e.g., apprenticeship of observation) and present (e.g., how they are experiencing the practices of teacher education) and engage in mediation that is responsive to teachers' future (the teacher they envision being). (p. 6)

In view of our participant teachers' main concern, we consider that socio-emotional skills should be addressed in teacher education programmes. This recommendation is supported by studies within language learning psychology that have shown the relevance of students' well-being (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; Mercer & Gkonou, 2020) and teachers' emotional well-being (Hagenauer et al., 2015) above measurable learning outcomes.

The main limitation of this study concerned the number of teachers that volunteered to participate, which may reflect an element of self-selection; the access to a wider network of possible participants, rather than relying on social media; and the fact that all

of the teachers were from the populated metropolitan region of the country. Future studies would benefit from reaching a wider base of teachers and including novice teachers from other areas of the country. Further research could be extended to explore the ways in which EFL teacher education programmes guide future teachers in negotiating their current views on teaching relative to their PLLE as part of their identity formation process (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

References

- Agencia de Calidad de la Educación. (2015). *Síntesis resultados de aprendizaje: Simce 2014, inglés* [Summary of learning outcomes: Simce 2014, English]. Gobierno de Chile. <https://bit.ly/2L9ETwQ>
- Ávalos, B. (Ed.). (2013). *¿Héroes o villanos?: La profesión docente en Chile* [Heroes or villains?: The teaching profession in Chile]. Editorial Universitaria de Chile.
- Barahona, M. (2014). Pre-service teachers' beliefs in the activity of learning to teach English in the Chilean context. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 10(2), 116–122. https://psyjournals.ru/files/70042/kip_2014_2_barahona.pdf
- Barahona, M. (2015). *English language teacher education in Chile: A cultural historical activity theory perspective*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315689937>
- Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative knowledging in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(3), 391–414.
- Barnard, R., & Burns, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Researching language teacher cognition and practice, international case studies*. Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847697912>
- Borg, M. (2005). A case study of the development in pedagogic thinking of a pre-service teacher. *TESL-EJ*, 9(2), 1–30. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1065854>
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(2), 81–109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903>
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. Continuum.
- Borg, S. (2009). Language teacher cognition. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 163–171). Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, A. V. (2009). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching: A comparison of ideals. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(1), 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00827.x>
- Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language programs*. Cambridge University Press.
- Calderhead, J., & Robson, M. (1991). Images of teaching: Student teachers' early conceptions of classroom practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(1), 1–8. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(91\)90053-R](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(91)90053-R)
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Curry, J. R., Webb, A. W., & Latham, S. J. (2016). A content analysis of images of novice teacher induction: First-semester themes. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 6(1), 43–65. <https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2016.06.1.04>
- Davin, K. J., Chavoshan, I., & Donato, R. (2018). Images of past teachers: Present when you teach. *System*, 72, 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.12.001>
- Farrell, S. C. (2012). Novice-service language teacher development: Bridging the gap between preservice and in-service education and development. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(3), 435–449. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.36>
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002>
- Freeman, D. (2002). The hidden side of the work: Teacher knowledge and learning to teach. *Language Teaching*, 35(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444801001720>
- Furlong, C. (2013). The teacher I wish to be: Exploring the influence of life histories on student teacher idealised identities. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(1), 68–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2012.678486>

- Gkonou, C., & Mercer, S. (2017). *Understanding emotional and social intelligence among English language teachers*. British Council.
- Glas, K. (2013). *Teaching English in Chile: A study of teacher perceptions of their professional identity, student motivation and pertinent learning contents*. Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-03076-1>
- Golombek, P. R., & Johnson, K. E. (2019). Materialising a Vygotskian-inspired language teacher education pedagogy. In S. Walsh & S. Mann (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English language teacher education* (pp. 25–37). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315659824>
- Gray, P. L. (2019). Mitigating the apprenticeship of observation. *Teaching Education*, 31(4), 404–423. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2019.1631785>
- Hagenauer, G., Hascher, T., & Volet, S. E. (2015). Teacher emotions in the classroom: Associations with students' engagement, classroom discipline and the interpersonal teacher-student relationship. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 30(4), 385–403. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-015-0250-0>
- Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14(8), 835–854. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(98\)00025-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(98)00025-0)
- He, Y., & Cooper, J. (2011). Struggles and strategies in teaching: Voices of five novice secondary teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 38(2), 97–116. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23479695>
- Johnson, K. E. (1994). The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10(4), 439–452. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(94\)90024-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(94)90024-8)
- Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878033>
- Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2011). The transformative power of narrative in second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(3), 486–509.
- Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2016). *Mindful L2 teacher education: A sociocultural perspective on cultivating teachers' professional development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315641447>
- Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2018). Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(1), 116–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777539>
- Johnson, K. E., & Worden, D. (2014). Cognitive/emotional dissonance as growth points in learning to teach. *Language and Sociocultural Theory*, 1(2), 125–150. <https://doi.org/10.1558/lst.v1i2.125>
- Joyce, B., Weil, M., & Calhoun, E. (2004). *Models of teaching* (7th ed.). Pearson Educational.
- Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist*, 27(1), 65–90. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2701_6
- Korthagen, F. A. (2010). How teacher education can make a difference. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(4), 407–423. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2010.513854>
- Kubanyiova, M. (2012). *Teacher development in action: Understanding language teachers' conceptual change*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230348424>
- Kubanyiova, M. (2014). Knowledge base of language teachers. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopaedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1–6). Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1415>
- Kubanyiova, M., & Feryok, A. (2015). Language teacher cognition in applied linguistics research: Revisiting the territory, redrawing the boundaries, reclaiming the relevance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(3), 435–449. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12239>
- Kuzhabekova, A., & Zhaparova, R. (2016). The effects of apprenticeship of observation on teachers' attitudes towards active learning instruction. *Educational Studies Moscow*, 2, 208–228. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1814-9545-2016-2-208-228>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design* (1st ed.). Routledge.

- Martin, A. (2016). Second language teacher education in the expanding circle: The EFL methodology course in Chile. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 18(1), 24–42. <https://doi.org/10.14483/calj.v18n1.9471>
- Mercer, S., & Gkonou, C. (2020). Relationships and good language teachers. In C. Griffiths & Z. Tajeddin (Eds.), *Lessons from good language teachers* (pp. 164–174). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108774390.016>
- Miller, K., & Shifflet, R. (2016). How memories of school inform preservice teachers' feared and desired selves as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 53, 20–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.10.002>
- Moodie, I. (2016). The anti-apprenticeship of observation: How negative prior language learning experience influences English language teachers' beliefs and practices. *System*, 60, 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.05.011>
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307–332. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543062003307>
- Rojas, D., Zapata, Á., & Herrada, M. (2013). Enseñanza del inglés en los colegios municipales de Chile: ¿Dónde estamos y hacia dónde vamos? [The teaching of English in Chilean public schools, where are we? Where are we going?]. *Foro Educativo*, (22), 95–108.
- Ruohotie-Lyhty, M., & Kaikkonen, P. (2009). The difficulty of change: The impact of personal school experience and teacher education on the work of beginning language teachers. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 53(3), 295–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830902917378>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.
- Sato, M., & Oyanedel, J. C. (2019). "I think that is a better way to teach but...": EFL teachers' conflicting beliefs about grammar teaching. *System*, 84, 110–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.06.005>
- Stake, R. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage.
- Tomlinson, P. (1999). Conscious reflection and implicit learning in teacher preparation. Part II: Implications for a balanced approach. *Oxford Review of Education*, 25(4), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/030549899103973>
- Vélez-Rendón, G. (2002). Second language teacher education: A review of the literature. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(4), 457–467. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2002.tb01884.x>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). Pensamiento y Palabra [Thought and word]. *Infancia y Aprendizaje: Journal for the Study of Education and Development*, 4, 15–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02103702.1981.10821886>
- Warford, M. K. (2011). The zone of proximal teacher development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 252–258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.008>
- Wright, T. (2010). Second language teacher education: Review of recent research on practice. *Language Teaching*, 43(3), 259–296. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000030>
- Yilorm-Barrientos, Y., & Acosta-Morales, H. (2016). Neoliberalismo y proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa en Chile: Una mirada dialéctica al estado del arte en sectores vulnerables [Neoliberalism and the process of English language teaching and learning in Chile: A critical analysis of this process in vulnerable sectors of the Chilean society]. *Revista Cubana de Educación Superior*, 35(3), 125–136. <https://bit.ly/395Ftng>
- Zeichner, K. M., & Tabachnick, B. R. (1981). Are the effects of university teacher education 'washed out' by school experience? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(3), 7–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718103200302>

About the Authors

Maritza Rosas-Maldonado, PhD, is an English teacher and researcher at Universidad Andres Bello, Santiago, Chile. Her research interests are related to teaching and learning foreign/second languages and initial EFL teacher education.

Macarena Durán-Castro is an EFL teacher and research assistant. She is currently doing a TESOL MA at Universidad Andres Bello, Santiago, Chile. Her research interests are related to English teaching and learning and initial EFL teacher education.

Annjeanette Martin, PhD, is a language teacher, teacher educator, and researcher at Universidad de los Andes, Santiago, Chile. Her current research interests are related to teaching and learning foreign/second languages and initial EFL teacher education programs.

Appendix: Narrative Frames

1. The English lessons that I remember most clearly are from [primary school/secondary school/university]. They were...
2. The English teachers that I remember most clearly are from [primary school/secondary school/university]. They were...
3. My best memories of English lessons at [primary school/secondary school/university] are...
4. My worst memories of English lessons at [primary school/secondary school/university] are...
5. The student experiences that have positively and negatively influenced the way I teach today are... (describe at least one positive and one negative, and explain why you think they have influenced your teaching method).
6. As a teacher, I think that nowadays, English lessons at [primary school/secondary school/university] are...
7. I have had some successful teaching experiences in the classroom. I think that the main reasons for this success are...

Approaching Teaching as a Complex Emotional Experience: The Teacher Professional Development Stages Revisited

Abordando la enseñanza como una experiencia emocional compleja: las etapas de desarrollo profesional del maestro revisitadas

Perla Villegas-Torres

M. Martha Lengeling


Universidad de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico


Along the evolving teaching journey, teachers experience a series of events that allow them to transition from novice to expert. Throughout the years, such transition has been the object of theories and debates about how this process is carried out, and when it is that teachers move from one stage to the other. This article presents a study of a Mexican teacher of English and examines the professional-developmental stages based on Huberman's (1993) career cycle model. Its aim is to understand the challenges and decisions a teacher may encounter in her or his career. The article shows the realities a teacher faces by exploring the concepts of emotions, identity, socialization, and agency. Moreover, it questions the belief that teachers achieve expertise through accumulating years of practice.

Keywords: agency, emotions, identity, socialization, teacher professional development

Durante su carrera, los docentes experimentan eventos que les permiten pasar de principiantes a expertos. A través de los años dicha transición ha sido objeto de debates sobre cómo se lleva a cabo y cuándo se efectúa el cambio. Este artículo presenta un estudio de una maestra de inglés mexicana y examina las etapas de su desarrollo profesional basado en el modelo de Huberman (1993). El objetivo del artículo es comprender las dificultades y decisiones que un docente encuentra durante su carrera. El artículo ilustra las realidades enfrentadas por una docente mediante la exploración de los conceptos de socialización, identidad, emociones y agencia. Adicionalmente, desafía la creencia de que los docentes adquieren experiencia mediante la acumulación de años de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: agencia, desarrollo profesional docente, emociones, identidad, socialización

Perla Villegas-Torres  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3153-0920> · Email: p.villegastorres@ugto.mx

M. Martha Lengeling  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2570-5002> · Email: lengelin@ugto.mx

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Villegas-Torres, P., & Lengeling, M. M. (2021). Approaching teaching as a complex emotional experience: The teacher professional development stages revisited. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 231–242. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.89181>

This article was received on July 15, 2020 and accepted on March 5, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

Teachers are part of a continuously changing career with a series of events and incidents which allow them to equip themselves with the knowledge and experiences necessary to move towards expertise. In most cases, it is a complex process characterized by continuous highs and lows because of the tremendous struggles that teachers undertake while handling their numerous responsibilities. Teachers face situations that challenge their stability and they are also given opportunities to change and grow while dealing with students, collaborating with colleagues at work, or exploring professional ventures in their careers. Throughout the years, this process of transitions has been the object of several theories and debates (Berliner, 2004; Bullough, 1989; Burden, 1982; Dreyfus, 2004; Katz, 1972; to name a few) regarding the different stages that teachers go through.

We introduce the participant, Violet, by providing a description of who she is and how she became an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher in Mexico. Next a literature review is provided regarding teacher professional development (often known as teacher development), and Huberman's (1993) teacher career cycle model: agency, emotions, identity, and teacher socialization. Then, the methodology section shows how this research was carried out using a qualitative paradigm, a narrative approach, and a semistructured interview to gather data. The section of the data analysis shows the different stages that Violet goes through based upon Huberman's (1993) teacher career cycle model. Lastly, we offer conclusions of this research.

Description of the Participant's Background: Violet

We present a description of the participant whose pseudonym is Violet. She teaches EFL at a public university in the northern region of the State of Guanajuato, in central Mexico. Currently, she is in her early thirties and has worked as an EFL teacher for seven years. She

feels she was fortunate enough to be hired in the first place where she asked for a job. As most EFL teachers in Mexico, Violet is a non-native English speaker. Teaching English was not the job that Violet had originally imagined devoting her life to. Her first idea was to work in an international business job, and consequently, she studied for and completed a BA in business degree at a large public university. During her studies she felt it was pertinent to simultaneously learn English in the university language department for four years. After graduating, Violet decided to travel to the United States as a tourist for a short period of time, but her trip extended to a stay of three years in which Violet enrolled in more English classes to strengthen her English level. This stay in the United States was meaningful for her and can perhaps be a consolidation of her English. She narrates the events once that she came back to Mexico in the following excerpt:

When I came back since I studied international business, I wanted to work at the Puerto Interior [an interior logistics center near Leon, Guanajuato], but the salary there was too low and I wanted to continue studying. So, my mom told me: "Why don't you apply at this university [near her home] as an English teacher?" I went and I applied for it. I didn't want to be a teacher, and they gave me the job and I started to teach.

This decision marked the beginning of her journey as an English teacher. She did not plan to be an English teacher, but was offered a job and took it. This represents career entry for Violet which is often the case for EFL teachers in Mexico due to the teachers' proficiency of English. The next section provides a review of the literature and several concepts in relation to Violet's study.

Literature Review

For the purposes of this article, it is fundamental to clarify the concept of teacher professional development, also known as teacher development. As defined by

Bell and Gilbert (1994) “teacher development can be viewed as teachers’ learning, rather than as others getting teachers to change. In learning, the teachers [construct] their beliefs and ideas, developing their classroom practice, and attending to their feelings associated with changing” (p. 493). This implies that teacher development cannot occur as top-down or imposed knowledge but instead, it is linked to an internal and personal determination to improve as a professional.

Given the importance that teacher professional development entails in the field of education, this phenomenon has been constantly studied by several authors. In her article, Avalos (2011) presents a review of publications spanning a complete decade from 2000 to 2010 regarding the main factors influencing teacher development, such as teacher learning, facilitation, collaboration, reflection processes, cognition, beliefs, and practice. Avalos’s conclusion focuses on the fact that more recent research has attained an acknowledgment of the fact that teachers should be “both the subjects and objects of learning and development” (p. 17). In other words, previous literature concerning this area focused on providing teacher training, presenting teachers only as passive knowledge-receptors. Conversely, the more recent change consists of showing awareness of the fact that teachers’ internal reflection and cognitive processes are decisive factors which influence teacher professional development. This same idea is reflected in the assertion that teacher professional development is based on constructivism and thus, teachers should be considered at the same time as learners involved in practices of observation, teaching, evaluation, and reflection (Dadds, 2001; King & Newmann, 2000; Lieberman, 1994; McLaughlin & Zarrow, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Such a constructivist approach implies that teacher development does not occur in a linear way, but rather represents a multi-angular progression in which the already-mentioned cognitive processes are carried out. Likewise, Yoon et al. (2007) conducted a quantita-

tive study to examine the existing evidence on teacher professional development and to determine whether it can be directly reflected in students’ achievement. After reviewing 1,300 studies that addressed this issue, they found that teachers who receive substantial professional development (meaning an average of 49-hours) can enhance students’ achievement with an indicator of 21 percentile points. This information sheds light on the importance of creating more strategies to boost teacher learning and teacher development. Moreover, Dede et al. (2009) sustain that most research in this field is limited in presenting anecdotal work, “without providing full details of the participants, setting, research questions, methods of data collection, or analytic strategies” (p. 8). In this sense, the authors urge researchers in the area to carry out more rigorous studies, with the aim of informing and providing stakeholders (practitioners, students, educational institutions, policy-makers, government, funders, etc.) with the necessary knowledge to make decisions and take actions to promote teachers’ learning and development. An objective of this article is to examine in-depth the lived experiences of an EFL teacher providing details on the issues that she faces through her labor to inform readers about the particularities related to teacher professional development.

Previously, a vast amount of literature on models that discuss the various stages of teacher professional development had been published (Berliner, 2004; Bullough, 1989; Burden, 1982; Dreyfus, 2004; and Katz, 1972; to name a few). All have contributed with different perspectives to shed light on this matter; however, in many cases they promote the common belief that teachers achieve expertise through accumulating years of practice. Nevertheless, this idea might not reflect what happens in the actual practice, being that every teacher is unique in their teacher development.

The analysis presented in this article is guided by Huberman’s (1993) teacher career cycle model of professional development. This model is used with the aim of exploring the stages of a teacher’s career.

Such a model is organized in seven stages. Huberman uses these seven stages to describe the teacher's career cycle of professional development. The first one is the "career entry: survival and discovery", and according to the author it might occur during the first three years of teaching. The second stage is "stabilization," which might go along four to six years of teaching. Around the seventh to the 25th year of teaching, two stages might intermittently take place: "experimentation/diversification" and "reassessment/interrogation." These two stages are interrelated, and teachers might go back and forward between them. Similarly, any of these teachers may advance towards the following stages of "serenity" or "conservatism" approximately occurring in the space from 26 to 33 years of teaching. Teachers can also continuously interchange positions between these two stages or move forward to the final stage known as "disengagement," which is often described with adjectives such as serene or bitter.

There are several reasons for which this model was selected among the others. One of them is that as opposed to other models, it acknowledges that teacher development is not necessarily carried out in a linear or sequential process. Huberman explains this with the following: "It represents the development of a profession rather than a successive series of punctual events. Not always are the cycles experienced in the same order, nor do all the members of a profession traverse each sequence" (p. 3). In a similar manner, Huberman points out that all teachers do not necessarily follow the same fixed pattern in their development by stating that "the sequences characterize the majority of the cases, but never a whole population" (p. 3).

Another feature acknowledged in this model is that every teacher represents a unique situation with its own special characteristics. Therefore, it allows certain flexibility in the study of professional development. Huberman (1993) points out:

For some, this process may appear linear, for others there are stages, regressions, dead-ends, and unpredictable

changes. There are some people who never stop exploring, who never stabilize or who destabilize for psychological reasons. There are people who stabilize early, some later, and some never, some stabilize only to be destabilized. (p. 5)

This excerpt also offers the notion that psychological and emotional factors may be involved in the process of professional development. Similarly, in their study, Malderez et al. (2007) suggest that the process of becoming a teacher involves an experience filled with both positive and negative emotions. This situation becomes especially evident during the first teaching experiences in which teachers tend to overemphasize their difficulties within the classroom. In many cases, teachers might develop a feeling of frustration and defeat that generates the idea of abandoning the profession. This phenomenon is known as teacher burnout which Maslach and Jackson (1981) define as a set of symptoms that include "depersonalization" (meaning a loss of sense of their own reality), "reduced personal accomplishment," as well as "emotional exhaustion" (p. 104). Such symptoms can make teachers feel overwhelmed with negative emotions (Maslach et al., 1996) and thus, they become unable to assertively handle a class.

Also related to these ideas is teacher identity which, according to Norton (2000), has a complex composition since it is fluidly constructed through social interaction. Throughout their careers, teachers' identity tends to evolve and strengthen due to the accumulation of challenges, as well as the positive and negative experiences throughout the teaching practice.

Likewise, another concept relevant to the study of professional development is the term of teacher socialization, defined by Grusec and Hastings (2007) as "the way in which individuals are assisted in becoming members of one or more social groups" (p. 1). When starting their careers, teachers also learn from their peers in both formal and informal situations while

they socialize, observe, reflect, and imitate their peers' practices. Moreover, participation in different social settings allows cognitive development (Lantolf, 2000). In this sense, teachers learn while functioning in different social roles. Knowledge is acquired not only from training programs and peer support, but also from different personal, professional, and social experiences. The guidance and support from a more experienced teacher are fundamental in helping teachers to advance in their learning.

Method

In this section we describe the research methodology and the techniques used to carry out this study.

Qualitative Research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) qualitative research attempts to "interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). For this study, this paradigm supports the researchers to establish direct contact with the participants to collect narratives. It also helps to reconstruct the participants' stories and lived experiences in order to maintain the essence of their accounts. Correspondingly, qualitative research results appropriate when it comes to studying social and human sciences, because "it allows to capture a more human, emotional, and cultural side of the investigation" (Creswell, 2012, p. 40). For the analysis of the EFL teacher's professional development, emotions play an important role in Violet's career.

Mack et al. (2005) state that "the strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions about the 'human' side of an issue. It is effective in identifying behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals" (p. 1). In this study, the participant's narratives were collected in order to have a broad overview of her experiences and identify the elements involved in her teacher professional development.

Narratives

Narrative inquiry represents a pathway to understand experience. Under this frame, the researcher is able to collect the life experiences from participants to tailor stories that capture their fundamental nature, and finally interprets them in narratives of their experience (Hatch & Wisniewski, 2002). This method allows the empowerment of the participants by means of telling their stories. Empowering relationships involve "feelings of connectedness that are developed in situations of equality, caring and mutual purpose, and intention" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). This study presents and interprets the participant's story to understand its connection with teacher professional development.

Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews

Lapan et al. (2011) point out that "semi-structured interviews use a detailed guide to focus on life-chapters, critical life episodes, or specific self-defining memories" (p. 60). Taking this as a guideline, after signing a previous consent form the participant was interviewed, examining events that shaped the participant's career entry and the different stages she went through as a professional. The interview was recorded and transcribed to subsequently proceed to the data analysis. To carry out this study, the teacher's accounts were first collected, in order to learn about her own experience as an EFL teacher. From these stories, her personal ideologies and beliefs were identified, as well as her self-perception.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Before approaching the phases, a point worth mentioning that Bullough (1989) brings to this discussion is that most preservice teachers construct a fantasy in which they picture their future class as an ideal one. Nonetheless, after becoming novice teachers and having their first teaching experiences, they face difficulties in diverse aspects, such as lacking strategies and techniques

for classroom management, administrative pressures, and language proficiency, among others. Due to all these job-related complexities, they soon reach the extreme opposite and develop feelings of insecurity. Regarding Violet's case, she did not have a certain time to idealize how her classes would be. Instead of imaging herself as an EFL teacher, she used to visualize her future as a businesswoman. Nevertheless, while seeking a job with a higher income, she decided to try teaching. In this section, we relate Violet's narrative to four stages of Huberman's (1993) teacher career cycle model of teacher professional development: (a) career entry, (b) stabilization, (c) experimentation/diversification, and (d) reassessment.

Career Entry

Huberman's (1993) model designates the first stage of teacher professional development as career entry. At the same time, he establishes two sub concepts to define this stage: survival and discovery. This first step represents for teachers the hardships of attempting a new career, along with the opportunity to explore the diverse possibilities to solve those hardships. The participant shares her experience as follows:

I had no clue; I just started to teach. I remember like a month after [starting my teaching job] I did not want to be a teacher. I wanted to quit but then my ego was like: "OK, I have to finish this quarter and that's it, then you can go on."

The participant's description of her first days teaching coincides with the description that Huberman (1993) gives about the period of career entry. The author describes it as a period of both survival and discovery. What is more, he adds the survival aspect has to do with the reality shock, in which most teachers experience strong feelings of insecurity. In Violet's words, these first negative emotions constitute the first red flag that might take the teacher towards an accelerated burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) sustain that one of the symptoms

burnout includes is a feeling of depersonalization, which Violet shows when not considering herself a teacher. Another feeling associated with burnout is poor personal achievement, which is reflected in Violet's idea of only finishing the semester. Her statement also shows a certain level of frustration since she was not trained to teach, so that during this period she considered leaving the profession.

Insecurity becomes the most representative emotion of novice teachers, as shown in the following excerpt:

I didn't feel comfortable speaking in front of people, being observed and questioned. I'm very...how can I say it...insecure. I tend to blush very often, which I hate and as a teacher it is awful. I was so nervous, and then students would ask many questions. So, I had to learn to control myself in order to answer those questions and to help my students to understand. It was a big problem for me.

In effect, Huberman (1993) sustains that during the survival stage of career entry teachers tend to feel uncomfortable working in front of the group, suffering from "the vacillation of hostility and intimacy towards one's pupils and uncertainty about the classroom environment" (p. 5). The feeling of preoccupation with the teacher self seems to increase when dealing "with unruly or intimidating students" (p. 5). Probably this comes as a product of the teacher's inexperience and lack of strategies to deal with defiant students, as Violet's account confirms:

I remember once that I got into the classroom and a male student was like "Oh, it's a lady." I'm very insecure and I was like "Oh, my God, I'm in trouble." I started to doubt my knowledge, to feel that my English knowledge was not enough, and I started to hesitate and that does not help in my development. . . . Sometimes there are some students who feel they know everything and that makes me feel like that.

This excerpt gives evidence of the creation of a vicious circle: the more a teacher vacillates, the more

the students challenge her or his authority. Nevertheless, this is a commonly occurring situation during this beginning stage.

Related to this problem is the teachers' "difficulty of combining instruction and classroom management" (Huberman, 1993, p. 5). The novice teacher's lack of knowledge and experience manifests itself through a frantic search for strategies and activities to compensate for this problem, as shown in the following comment:

My main challenge at that time was how to plan my lessons, I didn't know how to organize my classes and the materials. Many of the classes that I was teaching at the university were a copy of what my teachers did in the States. So, if I wanted to introduce an activity, I just remembered my teachers from the States.

According to the above, Violet felt she had a lack of knowledge to plan a lesson at the beginning of her teaching practice. This fact drew her to imitate the way in which her former teachers worked. Regarding this issue, Lortie (1975) proposes the concept of apprenticeship of observation which considers that teachers start learning from their former teachers who act as models. Consequently, this influence can be seen when novice teachers decide to imitate the way in which they were taught.

Among her teachers, Violet chose a specific teacher who served as a role model. In the next excerpt she further explains the reasons for her choice:

I don't like to speak in front of people . . . When I was studying in the States, I had a teacher who spoke five different languages, including Spanish. Once I did not understand something and he said "OK, don't worry," and he explained it to me in Spanish. He never said anything like "Hey guys! She doesn't understand" and he was like "OK, don't worry. I will explain it to you in your own language" and that affected in my life; that's what I want to do when a student is shy. [*sic*]

In reference to the participant's comment, Numrich (1996) explains that normally novice teachers

decide to promote or to avoid specific instructional strategies based on their previous positive or negative experiences.

To transition to the stabilization stage, teachers require support from more experienced peers, experience and knowledge that will allow them to develop their own teaching identity as well as to develop and improve their pedagogical strategies. In the following excerpt, Violet narrates the way in which one of her coworkers supported her: "I didn't know how to plan my lessons, or how to organize them, so Juan helped me to have an idea of how to organize my classes." This teaching peer helped her with practical knowledge of the profession, which increased her self-confidence as a teacher. This in turn made her consider teaching as a serious profession. Violet elaborates more on this matter:

I started to enjoy teaching and yes that's how it happened. It was weird because I did not want it at first, but then I liked it. That was why I started to study the BA [in English language teaching] because I liked to teach after two-three months teaching, and then I started the BA.

Huberman (1993) sustains that in addition to surviving, the stage of career entry also involves an element of discovery. Regarding this, he mentions that the teacher has "the enthusiasm of the beginner, the headiness of finally being in a position of responsibility" (Huberman, 1993, p. 5). The author explains that even when the survival and discovery phases are experienced in parallel, usually one is more dominant than the other. Violet's accounts place her more often on the survival side.

Nonetheless, entering the BA program in English language teaching (ELT) marked a starting point to her developmental process.

When I entered the BA, I changed a lot. I learned how to organize my lessons. I did not pay attention to the lessons or approaches. I started to play with everything: "I learned this, OK I'm gonna apply it. I learned that and I'm gonna apply it." So, I started to play with the

methodologies, approaches, or whatever thing they taught us in the BA.

The eclectic methodology that Violet used during this time coincides with Huberman's claim that the entry stage includes a sort of exploration. As he comments "exploration consists of making provisional choices, of investigating the contours of the new profession and with experimenting with one or several roles" (Huberman, 1993, p. 5). However, this continuous trial and error period should not be interpreted by teachers as falling into erratic behavior. Conversely, this exploration will allow them to understand better the particularities of the profession and eventually to find their own teaching style. From here teachers will move to the next stage as in the case of Violet.

Stabilization

At some point in the teaching journey, after solving the initial intricacies that entering a new career entails and getting a more advanced level of socialization, teachers are able to gain a certain level of confidence in their practice. Such confidence is jointly reflected with the development of agency, which may trigger a desire for growing professionally, that is, teachers find themselves at the door of starting their professional development. The next excerpt illustrates Violet's passage through a transitional period in which she moved from the career entry to the stabilization stage:

When I entered the BA, I changed a lot. I learned how to organize my lessons. I started to feel more comfortable because I felt I have the roots, or I have some knowledge about teaching. So, I thought: "OK, now I can say that I'm a teacher because I'm learning so maybe I'm doing everything wrong but I'm learning so I can experiment with everything."

As Violet explains, starting the BA program in ELT brought her a feeling of confidence. It was then that she felt validated as a teacher within her educational

institution with the knowledge she had obtained in the degree program. In this period, she tries to put into practice what she sees in the BA and she is more confident as a teacher.

For Huberman (1993) this behavior is a sign that the teacher has entered the stabilization stage, which is characterized by "an increased confidence, comfort, and a shift away from self-absorption. One is less preoccupied with oneself, and more concerned with instructional matters" (p. 6). After crossing the turmoil, the teachers' pressures are lessened. The new feeling of comfort can be noticed in the following excerpt:

In my personal life, I'm just shy. For me it is very difficult to go and to talk. If I am like that in the classroom, students do not like it. They expect to see somebody more active. I have to be more extroverted, to look happier, like the opposite that I am.

It seems that this conscious decision-making adds to Violet's professional identity and indicates the transition to the stabilization stage.

Norton (2000) affirms that identity is a fluid process, and here we can see how Violet accommodates herself to the new environment and assumes her role as a teacher. She takes on characteristics that she considers are expected and needed for this role. Huberman (1993) states that "the choice of a professional identity constitutes a decisive stage in ego development and reflects a stronger affirmation of the self" (p. 6). According to Huberman, these factors might put the continuity of teacher professional development at risk. In the next excerpt, Violet details the consequences of falling into a comfort zone.

I think that for a period I got stuck. I think that it is because I was confident, and I started using the same strategy. I was not even preparing the class or material to engage my students.

Apparently, reflecting upon and acknowledging her own conformative attitude led Violet to consider new

venues for her teaching career. Thus, how long a teacher remains in the stabilization stage depends mostly on his or her introspection and reflection ability. Only in this manner will the person be able to move on in the developmental process. Considering Violet's case, she took agency of her decisions and moved to the stage of experimentation or diversification.

Experimentation/Diversification

According to Huberman's (1993) teacher career cycle model, once being at the stabilization stage, the teachers' journey can take two possible directions: opening their way to reach the stage of experimentation and diversification or going to the stage of reassessment, depending on the teacher's decisions and attitudes. Violet's account shows that in her case she opted for experimenting.

Then I started to change again and I decided like "OK, let's go back to the basis, and try to explore again" and I tried to experiment again because I think that's the way we can improve.

As Violet manifests, being in a state of stability led her to feel dissatisfied and to look for new challenges. This shows how a reflective teacher can make decisions. Huberman (1993) expands on this situation sustaining that "pedagogical consolidation leads to increase one's impact in the classroom. Teachers embark on a series of personal experiments by diversifying their instructional materials, their methods of evaluation, or their instructional sequences" (p. 8). This perhaps refers to how the teachers have gained control over initial concerns that they faced at career entry, such as classroom management, planning and presenting a class, as well as handling the diverse procedures imposed by the administration. Violet elaborates more on this issue in the following comment:

I'm still learning, because sometimes I was working with some ideas that I liked, but then I noticed they didn't work with my students. I'm still developing my profile

as a teacher: "OK, this can work here; this cannot work here." So, I cannot say that I have one way of teaching.

In the above excerpt Violet shows concern not only about delivering a class, but also, she wants to excel in the use of effective strategies to improve her students' learning. This coincides with Huberman's (1993) argument that:

teachers' desires to heighten their impact in the classroom leads to an awareness of instructional factors blocking that objective and, from there, to press for more consequential reforms. Teachers in this phase could be the most highly motivated and dynamic. (p. 8)

This willingness of advancing towards expertise leads teachers to search for diverse opportunities that foster professional development. Despite this continuous search for improving her teaching practice, Violet still finds herself insecure at times. She has learned to explore in her teaching and reflect, but she is not entirely secure of her choice of teaching methodology. This attitude might be interpreted as evidence that Violet is moving to the stage of reassessment.

Reassessment

As denominated in Huberman's (1993) model, this stage's name suggests that teachers take a step back to allow reflection on their own teaching practice. During this period, they might look at the journey they have taken so far and ponder on the need to make some adjustments to their beliefs, attitudes, or pedagogical practices. In Violet's experience, it is possible to identify the reassessment stage in the following:

Sometimes I feel like in the beginning, very insecure. I don't know why. I don't know if it's a process, or it's because I haven't finished my thesis. I think that has affected my development as a teacher and I feel insecure. I'm like: "I cannot tell them [my students] something because I haven't even finished."

Huberman (1993) states that this feeling is part of the stage of reassessment, which is described as “a stage of self-doubt” or “period of uncertainty” in which the teacher “examines what one has made of one’s life,” and compares it “against one’s initial ideas and objectives. One may then decide whether continuing in the same path or striking out but with more uncertainty and insecurity on a new path” (p. 8). This episode in the professional teaching journey can be taken as a growing opportunity when the teacher is able to acknowledge the weak points in order to strengthen them. Once again, socialization plays an important role here, since more experienced peers might guide the teacher to find alternatives to pursue his or her objectives.

Despite the negative emotions associated with the fact of not having formally obtained her degree, Violet continues searching for options to continue fostering her professional development. In the following excerpt she expresses this idea:

Now I think I am stuck, but I am willing to learn; that is why I’m trying to go in these free online courses, even though I don’t do them as I would like. I would like to have more time, but I think that they are helping me in some way; I can continue learning even though I haven’t finished my thesis.

As shown in the data describing her professional journey, Violet has frequently faced several highs and lows which, when interpreting Huberman’s (1993) teacher career cycle model, promote the transition from one stage to the other. Remarkably, Violet seems to be aware of this idea in her practice, since she summarized her teaching career as follows: “It’s been a roller coaster! So, sometimes I feel good or bad. I think that I’m doing well because whatever thing I learned, it is helping me. But then I realize that no, I must do some changes” [*sic*].

Regarding Huberman’s (1993) career cycle model, Violet’s case illustrates the way in which teachers’ careers evolve. As in most of cases, her journey has been full of complexities including emotions, challenging situ-

ations, achievements, opportunities of socialization, weaknesses, and strengths that have shaped her identity, as well as her agency to pursue her own professional development. The search for professional development pushes her upwards and allows her to overcome the difficulties that emerge daily.

Conclusion

This study has revisited Huberman’s (1993) teacher career cycle model of teacher professional development. The findings obtained challenge the common belief that expertise goes hand in hand with the number of years teaching. The analysis shows that the level of expertise that a teacher develops does not depend on the number of years working in this profession. In their developmental process, teachers can sometimes move from one stage to another because of certain events or circumstances in their teaching practice. In some instances, such events trigger positive emotions and attitudes, and in other instances negative ones. These emotions and attitudes modify teachers’ behavior and thus, they end up having an impact on professional development. Even though Huberman’s teacher career cycle model provides an estimation of the years a teacher may take to transition from one stage to the other, it also recognizes that each instance is different.

People with whom teachers socialize become an important influence in their professional careers; either when a relative or friend influences their career choice, when remembering and applying the techniques of a role-model teacher from the past, or during the peer-socialization process. All these shareholders, in combination with the varied experiences faced in the teaching practice, contribute to shaping teachers’ identity and love for the profession. In no case should teaching be considered a solitary activity, and even when there may be cases in which teachers’ personality prompts an isolated practice, since they might not be advancing in their level of knowledge and quality of teaching.

It is fundamental to increase the production of scientific research in this field, with the aim of documenting and informing practitioners on the developmental process that teachers go through during their careers. Furthermore, it is essential to examine this knowledge especially for preservice and novice teachers who are at a greater risk of experiencing burnout or even of leaving the profession. Nevertheless, it is important to change teachers' notion of failure within the classroom to the notion of the appreciation of an opportunity to learn and improve. Novice teachers should know that not everything that goes wrong within the classroom is their fault, and that eventually, with adequate guidance and increased knowledge, they will be able to reach expertise.

Finally, an important aspect to remark on is that taking agency of one's own emotions is a long process. As has been observed in this study, even though Violet has developed the ability to take on a professional identity when being in front of the classroom, she still finds herself overwhelmed with emotions, such as insecurity. Nevertheless, this challenge makes teachers transform their own identity in a positive way. The positive attitude towards professional development boosts teachers upwards in the path towards professional development. Violet seems to have a genuine interest in creating a positive impact on her students' learning.

To sum this up, at the end of the semistructured interview, Violet was asked to define her teaching philosophy to which she answered: "I want to inspire my students." This shows how Violet sees herself as a teacher and the role that she takes on. Her students are important for her, and this authentic concern for overcoming her own weaknesses in teaching constitutes the motivation to make decisions that will bring her closer to reaching expertise.

References

- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in *Teaching and Teacher Education* over ten years.

Teaching and Teacher Education, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>

Bell, B., & Gilbert, J. (1994). Teacher development as professional, personal, and social development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10(5), 483–497. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(94\)90002-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(94)90002-7)

Berliner, D. C. (2004). Describing the behavior and documenting the accomplishments of expert teachers. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 24(3), 200–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467604265535>

Bullough, R. V. (1989). *First-year teacher: A case study*. Teachers College Press.

Burden, P. R. (1982). Implications of teacher career development: New roles for teachers, administrators, and professors. *Action in Teacher Education*, 4(3–4), 21–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.1982.10519117>

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019005002>

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Dadds, M. (2001). Continuing development: Nurturing the expert within. In J. Soler, A. Craft, & H. Burgess (Eds.), *Teacher development: Exploring our own practice* (pp. 50–56). Paul Chapman Publishing and the Open University.

Dede, C., Jass Ketelhut, D., Whitehouse, P., Breit, L., & McCloskey, E. M. (2009). A research agenda for online teacher professional development. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(1), 8–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108327554>

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Dreyfus, S. E. (2004). The five-stage model of adult skill acquisition. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 24(3), 177–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467604264992>

Grusec, J. E., & Hastings, P. D. (2007). *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research*. The Guilford Press.

Hatch, J. A., & Wisniewski, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Life history and narrative*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203486344>

- Huberman, A. M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. Cassell.
- Katz, L. G. (1972). Developmental stages of preschool teachers. *The Elementary School Journal*, 73(1), 50–54. <https://doi.org/10.1086/460731>
- King, M. B., & Newmann, F. M. (2000). Will teacher learning advance school goals? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(8), 576–580.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Lapan, S. D., Quartaroli, M. T., & Riemer, F. J. (Eds.). (2011). *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lieberman, A. (1994). Teacher development: Commitment and challenge. In P. P. Grimmet, & J. Neufeld (Ed.), *Teacher development and the struggle for authenticity: Professional growth and restructuring in the context of change*. Teachers College Press.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study* (1st ed.). The University of Chicago.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collectors' field guide*. Family Health International.
- Malderez, A., Hobson, A. J., Tracey, L., & Kerr, K. (2007). Becoming a student teacher: Core features of the experience. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(3), 225–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760701486068>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2(2), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030020205>
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). *Maslach burnout inventory manual* (3rd ed.). Consulting Psychologists Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W., & Zarrow, J. (2001). Teachers engaged in evidence-based reform: Trajectories of teachers' inquiry, analysis, and action. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.), *Teachers caught in the action: Professional development that matters* (pp. 79–101). Teachers College Press.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Dunken.
- Numrich, C. (1996). On becoming a language teacher: Insights from diary studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(1), 131–153. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587610>
- Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: An international review of the literature*. International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W.-Y., Scarloss, B., & Spapley, K. L. (2007). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*. Institute for Education Sciences.

About the Authors

Perla Villegas-Torres holds a master's degree in Applied Linguistics in ELT (Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico), and a bachelor's degree in ELT (Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico). Currently, she teaches at the Universidad de Guanajuato. She has published several articles and presented in national and international conferences.

M. Martha Lengeling holds a master's degree in TESOL (West Virginia University, USA) and a PhD in Language Studies (Kent University, UK). She teaches at the Universidad de Guanajuato and is a member of the National System of Researchers (*Sistema Nacional de Investigadores*).

P R O
F I
L E

*Issues from Novice Teacher
Researchers*

English as a Foreign Language Students' Emotional Intelligence Management When Taking Speaking Exams

El manejo de la inteligencia emocional en los estudiantes de lengua extranjera mientras presentan sus exámenes orales de inglés

Sara Bata
Cristal Castro


Universidad de Pamplona, Pamplona, Colombia


This article is a mixed method study which examines how a group of six elementary students who study English as a foreign language manage their emotional intelligence while taking their speaking exams. Data were collected through both quantitative and qualitative instruments such as an emotional intelligence test, non-participant observations, surveys, and individual interviews with open-ended questions. The results provide further insight into the students' emotional intelligence and the coping mechanisms/strategies used to manage their emotional intelligence while taking two different speaking exams.

Keywords: coping mechanism, emotional intelligence, foreign languages, speaking exams, test anxiety

Este artículo es un estudio mixto el cual examina cómo un grupo de seis estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera del nivel básico manejan su inteligencia emocional mientras presentan sus exámenes orales. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de instrumentos cuantitativos y cualitativos como lo son: una prueba de inteligencia emocional, observaciones no participativas, encuestas y entrevistas individuales con preguntas abiertas. Los resultados proporcionan una mayor comprensión sobre la inteligencia emocional de los estudiantes y sus mecanismos de afrontamiento utilizados para gestionar su inteligencia emocional mientras presentan dos exámenes orales diferentes.

Palabras clave: ansiedad ante los exámenes, exámenes orales, inteligencia emocional, lenguas extranjeras, mecanismos de afrontamiento

Sara Bata  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6939-2837> · Email: sara.bata@unipamplona.edu.co

Cristal Castro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9980-0512> · Email: cristal.castro@unipamplona.edu.co

This article is based on the undergraduate thesis completed by Bata and Castro (2020).

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Bata, S., & Castro, C. (2021). English as a foreign language students' emotional intelligence management when taking speaking exams. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 245–261. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.88378>

This article was received on June 17, 2020 and accepted on May 25, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

“Emotional intelligence is the capacity to control and regulate one’s own feelings and those of others and use them as a guide for thought and action” (Barchard & Hakstian, 2004, p. 440). Supporting this statement, Goleman (1995) describes emotional intelligence in terms of “abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distressed from swapping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope” (p. 34).

Moreover, Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) argue that academic achievement is “strongly associated with several dimensions of emotional intelligence (intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood competencies)” (p. 240) and that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence, skills, and academic success. Thus, students with high emotional intelligence have more academic success due to their stress management and general mood competencies.

In the foreign language field, Dörnyei (2005) also states that “researchers had to accept the fact that personality traits such as self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety, risk-taking, and extraversion, may well shape the ultimate success in mastering a foreign language” (p. 30). According to Méndez-López and Bautista-Tun (2017),

the speaking performance of foreign language students can be affected by diverse factors generated by performance conditions, such as pressure, planning, and the amount of support provided. Furthermore, affective factors such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety can affect learners’ willingness to participate in class (Méndez & Fabela, 2014; Shumin, 2002). (p. 153)

This underscores the need for students to be aware of emotional intelligence management to cope with those factors, especially in situations like test-taking. In agreement with the statement above, Young (1990)

affirms that “speaking activities which require ‘on the spot’ and ‘in front of the class’ performance produce the most anxiety from the students’ perspective” (p. 551).

On the other hand, Smith (2019) claims that some people experience intense fear or worry on tests because there is pressure to do well in that specific situation. Horwitz et al. (1986) also state that students usually realize, after taking a test, that they knew the correct answer but marked or gave the wrong answer due to nervousness; this means that the students could keep making preventable errors during their performance and that their anxiety—and errors—may increase with time. Additionally, Roso-Bas et al. (2016) affirm that “students with pessimistic tendencies are more likely to drop out [and that] pessimism is related with depressive rumination and lower levels of emotional clarity and repair” (p. 57).

This explanatory sequential mixed method research project aims to analyze A2¹ English as a foreign language (EFL) students’ emotional intelligence management when taking speaking exams. Thus, the question that guided this study was: How does a group of A2 EFL students manage their emotional intelligence while taking speaking exams? To address this question, we sought to identify the participants’ level of emotional intelligence, the factors that influenced their emotional intelligence while taking speaking exams, and the coping mechanisms they used to control their emotions in this situation.

Theoretical Framework

Salovey and Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as a mental process that comprehends the following aspects: appraising and expressing emotions about oneself and others, regulating one’s own emotions and those of others, and using emotions in adaptive

¹ English A2 level is the second level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). At this level, which might be described as “elementary,” students master the basics of English and can communicate simple, basic needs (Council of Europe, 2001).

ways. In the same way, Ciarrochi and Mayer (2007, as cited in Abdolrezapour & Tavakoli, 2012) state that the “emotional quotient (EQ) is about the intelligent use of emotions and utilizing the power or information contained in emotion to make effective decisions” (p. 2). In accordance with these statements, students with the aid of emotional intelligence can develop the mental process and competencies necessary to perform well academically.

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Emotional intelligence has been shown to play a meaningful role in academic and professional success. Bar-On (1997) found that people with higher emotional intelligence performed better and had higher success rates than those with lower emotional intelligence. Regarding students' academic achievement, Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) affirm that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence, skills, and academic success. For Steinmayr et al. (2014) “academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments” (para. 1).

In light of this, Preeti (2013) also states that “[academic] achievement encompasses student ability and performances; it is multidimensional; it is intricately related to human growth and [to the] cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development [of the student]” (p. 9).

Psychological Barriers of a Foreign Language

In the EFL field, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) describe the anxiety associated with learning a second language as “foreign language anxiety,” which is “the apprehension experienced when a situation requires

the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient” (p. 5).

Horwitz et al. (1986) describe three components of foreign language anxiety that can hinder students' learning process: (a) communication apprehension due to the students' shyness to express themselves in public and to their lack of vocabulary and knowledge of the target language, which lowers their ability to express themselves clearly; (b) fear of negative evaluation, that is, the apprehension of being negatively judged by their teacher or peers; and (c) test anxiety that arises from the students' fear of failure.

Regarding speaking in a foreign language, Boonkit (2010) considers that this is “one of the macro skills that should be developed as a means of effective communication” (p. 1305). However, speaking in the target language has been regarded as the most challenging skill for EFL students due to its interactive nature (Harumi, 2011; Méndez-López, 2011; Woodrow, 2006; Zhang & Head, 2010) and also because it is an anxiety inducing activity (Young, 1990). Furthermore, other potential sources of EFL learners' anxiety are the level of the language course, expected language skills, motivation, proficiency, teachers, instructor–learner interaction, tests, and culture (Ellis & Rathbone, 1987; Oxford, 1992; Price, 1991; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Young, 1990).

Psychological Burden of Evaluations

According to Shaw and Weir (2007), test anxiety can be considered beneficial for students as it can help them be more “alert and focused on the task.” However, a high amount of anxiety can backfire and create more problems.

Following Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theories of components that can affect EFL students' learning process, test anxiety in specific refers to a special case of general anxiety consisting of physiological (sweating, shaking, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth, fainting, nausea, etc.), cognitive (blanking out, trouble

concentrating, etc.), and emotional (depression, low self-esteem, anger, feeling of hopelessness, etc.) responses related to a fear of failure and pressure to do well in that situation (Smith, 2019). According to Oxford Learning (2018) the possible sources of test anxiety can be divided in situational causes (time constraints, “poor study skills or a lack of preparedness,” evaluator’s attitude, “a history of stress related to test taking, lack of understanding the material, previous poor test performance”) and mental causes (“fear of poor grades, a feeling of lack of control, fear of letting down . . . parents [or] teachers, placing too much emphasis on single tests and exams, high [performance] expectations, . . . using grades as a reflection of self-worth, [and] poor self-esteem or negative self-talk”; Causes of Test Anxiety section).

Coping Mechanisms to Manage Stressful Situations

Admasu (2019) defines coping mechanisms as “strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage difficult and/or painful emotions. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while maintaining their emotional well-being” (p. 23). Since an anxious foreign language learner is a less effective foreign language learner (Horwitz, 1996), it is of extreme importance they learn to use coping mechanisms to control their anxiety.

Folkman and Lazarus (1988, as cited in Grover et al., 2015) divide the coping strategies into four groups: problem-focused (taking control, information seeking, and evaluating the pros and cons); emotion-focused (disclaiming, escape avoidance, accepting responsibility or blame, exercising self-control); support-seeking (seeking social support from others); and meaning-making coping, which relates to what Ignelzi (2000) describes as “the process of how individuals make sense of knowledge, experience, relationships, and the self” (p. 5).

Likewise, Weiten and Lloyd (2008) identify four types of coping strategies:

appraisal-focused (employing denial, humor, or distancing oneself from the problem); problem-focused (deals with finding out information on the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem); emotion-focused (releasing pent-up emotions, distracting oneself, managing hostile feelings, meditating and using systematic relaxation procedures); and occupation-focused coping (changing one’s activities or daily routine to avoid or distance oneself from the stressor). (p. 72)

Method

This study takes on an explanatory sequential mixed method design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) describe the explanatory sequential mixed method design as “a method consisting of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain the quantitative results” (p. 69). This means that the qualitative results will help the researchers interpret and clarify the initial quantitative results by providing more in-depth information about the phenomenon.

In this regard, this research followed the explanatory sequence method by first collecting the results acquired from the TMMS-24 based on Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) test (which is the longer and original version of the test) and then classifying the participants with high and low emotional intelligence. Next, qualitative data were gathered through non-participant observations, surveys, and individual interviews.

Participants

For this research, a purposeful sampling technique was selected. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015) this type of sampling “involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowl-

edgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest" (p. 534).

Considering that foreign language anxiety has been shown for many years to be a key barrier in language learning—more so for beginners than for experienced language learners (Liu, 2006)—this research was carried out with six participants from an elementary English (A2 level) course in the EFL program at Universidad de Pamplona, a Colombian public university in the northeast of the country.

Of the six participants (four women and two men whose ages ranged from 18 to 20 years) three obtained higher scores than average on the emotional intelligence test while the other three were at the lowest levels.

Data Collection Process

The TMMS-24 contains a list of 24 items related to feelings and emotions that the participants have to rate on a scale from 5 to 1 (*strongly agree* – *strongly disagree*). The aim of this instrument was not only to measure the students' emotional intelligence level but also to help select the sample according to the conditions previously determined (the three students with the highest scores and the three with the lowest). The Spanish version of this test, translated by Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2004), was used to guarantee the participants' full understanding of the test items (see Appendix A). The test was carried out online using Google Forms and it was answered in no more than 20 minutes by 17 A2 EFL students.

After collecting the quantitative data, we implemented the qualitative data collection instruments. On this occasion a survey containing six open-ended questions was applied via Google Forms to the selected six participants (see Appendix B).

Later, three semi-structured interviews were carried out in different instances: one after the first term speaking exam, one before the second term exam, and one after it. The objectives of these instruments were to collect data about the participants' emotions

before and after taking speaking exams and to identify the coping mechanisms used by them when taking a speaking exam. Each interview was composed of a semi-structured, contained, six open-ended questions categorized into seven themes: emotional factors, physical factors, psychological factors, cognitive factors, situational factors, emotional intelligence influence on academic achievement, and coping mechanism.

For the interview applied after the first term speaking exam, four of the six participants were interviewed personally; the other two were interviewed and recorded (with their permission) via telephone since they were unable to meet with the researchers. For the interview that took place before the second term's speaking exam, all of the participants were able to meet with the researchers to be interviewed. For the final interview that was carried out after the second term's speaking exam, all the participants were interviewed via telephone since they were not in town due to an unexpected break in the academic calendar.

To gain further insight of the phenomenon studied, it was vital to have a closer contact with the phenomenon and its natural setting. For this reason, two non-participant observations were carried out by the researchers: one during the first term speaking exam on a virtual platform and the other on the second term speaking exam inside the classroom. The objectives of this instrument were to collect information about the factors that could influence the participants' performance in their speaking exams and to observe the participants' psychical, emotional, and cognitive reactions while taking their speaking exams.

During each observation, we monitored the participants' physical, cognitive, and emotional responses, as well as the circumstantial factors that took place during a speaking exam. Taking these factors into account, an observation chart was created for both occasions (see Appendix C). For the first non-participant observation that took place during the first term's speaking exam, there was a change in the manner in which the

participants were going to be evaluated: Initially they would be evaluated through an oral presentation, however, the teacher decided to have the participants film themselves speaking and then post the video on YouTube. Therefore, the participants' videos became the source for the observation. In the videos the participants had to analyze a poem about loss and overcoming a difficult situation and talk about a personal experience related to the poem. It is worth noting that the test did not have a time limit.

For the final non-participant observation, which took place in the second term's speaking exam, we observe each participant interacting or speaking with other students for five minutes in the target language in the presence of their teacher and a co-evaluator.

After having collected the data, we implemented the typological analysis method, which is described as "dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, as cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 257). As explained by Hatch (2002), the primary strength of the typological analysis is its efficiency since it starts with predetermined typologies taking less time than "discovering" categories inductively.

Keeping in mind our research questions, the generalizations that emerged from our data analysis with the use of the software program MAXQDA are presented in three sections: (a) A2 EFL students with high and low emotional intelligence levels, (b) the speaking exams' circumstantial factors' influence on the participants' emotional intelligence, and (c) the coping mechanisms implemented by participants with low and high emotional intelligence. Generalization (b) was further divided into two subsections: first term speaking exam and second term speaking exam. The data were collected in L1 (Spanish) and translated into L2 (English) for the purpose of this publication. We use pseudonyms to refer to the participants for ethical considerations.

Findings

A2 EFL Students With High and Low Emotional Intelligence Levels

The TMMS-24 test revolves around the following dimensions:

- Clarity of feelings, that is, the person is more or less aware of his or her own emotional feelings.
- Emotional repair in which the person is able to regulate his or her emotional state correctly. A high emotional repair shows a good control of positive and negative emotions.
- Emotional attention in which the person is capable of feeling and expressing his or her emotions and feelings in an appropriate way. Unlike the other two dimensions, it is important that the person pay just enough attention to his or her emotions because too much attention could be harmful and cause unnecessary worry.

The information drawn from the test helped us find the participants' average score for each cognitive component, and thus, we were able to determine their levels of emotional intelligence (see Table 1).

Table 2 shows the participants' scores on the TMMS-24 test. These scores are divided into two categories: participants with high and participants with low emotional intelligence. In this case, the results of each of the three cognitive components of the emotional intelligence construct (attention to feelings, emotional repair, and clarity of feelings) are also shown.

In total, the participants' emotional intelligence levels ranged from 84 to 89, above the average, meaning that they have the skill to identify and recognize their feelings and those of the people around them; as such, they can recognize their emotions, label them, and understand the underlying causes behind their emotions. Lastly, they can regulate or control their emotions and, in doing so, also help others regulate their own emotions. Conversely, the participants whose total scores ranged

Table 1. Scales of Reference for the TMMS-24 Test

	Male participant score	Female participant score
	Should improve his attention (pays little attention) < 21	Should improve her attention (pays little attention) < 24
Emotional attention	Enough attention 22 to 32	Enough attention 25 to 35
	Should improve his attention (pays a lot attention) > 33	Should improve her attention (pays a lot attention) > 36
	Should improve his clarity < 25	Should improve her clarity < 23
Clarity of feelings	Enough clarity 26 to 35	Enough clarity 24 to 34
	Excellent clarity > 36	Excellent clarity > 35
	Should improve his repair < 23	Should improve her repair < 23
Emotional repair	Enough repair 24 to 35	Enough repair 24 to 34
	Excellent repair > 36	Excellent repair > 35

Table 2. Participants' Results of the TMMS-24 Test

	Clarity of feelings	Emotional repair	Emotional attention	Total
Participants with high emotional intelligence				
Girl	28	26	30	84
Black Panther	23	31	34	88
Salem	37	25	27	89
Participants with low emotional intelligence				
Regina	17	11	16	44
Florecita	15	17	16	48
Tatiana	21	15	16	52

from 44 to 52 (below the average) should, according to Salovey and Mayer (1990), pay more attention to their emotions to be able to recognize them and their causes and should work on regulating or controlling their emotions to prevent them from overriding their rational thinking.

The Influence of Speaking Exams' Circumstantial Factors on Participants' Emotional Intelligence

First Term Speaking Exam

Data revealed that the circumstantial factors of speaking exams exert a strong influence on students' emotional intelligence. The circumstantial factors of the first term exam were different in the sense that the participants had to take their speaking exam through a video and in an individual manner in their homes; thus, they experienced such circumstantial factors as better preparation, time flexibility, absence of a second teacher evaluating, opportunity to edit mistakes, and autonomous work.

The previously mentioned circumstantial factors had a significant effect on the participants' emotional, physical, and cognitive responses. Regarding emotional responses, the participants with high emotional intelligence showed calmness and relaxation with an overall low degree of anxiety while taking the first speaking exam. Nevertheless, the observations did show some noticeable physical responses such as hand or body movements, random laughter, and the use of filler sounds. These responses can be the result of the participants trying to express themselves freely in a foreign language where they were alone in front of a camera without a peer or teacher near. One thing that stood out about the participants with high emotional intelligence was their confidence, which allowed two out of the three of them to improvise or talk without reading a script.

On the other hand, the emotional responses presented by participants with low emotional intelligence were not as calm and relaxed as their counterparts. They showed more physical responses of anxiety such as moving their arms, use of filler words, and not looking at the camera (two of the three participants with low emotional intelligence were visibly reading what they had to say). These responses could be due to a lack of preparation or memorization on their part. On the other hand, one participant, Tatiana, stated that she does not like recording herself since she always gets anxious and starts moving her body involuntarily and at random.

Second Term Speaking Exam

Concerning the second term exam, which was an interaction between two students, the teacher asked them to perform a role play about a random situation using previous topics as a guide with a classmate (chosen by the teacher) and at the end of the role play they had to ask their partner questions and, in the same way, answer the questions their partners asked. Both exercises had a time limit of 5 minutes and a preparation time of 5 minutes for the presentation of the role play. Therefore, in this speaking exam different factors such as improvisation, teamwork, presence of a second evaluator, and time constraint had to be considered.

The emotional responses of the participants with high emotional intelligence were anxiousness, nervousness, and worry. Girl, for instance, indicated that these emotional responses were due to the small amount of time they had to prepare for the exam: "I improvised because I felt the teacher did not give enough time to prepare my oral presentation."

Furthermore, the participants' low proficiency in the foreign language as well as the need to improvise in that language made their cognitive responses more apparent. We could observe some participants becoming confused for short periods or making

speech mistakes. This, in turn, caused participants to exhibit physical responses such as shaking, trembling, fidgeting, blushing, sweating, or crossing their arms and they often resorted to filler words, especially after making a mistake.

In the same manner, the participants with low emotional intelligence showed more signs of anxiety, nervousness, and worry than the participants with high emotional intelligence. These participants' low proficiency level in the target language also influenced their cognitive responses, more so than the participants with high emotional intelligence because they blanked out and made speech mistakes more frequently, which, at the same time, increased their worry of failing the exam: "I started to go blank, I forgot words. I think I made several conjugations wrong" (Tatiana). "I didn't know how to answer or how to ask a question well" (Regina).

However, it is relevant to mention that there was one participant with high emotional intelligence whose responses were very similar to those who had low emotional intelligence. During the observation, this participant's physical, cognitive, and emotional responses were more transparent and numerous than the other participants with high emotional intelligence: "The partner I was with . . . did not speak fluently, I could not understand him when he spoke, that influenced my performance on the test" (Black Panther).

The fact that the speaking exam was taken in pairs also impacted Black Panther's performance since he was unable to understand his partner. This situation can be the result of not being able to choose a partner whom he trusts and feels comfortable with when speaking.

In regard to the physical responses (random hand movements, nervous laughter, shaking, etc.) of the participants with low emotional intelligence, these were more noticeable as compared to the first exam; plus, the use of filler words was more evident as well.

However, it is important to mention that Tatiana, a participant with low emotional intelligence, experi-

enced similar responses to those of the group with high emotional intelligence. During observation, Tatiana's anxiety and nervousness were less transparent than those of the other participants with low emotional intelligence. In the interview, she mentioned the fact that the speaking exam was taken in pairs influenced her performance because she did not feel at ease with her partner, who seemed very nervous during the exam:

I was blanking out a little because of my partner...if you do not feel safe or trust that person, you too will be filled with nerves, and I felt that with my partner. When the exam started, I was confident, but my partner started to feel very nervous, then I started to go blank and I started to forget words.

Nevertheless, this particular factor did not seem to affect Tatiana's responses in a great manner since she also stated that at the end of the exam there was a feeling of satisfaction: "The truth is that I'm satisfied. I didn't make it an excellent job...but I did it well" [*sic*].

Coping Mechanisms Implemented by Participants With Low and High Emotional Intelligence

In general, the coping mechanisms implemented by the participants to help control their anxiety or negative emotions while they were taking their speaking exams did not vary much from each group.

In the first term speaking exam, all participants expressed in the interviews that they used the following coping mechanisms to lower their anxiety before taking the exam or while presenting it: listening to music, breathing slowly, and positive thinking. According to Carver and Connor-Smith (2010), the coping mechanisms used by the participants are emotion-focused, that is, "aimed at minimizing distress triggered by stressors" (p. 685). In addition, two participants with high emotional intelligence (Girl and Black Panther) and one participant with low emotional intelligence (Florecita) placed emphasis on preparing themselves

before the exam by reviewing or studying: “I relaxed too much listening to music before taking the oral exam; also, I studied a lot” (Black Panther). I tried to think positive, breathe, review what I studied and singing relax me too” (Florecita) [*sic*]. As specified by Folkman and Tedlie-Moskowitz (2004), studying for an exam is a problem-focused coping mechanism that aims at changing or eliminating the source of the stress by taking control of the problem and seeking information.

In the second term speaking exam, two participants with high emotional intelligence (Black Panther and Girl) emphasized again the importance of preparation and studying before the exam (a problem-focus coping mechanism). Girl mentioned that for this exam she studied and practiced her speaking with a friend, which, according to Folkman and Tedlie-Moskowitz (2004), is a support-seeking coping mechanism that deals with seeking social support from others in times of need.

While I was preparing to take the exam, I played music in the background, but in this case, I have a classmate with whom I always practiced in English and we talk in class and outside in English. (Girl)

The other participants with high and low emotional intelligence mentioned having resorted to breathing, positive thinking, self-talk, and avoidance of the problem as mechanisms to control their anxiety, that is, emotion-focused coping mechanisms used to alleviate or minimized distress: “Controlling your breath helps a lot, also the fact of speaking to yourself and saying ‘calm down, everything will be fine’” (Florecita).

I am used to taking deep breaths before and during the exam. Also, I think positive during the exam and I repeat to myself that I am going to do very well, and if I do poorly, there will be another opportunity in the third term to have a better grade; then, I try to think the best and stay calm. (Salem)

Discussion

This study examined how a small group of six A2 level EFL students managed their emotional intelligence while taking their speaking exams. According to the findings, the speaking exams’ circumstantial factors played a big role in the participants’ anxiety levels regardless of the results obtained on the TMMS-24 test. However, the participants with high emotional intelligence were able to control their anxiety levels on both speaking exams that had different circumstantial factors (time preparation, teamwork, evaluators, difficulty level, etc.) more effectively than the participants with low emotional intelligence, who were visibly more nervous and anxious when taking their speaking exams; responses which led to more grammatical mistakes in the target language and forgetfulness. This result is consistent with Zeidner’s (1998) idea that “students who experience test anxiety tend to be easily distracted during a test”; they also “experience difficulty in comprehending relatively simple instructions and have trouble organizing or recalling relevant information” (p. 4).

Conversely, there were two special cases that demonstrated different results: In the first term speaking exam, a participant who, according to the TMMS-24 test, had a low emotional intelligence showed the same responses to anxiety as the participants with high emotional intelligence; in other words, he was confident, calm, and did not make many mistakes in his speech, but on the second term speaking exam, where the circumstantial factors were more demanding and difficult, his responses differed from those who had high emotional intelligence because he was noticeably more anxious and made more mistakes while speaking. In contrast another participant who, according to the TMMS-24 test, had a low emotional intelligence level, showed similar responses on the first term speaking exam as those who had low emotional intelligence; that is, he was nervous and made some mistakes in his speech even though he was the only participant

with low emotional intelligence that did not limit himself to reading what he wanted to say but tried to improvise in the target language. On the second term exam, his responses also varied or differed from those with low emotional intelligence because his anxiety and nervousness were less transparent than those of the other participants with low emotional intelligence.

Regarding the coping mechanisms implemented by the participants to control their anxiety while taking their speaking exam, all participants primarily used emotion-focused coping mechanisms such as listening to music, positive thinking, self-talk, and breathing exercises, as well as problem-focused coping mechanisms by studying before the exam. There was another type of mechanism used by only one participant with high emotional intelligence: the support-seeking coping mechanism in which the participant asked a classmate to practice her speaking.

The results of this study show that the participants' anxiety levels when taking a speaking exam depend in great measure on the speaking exams' circumstantial factors: the preparation time, the trust they have in their partners, the presence of a second evaluator, their proficiency level in the target language, and so on. This result is in line with the large body of research linking the characteristics of the test such as the nature of the task, difficulty, atmosphere, time constraints, examiner characteristics, mode of administration, and physical setting to the level of anxiousness felt by the student (Putwain et al., 2010; Salend, 2012).

Furthermore, the results also showed that the coping mechanisms implemented by the participants were somehow effective in helping them to cope with their anxiety or nervousness when taking their speaking exams. As suggested by Carver and Connor-Smith (2010), emotion-focused coping may reduce the influence of a stressor in such a way that it never brings out a negative emotional response and produces less anxiety. Even though the main purpose of this strategy is also to decrease stress (Endler & Parker, 1999), this

is not always successful, and, in some cases, it even increases stress.

Nevertheless, to assess the success of a coping mechanism, Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) remind us that it is important to look at variables such as type of stress and individual (habitual traits) and circumstantial characteristics (environment). Therefore, it is possible that the difficulty of the second term exam caused so much distress and anxiety to the participants that the coping mechanisms used lost their effectiveness.

Conclusions

In conclusion, while the participants' emotional intelligence levels were in some cases able to predict the participants' performance when taking their speaking exams, the circumstantial factors of the exam also played a major role in the participants' anxiety responses and in their performances. The participants with high emotional intelligence did manage their emotions more effectively than their low emotional intelligence counterparts, thus allowing them to perform better and act with confidence and clarity. In contrast, the participants with low emotional intelligence did not control their emotions as effectively, which opened the way to mistakes that could have been prevented had they not been as anxious and distressed. However, the speaking exams' circumstantial factors changed or increased participants' distress and anxiety to the point that the participants with low emotional intelligence made more mistakes on their speaking exam than did their high emotional intelligence counterparts. Despite all this, the results are not always consistent since there were two participants whose results showed different responses to anxiety despite their emotional intelligence levels. These results demonstrate that the speaking exams circumstantial factors can influence any student's performance despite their emotional intelligence levels and the use of coping mechanisms. Sometimes positive thinking, self-talk, and breathing exercises were not enough to help them control or manage their emotions, anxiety, and distress.

Implications

It is important for teachers and university administrators to understand that test anxiety and low emotional intelligence levels in students “can be potentially serious when it leads to high levels of distress and academic failure in otherwise capable students” (Wachelka & Katz, 1999, p. 191). Therefore, teachers and administrators should find ways to help students control their anxiety and negative emotions that often manifest themselves before a speaking exam. According to Bass et al. (2002), teaching organizational and study skills and effective test-taking strategies will allow students to be more successful and experience less anxiety during testing. Therefore, teachers and administrators should consider implementing strategies within the curriculum such as test preparation and test-taking and anxiety-reducing strategies to assist students with anxiety. It is also important that students find healthy ways to cope with their emotions and stressful situations, develop good study habits and good test-taking skills that will allow them to have better access to the information they have learned, focus on test questions, and have the confidence to answer them correctly.

The insights gained from this study could be used for further research focusing on determining, analysing, and exploring useful and effective coping mechanisms that EFL students may use when taking their speaking exams. Also, further research could delve more deeply into how EFL students speaking exams’ circumstances influence their performance.

References

- Abdolrezaipoor, P., & Tavakoli, M. (2012). The relationship between emotional intelligence and EFL learners’ achievement in reading comprehension. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 6(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2010.550686>
- Admasu, H. (2019). *The coping mechanism of road traffic accident victims: The case of ALERT Hospital Trauma Center Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2016–2017* [Master’s thesis, Addis Ababa University]. Dspace. <http://etd.aau.edu.et/handle/123456789/22561>
- Bar-On, R. (1997). *The emotional intelligence inventory (EQ-I): Technical manual*. Multi-Health Systems.
- Barchard, K. A., & Hakstian, A. R. (2004). The nature and measurement of emotional intelligence abilities: Basic dimensions and their relationships with other cognitive ability and personality variables. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 64(3), 437–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164403261762>
- Bass, J., Burroughs, M., Gallion, R., & Hodel, J. (2002). *Investigating ways to reduce student anxiety during testing* (Publication No. ED469169) [Master’s thesis, Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight]. ERIC Database.
- Bata, S., & Castro, C. (2020). *Foreign languages students’ emotional intelligence management when taking speaking exams* [Unpublished undergraduate thesis]. Universidad de Pamplona, Pamplona, Colombia.
- Boonkit, K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 1305–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.191>
- Carver, C. S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 679–704. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100352>
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ellis, R., & Rathbone, M. (1987). *The acquisition of German in a classroom context*. Ealing College of Higher Education.
- Endler, N. S., & Parker, J. D. A. (1999). *Coping inventory for stressful situations (CISS): Manual* (2nd ed.). Multi-Health Systems. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t67919-000>

- Fahim, M., & Pishghadam, R. (2007). On the role of emotional, psychometric, and verbal intelligences in the academic achievement of university students majoring in English language. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9(4), 240–253.
- Fernández-Berrocal, P., Extremera, N., & Ramos, N. (2004). Validity and reliability of the Spanish modified version of the Trait Meta-Mood Scale. *Psychological Reports*, 94(3), 751–755. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pro.94.3.751-755>
- Folkman, S., & Tedlie-Moskowitz, J. (2004). Coping: Pitfalls and promise. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55(1), 745–774. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.141456>
- Gardner, R. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). A student's contribution to second-language learning. Part II: Affective variables. *Language Teaching*, 26(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800000045>
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Grover, S., Pradyumna, & Chakrabarti, S. (2015). Coping among the caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 24(1), 5–11. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.160907>
- Harumi, S. (2011). Classroom silence: Voices from Japanese EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, 65(3), 260–269. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq046>
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. State University of New York Press.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1996). Even teachers get the blues: Recognizing and alleviating teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(3), 365–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb01248.x>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Ignelzi, M. (2000). Meaning-making in the learning and teaching process. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2000(82), 5–14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.8201>
- Liu, M. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34(3), 301–316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.04.004>
- Méndez-López, M. (2011). The motivational properties of emotions in foreign language learning. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 13(2), 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.3764>
- Méndez-López, M., & Bautista-Tun, M. (2017). Motivating and demotivating factors for students with low emotional intelligence to participate in speaking activities. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 19(2), 151–163. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v19n2.60652>
- Oxford, R. (1992). Who are our students? A synthesis of foreign and second language research on individual differences with implications for instructional practice. *TESL Canada Journal*, 9(2), 30–49. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v9i2.602>
- Oxford Learning. (2018, August 20). *What is test anxiety (and how it affects students)*. <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/what-is-test-anxiety/>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Preeti, B. (2013). Role of emotional intelligence for academic achievement for students. *Research Journal of Educational Sciences*, 1(2), 8–12.
- Price, M. L. (1991). The subjective experience of foreign language anxiety: Interview with highly anxious students. In E. K. Horwitz & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp. 101–108). Prentice Hall.
- Putwain, D. W., Woods, K. A., Symes, W. (2010). Personal and situational predictors of test anxiety of students in post-compulsory education. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(1), 137–160. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709909X466082>
- Roso-Bas, F., Pades-Jiménez, A., & García-Buades, E. (2016). Emotional variables, dropout and academic performance in Spanish nursing students. *Nurse Education Today*, 37, 53–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2015.11.021>

- Salend, S. J. (2012). Teaching students not to sweat the test. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(6), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171209300605>
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211. <https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG>
- Shaw, S. D., & Weir, C. J. (2007). *Examining writing: Research and practice in assessing second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, K. (2019, April 11). *Managing test anxiety*. Psycom. <https://www.psycom.net/managing-test-anxiety/>
- Sparks, R. L., & Ganschow, L. (1991). Foreign language learning differences: Affective or native language aptitude differences? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(1), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1991.tb01076.x>
- Steinmayr, R., Meißner, A., Weidinger, A., & Wirthwein, L. (2014). Academic Achievement. *Oxford Bibliographies*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199756810-0108>
- Wachelka, D., & Katz, R. C. (1999). Reducing test anxiety and improving academic self-esteem in high school and college students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 30(3), 191–198. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7916\(99\)00024-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7916(99)00024-5)
- Weiten, W., & Lloyd, M. A. (2008). *Psychology applied to modern life* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 308–328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688206071315>
- Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(6), 539–553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1990.tb00424.x>
- Zeidner, M. (1998). *Test anxiety: The state of the art*. Plenum.
- Zhang, X., & Head, K. (2010). Dealing with learner reticence in the speaking class. *ELT Journal*, 64(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccp018>

About the Authors

Sara Bata and Cristal Castro are undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Arts in foreign languages program at Universidad de Pamplona, Colombia. Their research is centered on beginner foreign language students' emotional intelligence.

Appendix A: The TMMS–24 (English Version)

Below you will find some statements about your emotions and feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide whether or not you agree with it. Place an “x” for the answer that comes closest to your preferences. There are no correct or incorrect answers, neither good nor bad. Don't spend too much time on each answer.

- 5 = Strongly agree
 4 = Somewhat agree
 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
 2 = Somewhat disagree
 1 = Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I pay a lot of attention to feelings.					
2. I usually worry a lot about what I feel.					
3. I usually spend time thinking about my emotions.					
4. I think it is worth paying attention to my emotions and mood.					
5. I let my feelings interfere with what I am thinking.					
6. I often think about my moods.					
7. I often think about my feelings.					
8. I pay close attention to how I feel.					
9. I am clear about my feelings.					
10. I can often define my feelings.					
11. I almost always know how I feel.					
12. I usually know my feelings about people.					
13. I am often aware of my feelings on an issue.					
14. I can always tell how I feel.					
15. Sometimes I can tell what my emotions are.					
16. I can come to understand my feelings.					
17. Although I sometimes feel sad, I usually have an optimistic outlook.					
18. Even if I feel bad, I try to think of pleasant things.					
19. When I am sad, I think of all the pleasures of life.					
20. I try to have positive thoughts even if I feel bad.					
21. If I think about things too much and complicate them, I try to calm down.					
22. I worry about being in a good mood.					
23. I usually have lots of energy when I'm happy.					
24. When I am angry, I try to change my mood.					

Note. The original version of the test is in Spanish (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2004); it has been translated for publication purposes. The Spanish modified version of the TMMS used in this study is available from the authors, free of charge, for research purposes only.

Appendix B: Survey

Objectives:

- To collect information about students' emotions before taking an English-speaking exam.
- To gather information about self-regulation strategies students use to control their emotional intelligence before taking an English-speaking exam.

Instructions:

Read each question carefully, then answer it honestly and try to be as descriptive as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. How do you prepare yourself academically to take your English-speaking exam? (study methods)
2. What are your perceptions towards English-speaking exams? (difficult or easy, why?)
3. How do you feel before taking an English-speaking exam?
4. Do you think your emotions may influence the results of your English-speaking exam?
5. Do you think that the circumstances (complexity, time, evaluators, etc.) of the exam may influence its results?
6. Do you often use coping mechanisms to control your emotions during a speaking exam? (pray, breathe deeply, or think positively, etc.)

Appendix C: Observation Chart

Pseudonym:

Date:

Hour:

Place:

Objectives:

- To gather information about factors which influence students' performances while taking an English-speaking exam.
- To observe students' reactions to an English-speaking exam.

Aspects to observe:

- Emotional responses to an English-speaking exam
- Cognitive responses to an English-speaking exam
- Physical responses to an English-speaking exam
- Circumstantial factors of the exam

Hour	Description	Comments
------	-------------	----------

Aspects to observe	Observed	Not observed	Comments
Observable physical responses (e.g., sweating, fidgeting)			
Cognitive responses (e.g., blanking out, trouble concentrating, etc.)			
Observable emotional responses (e.g., expressions of anger, unease, annoyance, etc.)			
Circumstantial factors (e.g., evaluators, time of the exam, etc.)			

P R O
F I
L E

*Issues Based on Reflections
and Innovations*

Language Assessment Literacy and Teachers' Professional Development: A Review of the Literature

La literacidad en evaluación de lenguas y el desarrollo profesional docente:
una revisión de la literatura

Frank Giraldo


Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia

In this literature review, I analyze the features and impacts of 14 programs which promoted teachers' language assessment literacy. I used content analysis to build a coding scheme with data-driven and concept-driven categories to synthesize and then analyze trends in the 14 research studies. Regarding core features, findings suggest that the programs were geared towards practical tasks in which teachers used theory critically. Also, the studies show that teachers expanded their conception of language assessment, became aware of how to design professional instruments, and considered wider constructs for assessment. Based on these findings, I include implications for the construct of language assessment literacy and recommendations for those who educate language teachers.

Keywords: language assessment, language assessment literacy, language testing, professional development programs, teacher professional development

En esta revisión literaria, analizo las características e impactos de catorce programas para literacidad en evaluación de lenguas de docentes de idiomas. A través del análisis de contenidos, diseñé un esquema de códigos con categorías basadas en datos y conceptos para examinar tendencias en los catorce estudios. Los hallazgos sugieren que los programas se basaron mayormente en actividades prácticas para que los docentes usasen la teoría de manera crítica. Los estudios indican que los docentes ampliaron su concepción sobre evaluación de lenguas, se hicieron conscientes de cómo diseñar instrumentos de manera profesional y expandieron los constructos de evaluación. Desde estos hallazgos, discuto unas implicaciones sobre la literacidad en evaluación de lenguas y unas recomendaciones para la formación de docentes.

Palabras claves: desarrollo profesional docente, evaluación de lenguas, literacidad en evaluación de lenguas, programas de desarrollo profesional

Frank Giraldo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5221-8245> · Email: frank.giraldo@ucaldas.edu.co

This literature review is part of the research study called "Literacidad en Evaluación de Lenguas Extranjeras y Desarrollo Profesional Docente" (Language Assessment Literacy and Teachers' Professional Development). The study is sponsored by the Vicerrectoría de Investigación y Posgrados of Universidad de Caldas in Manizales, Colombia. The code for this research study is 0509020.

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Giraldo, F. (2021). Language assessment literacy and teachers' professional development: A review of the literature. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 265–279. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90533>

This article was received on September 14, 2020 and accepted on March 24, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

In the field of language testing, much is discussed about language assessment literacy (LAL) for different stakeholders (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; O'Loughlin, 2013; Pill & Harding, 2013; Taylor, 2013). For discussions on this matter, authors have focused on the conceptual dimension of LAL, that is, drawing the construct (see for example Davies, 2008; Inbar-Lourie, 2008, 2012, 2017; Taylor, 2013). Thus, LAL is now generally known as the combination and use of knowledge, skills, and principles for conducting language assessment in the various educational contexts where it is needed.

Another focus of scholarly work in LAL is empirical research. This research has predominantly focused on teachers' LAL, although work has been done with other stakeholders (for example, O'Loughlin, 2013, with staff members at a university; Pill & Harding, 2013, with policymakers). Regarding teachers, there has been an emphasis on practices, beliefs, and needs around language assessment and the contexts where teachers conduct it (Berry et al., 2019; Crusan et al., 2016; Hill, 2017; Hill & McNamara, 2011; López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009). The research has been robust and provided descriptions of what LAL means for these stakeholders, and specifically what they need to improve in their LAL—The research has suggested teachers want special attention to practical matters, for instance, design of assessment instruments (Fulcher, 2012; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Yastibaş & Takkaç, 2018). Finally, other scholars have focused on reviewing resources for advancing teachers' LAL (Davies, 2008; Giraldo, 2021; Inbar-Lourie, 2017; Malone, 2017). They have explained that textbooks have been a fundamental element to foster LAL, but other initiatives exist as, for instance, open online resources (Giraldo, 2021; Malone, 2017). Additionally, the authors have explained that these materials remark theoretical and practical aspects and, more recently, the social and ethical dimensions of language testing (e.g., Davies, 2008).

Even though resources and initiatives for helping teachers to improve their LAL exist, there is, as of now, no synthesis on their characteristics and impact on teachers' professional development. Therefore, in this literature review, I provide a critical account of programs for advancing teachers' LAL. To make the review useful, I focused my analysis on courses and workshops in which language teachers specifically studied issues related to language assessment. Reviewing existing programs for teachers' LAL is necessary given that initiatives for teacher education in this area should be encouraged at both the preservice and in-service levels. Thus, a critical account of these programs may shed light on what seems effective to advance teachers' professional development through LAL. I start this paper with what LAL means for language teachers and a review of trends in teachers' LAL research. Then, I report findings related to the methodology used in fourteen LAL courses and workshops, their contents, and the impact they have had on teachers' professional development. Based on these findings, I then discuss some implications and recommendations for the nature and implementation of professional development programs in LAL.

What is Language Assessment Literacy for Language Teachers?

LAL is the theoretical framework underlying the present research study, and I use this construct to present the findings and corresponding discussion. Hence, a definition of LAL is warranted.

Through a review of language testing textbooks, Davies (2008) explained that LAL consists of *knowledge* of theories and models of language proficiency, *skills* for design and educational measurement, and *principles* ethics and the impact of language testing. Davies's is a characterization that is generally accepted in the field. I use Davies's proposed components for LAL as a theoretical framework because it has been steadily used to discuss and problematize LAL either as a concept

or set of competencies (Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo, 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2013b; 2017; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Stabler-Havener, 2018). Additionally, LAL as a theoretical framework is appropriate enough to analyze professional development initiatives for teachers' LAL, because these programs can target and/or impact teachers' knowledge, skills, or principles for language assessment. A specific type of positive impact on teachers can be traced to one of LAL's components; for example, if teachers improve their *design* of peer assessment instruments, this can primarily mean a positive impact on the *skills* side of LAL. Finally, I choose LAL's three components for this paper because they are amenable to qualitative content analysis as a research method—The framework is flexible but can be used for systematic data reduction that leads to major trends in the literature.

It is important to note that, although LAL's three overarching components have been constant in the literature, they are still going through refinement (Giraldo, 2020; Inbar-Lourie, 2013a). In the case of language teachers, the LAL construct is intricate and still gaining research attention (for examples, see Coombe et al., 2020; Vogt et al., 2020). Notwithstanding the growing discussions, trends in LAL for language teachers are

clear. Table 1 groups examples of elements within each component of LAL for teachers: knowledge, skills, and principles. Table 1 also gathers ideas from various authors in a 19-year span (Boyles, 2005; Brindley, 2001; Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo, 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2008, 2013a, 2013b; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Scarino, 2013; Stabler-Havener, 2018; Taylor, 2013; Vogt et al., 2020).

The elements in Table 1 represent core aspects with which scholars have contributed to the meaning of LAL for language teachers. As can be seen from the list, expectations of teachers' practice in language assessment are high and, consequently, position LAL as a high-impact dimension of their professional development. Empirical evidence from descriptive research studies, on the other hand, has shown that many, but not all, of the issues in Table 1 can be traced as needs that language teachers report. The next section, then, focuses on studies researching the intricacies of teachers' LAL.

What Has the Research on Teachers' LAL Suggested?

Research studies delving into teachers' LAL have provided thick descriptions of, particularly, practices, beliefs, and needs. In terms of practices, the research

Table 1. Examples of Knowledge, Skills, and Principles in Language Assessment for Teachers

Knowledge	Skills	Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> models describing language ability frameworks for doing language assessment, e.g., criterion-referenced purposes and theoretical concepts relevant theories in second language acquisition and language teaching pedagogy personal assessment contexts, which include practices and beliefs critical issues such as ethics, fairness, and impact 	<p><i>Design of assessment instruments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessment specifications items and tasks rubrics with criteria alternative assessment instruments, e.g., peer-assessment protocols statistics and score interpretation <p><i>Test critique:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identification of poorly designed items evaluation of assessment instruments against qualities such as validity and reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethical use of assessment data fair treatment of students democratic practices in which students can share their voice transparent practices to inform the nature of assessment systems and their consequences critical stance towards unfair or unethical uses of language assessment awareness of consequences (both intended and unintended) of assessment systems

has shown that language teachers tend to emphasize linguistic competence over others; tend to use and rely mostly on traditional assessment procedures (e.g., a final test); and avoid the use of alternative assessments such as peer-assessment (Babaii & Asadnia, 2019; López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009; Sultana, 2019). However, these stakeholders believe that assessment should serve formative purposes and be meaningful to impact teaching and learning (Díaz-Larenas et al., 2012; López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009).

As for the needs in LAL that teachers report, studies show that they feel underprepared and, therefore, want training in all areas, that is, knowledge, skills, and secondary attention to principles (Giraldo & Murcia, 2018; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Fulcher (2012) reports that teachers want special training in the design of assessment instruments, what the author calls the practice of language testing. As the author discusses, when it comes to theory and statistics, teachers seem to want clarity and practical examples rather than abstract notions. This sentiment is echoed in Jeong (2013), who states that teachers tend to see language assessment from a practice-based perspective. An interesting finding that has emerged in this LAL research is that teachers learn from more experienced peers to compensate for their lack of preservice or in-service training in LAL (Babaii & Asadnia, 2019; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

Overall, research regarding teachers' LAL has made it clear that professional development in this area is expected and encouraged. As I mentioned earlier, LAL can be fostered through textbooks and online resources; however, it is not easy to track the impact of these materials on teachers' professional development if relevant research reports are not published. Thus, the purpose in the present study was to synthesize and analyze features and findings from 14 published research studies which describe professional development initiatives to support teachers' LAL.

Method

This literature review is grounded in a qualitative approach to research as it sought to interpret robust descriptive information from research studies on professional development through LAL. Particularly, I relied on a method called content analysis (Schreier, 2012) to read through, categorize, synthesize, and analyze codes that were data- (e.g., *purposes of the programs*) and concept-driven, that is, LAL's knowledge, skills, and principles. Such information was gathered from research reports on workshops and courses for language assessment. I reviewed the studies guided by these two questions:

- What are the characteristics of professional development programs for teachers' LAL?
- What impact do these programs have on teachers' professional development?

To find relevant studies, I searched major specialized journals in language testing and assessment (*Language Testing* or *Language Assessment Quarterly*) and also major journals in language teaching (e.g., *TESOL Quarterly*). My search included Latin American, North American, European, and Asian journals. Finally, I used the *Directory of Open Access Journals* to search for more papers. In all of these websites, I typed keywords such as *language assessment literacy* or *language testing program*.

The Literature Corpus

The corpus for this review consisted of 14 research studies in which various language teachers (preservice, in-service, student teachers) were engaged in learning about theories and practices in language testing and assessment. To choose studies fit-for-purpose in the review, I used three selection criteria:

- The study had to exclusively describe a course or workshop about language assessment rather than one in general applied linguistics or language teaching. This criterion was necessary because

several scholars have questioned the usefulness of courses which touch upon assessment in passing rather than giving extensive attention to it (Babaii & Asadnia, 2019; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

- The participants in the course or workshop had to be language teachers. In this case, language teachers include those who are preservice, in-service, and those student teachers in graduate programs (see O'Loughlin, 2006, for example). This criterion was necessary to collect more studies and, therefore, provide aggregated evidence for the findings in this report.
- The study describes, either explicitly or implicitly, the contents, methodology, and impact of the course/workshop on teachers' LAL. This was the key criterion for the research questions in this review.

Data Analysis

To arrive at the findings for this review, I first iteratively analyzed data inside each study independently, and then across studies, to form what Schreier (2012) calls a "coding frame." For this, I employed a matrix through which I collected the following information: *purpose*, *context*, and *participants*; *methodology for teaching language assessment*; *contents of the workshop or course*; *findings* (impact on teachers); and *other insights*, for example, recommendations emerging from each study.

With these codes, or categories as Schreier (2012) calls them, I then proceeded to group information across all 14 studies and observe instances of data to illustrate each category. For example, language assessment contents such as *item analysis* and *task analysis* were data-driven categories for which I associated examples from all studies. I then grouped these categories into one called *assessment design*, and then this and other grouped categories (e.g., *task development*) formed a synthesized category, that is, a finding—*rigorous design of assessments*. I explain and discuss this and other findings next.

Findings and Discussion

In line with the research questions for this review, I will first present the findings regarding the nature of the professional development programs. Then, I will explain findings which highlight major impacts the programs had on the participating teachers. After each finding, I provide a discussion based on LAL as the theoretical framework and empirical research reported elsewhere in this paper.

On the Context, Purpose, and Methodology of These Language Assessment Programs

The first finding relates to the contexts, objectives, and professional development approaches in the 14 programs. Although these elements varied in their focus, naturally the programs had a common goal, which was to help teachers improve different aspects of their LAL. Table 2 lists down basic features about the context of these programs, their purpose, and methodologies.

Based on the corpus of 14 studies, four trends are evident. The initiatives reported in the literature are aimed at helping language teachers in general, with most emphasis placed on those who teach the English language. However, the presence of teachers from different languages suggests that training in this area is necessary regardless of the language taught (for example, Montee et al., 2013 and Koh et al., 2018). Also, there is an emphasis on in-service language teachers, but studies with preservice teachers are starting to appear, with Giraldo and Murcia (2019), Jaramillo-Delgado and Gil-Bedoya (2019) and Restrepo-Bolívar (2020) being examples of this trend. This is positive, given that authors have emphasized the burning need for preservice teacher training in language testing and assessment (Hill, 2017; Lam, 2015; López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). The fact that most studies included in-service teachers attests to the need for providing these teachers with continuous

Table 2. Context, Purposes, and Methodologies of LAL Programs

Context		
Graduate	In-service	Preservice
2 studies: Kleinsasser (2005); O'Loughlin (2006)	9 studies: Arias et al. (2012); Baker & Riches (2017); Boyd & Donnarumma (2018); Koh et al. (2018); Kremmel et al. (2018); Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2019); Montee et al. (2013); Nier et al. (2009); Walters (2010)	4 studies: Giraldo & Murcia (2019); Jaramillo-Delgado & Gil-Bedoya (2019); Restrepo-Bolívar (2020); Walters (2010)
Purposes		
Critique or design of assessments		Development of LAL at large
9 studies: Arias et al. (2012); Kleinsasser (2005); Koh et al. (2018); Kremmel et al. (2018); Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2019); Montee et al. (2013); Nier et al. (2009); O'Loughlin (2006); Walters (2010)		5 studies: Baker & Riches (2017); Boyd & Donnarumma (2018); Jaramillo-Delgado & Gil-Bedoya (2019); Giraldo & Murcia (2019); Restrepo-Bolívar (2020)
Methodologies		
Critiquing and designing assessments: Face to face		Critiquing and designing assessments: Blended
11 studies: Arias et al. (2012); Baker & Riches (2017); Boyd & Donnarumma (2018); Giraldo & Murcia (2019); Jaramillo-Delgado & Gil-Bedoya (2019); Kleinsasser (2005); Koh et al. (2018); Kremmel et al. (2018); Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2019); Restrepo-Bolívar (2020); Walters (2010)		3 studies: Montee et al. (2013); Nier et al. (2009); O'Loughlin (2006)

professional development in LAL; however, the number of LAL initiatives for preservice teachers should be higher, so that they are more professionally prepared for the inevitable task of in-service language assessment.

Another trend in the corpus regards the purposes for training in LAL. Naturally, all studies were meant to help teachers improve their LAL. The clear tendency, however, is that improving assessment design is a key objective of these programs. Twelve out of 14 studies explicitly aimed at helping teachers improve their LAL either through analysis or design of assessment instruments; Kleinsasser (2005) and Restrepo-Bolívar (2020) do mention design in their studies but not as the approach

to teaching LAL. The trend of design as a main purpose in these programs reflects one expectation that teachers have about language assessment: They want practical, hands-on training (Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo & Murcia, 2018). This finding emphasizes teachers' need of a focus on the *skills* side of LAL. The implication seems to be that if teachers study knowledge and principles in LAL, they should do so within a practice-based framework.

The approaches to teaching language assessment in these programs were variegated. However, and as just commented, design-based learning is fundamental in these studies. The programs, whether face-to-face or online, use hands-on design and critique of assessments

for helping teachers improve the *skills* component of LAL but *knowledge* emerges in these tasks, as I will explain later. This is in line with what authors have discussed about LAL for teachers, that is, that the practical side of assessment is pivotal (Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo, 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2008). As Boyd and Donnarumma (2018) argue, “teachers need a proper course in assessment design to allow them the time to absorb what is, after all, an expert subject” (p. 120). As the data corroborate, the *skills* side of LAL, and particularly design, seem to be pivotal to help teachers further their LAL. Clearly, the studies indicate that engaging teachers in designing assessment instruments impacts them positively at the technical and theoretical levels.

Lastly, one issue that may merit attention in these studies is the time devoted for training. The range is wide, from one-off workshops lasting three hours (Boyd & Donnarumma, 2018), week-long or semester-long programs (Baker & Riches, 2017; O’Loughlin, 2006, respectively), to sustained training for two or three years (Koh et al., 2018; Kremmel et al., 2018). As the authors in these programs suggest, initiatives with longer times should be encouraged for teachers’ LAL (Baker & Riches, 2017; Boyd & Donnarumma, 2018; Kremmel et al., 2018). Since LAL is so much needed, as language testing experts and language teachers agree, the long-term impact of short professional development programs, if such exist, should be questioned or researched. Programs like the ones in Arias et al. (2012) and Koh et al. (2018) attest to the need for sustainable initiatives that, in addition to training in language assessment, accompany teachers in the implementation and scrutiny of the assessments they design. While short programs seem to raise teachers’ awareness of what language assessment implies, actual impact on teaching and student learning seem to come with sustained programs (months and even years, such as Koh et al., 2018) that connect assessment to the contexts where teachers work. Clearly, the longer the LAL program, the more beneficial it might be for all stakeholders involved.

On the Contents of These Language Assessment Programs

Whereas the contents found in all 14 programs naturally varied, the data suggest clear tendencies at a theoretical and a practical level of language assessment. The data also show that there are contents which are not addressed in the majority of the studies, and there may be reasons for this.

The information in Table 3 corroborates the finding explained above: In this review, language assessment programs for teachers’ LAL prioritize the critique and, most importantly, the design of language assessments. There is evidence in all 14 studies that teachers are engaged in studying and creating instruments with either items (e.g., multiple-choice questions) or tasks (a rubric for a speaking assessment) for traditional or alternative assessment. Thus, it can be suggested that these programs have responded to the need that teachers have expressed (see the relevant section on teachers’ LAL research). In line with this finding and with a focus on preservice teachers, Giraldo and Murcia (2019) state that “language assessment courses for pre-service teachers should emphasise highly structured design tasks because they trigger conscientious decisions fueled by seasoned theoretical frameworks” (p. 255). Based on the data from the corpus, the programs seemed to have understood language assessment as design-driven rather than merely conceptual, which should have implications for language teacher education in various contexts, for instance, pre- and in-service: The design of assessment instruments should be a top priority for teachers’ LAL.

Qualities for language assessment is another type of content that is common across most studies (11 out of 14). Of these, *validity* and *reliability* are the qualities that occur most in the studies, with *authenticity* and *practicality* coming second in the data. In scholarly discussions, these qualities are included in the *knowledge* dimension of LAL, which underscores them as an essential part of the fundamental knowledge base

Table 3. Language Assessment (LA) Contents in the Programs

Study	Knowledge			Skills		Principles
	Meaning of LA	Purposes in LA	Qualities of LA: validity, reliability, etc.	LA methods: critique and/or design	Assessing language skills	Ethics, fairness, impact, etc.
Kleinsasser (2005)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
O'Loughlin (2006)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nier et al. (2009)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walters (2010)				✓		
Arias et al. (2012)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Montee et al. (2013)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baker & Riches (2017)			✓	✓	✓	
Boyd & Donnarumma (2018)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kremmel et al. (2018)			✓	✓	✓	
Koh et al. (2018)			✓	✓	✓	
Jaramillo-Delgado & Gil-Bedoya (2019)			✓	✓		
Giraldo & Murcia (2019)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2019)	✓	✓		✓		✓
Restrepo-Bolívar (2020)	✓	✓		✓		✓

that is needed for language assessment (Inbar-Lourie, 2008, 2012). Besides, as various authors in these studies report (Giraldo & Murcia, 2019; Kleinsasser, 2005), the participating teachers used these qualities to critique and design instruments for language assessment, which suggests that theory, apparently, was not studied in isolation but through the analysis assessments. A major implication from these data may be that theory should connect to design so teachers can make sense of it in the assessments they critique or analyze. Finally, three studies did not explicitly address key qualities such as reliability and validity (Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2019; Restrepo-Bolívar, 2020; Walters, 2010), which are staple in language testing and assessment given their overarching impact. Thus, these two qualities should be

central topics in LAL programs and studied accordingly given the specific nature of each initiative.

Another common content that stands out in Table 3 is, perhaps naturally, the assessment of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The studies that do not mention skills assessment (Jaramillo-Delgado & Gil-Bedoya, 2019; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2019; Restrepo-Bolívar, 2020; Walters, 2010) perhaps did cover these topics, but they are not explicitly or implicitly reported in the articles. In the case of Walters' study, the program focused on a rather particular set of strategies for analyzing items: specifications writing and reverse specifications. Overall, the focus on assessing skills aligns with studies which report that teachers want to learn or improve how they assess language

skills (for example, see Giraldo & Murcia, 2018; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). In all 14 studies there is an absence of construct-based discussions which are prominent in language testing, namely the assessment of multilingual competence. This may happen given that teachers work in contexts where there is a majority target language to be assessed.

As for the absence, in some cases, of the meaning of and purposes for language assessment, it may be the case that these topics were in fact studied in the programs. However, these topics are not reported in all studies because they may be taken for granted or because the nature of the study did not need to address them at length. For example, Kremmel et al. (2018) state that their study was not meant for classroom assessment, in which case *instructional purposes* for assessment may be irrelevant. However, language testing is predominantly done from a purpose-based angle: Assessments respond to purposes for them to be useful. Thus, purposes should be explicitly studied so that knowledge, skills, and principles in language assessment correspond to them.

Lastly, only six out of 14 programs included or addressed, at least explicitly, principles for language assessment. The principles included in the studies were *ethics, fairness, democracy, and transparency*, with a major focus in Arias et al. (2012) and, to a lesser extent, Levi and Inbar-Lourie (2019). The other studies (Boyd & Donnarumma, 2018; Kleinsasser, 2005; Montee et al., 2013; Restrepo-Bolívar, 2020) merely mention these contents. This finding contrasts with overall discussions of LAL, which state that principles such as ethics and fairness are a fundamental piece of this puzzle, for all stakeholders, teachers included (Davies, 2008; Inbar-Lourie, 2017; Kremmel & Harding, 2020). Interestingly, the finding does seem to align with teacher-reported needs. Descriptive studies such as Fulcher (2012) and Giraldo and Murcia (2018) show that teachers rank *principles* as a low priority for LAL. In one of the studies in this review—Kremmel et al. (2018)—teachers reported

that they learned little about principles such as ethicality, but as the authors comment, this was not the focus of their LAL study. However, in the study by Arias et al. (2012), teachers implemented fair, transparent, and democratic practices in their assessment approach. Thus, it seems that principles for LAL should be further studied in these programs, and their impact on teachers elucidated, especially because such principles have become central regarding the role and impact of language assessment in society (Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo, 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2017).

On the Impact of These Programs on Teachers' Professional Development

In this section, I will provide evidence to answer the second research question that guided this review. The impact that these programs had on teachers' LAL can be explained in three aspects: *Heightened conception of language assessment, rigorous design of assessments, and broader constructs for assessment*. Next, I will explain and discuss these impacts.

Heightened Conception of Language Assessment

Most studies in this review (12 out of 14) report that teachers' conception of language assessment went beyond merely using tests and reporting grades to using assessment to improve learning and teaching. According to the reports, the teachers in the studies explained that they viewed language assessment as a powerful tool to impact student learning. Montee et al. (2013), for example, state that the teachers in their program developed "an increased awareness of and appreciation for assessment as a tool for guiding and improving language instruction" (p. 23). Similarly, in Restrepo-Bolívar's (2020) study, one of the preservice teachers viewed assessment as "a process in which the teacher gathers relevant information about the student's weaknesses and strengths in the learning process to make decisions about the instruction and students' learning" (p. 45).

Kremmel et al. (2018) and Walters (2010) do not report teachers' change regarding their conception of language assessment as a whole but do mention they became aware of issues in test development and design. Arguably, these areas may cause a change in perspective. In conclusion, the studies suggest that, even with short workshops (e.g., Boyd & Donnarumma, 2018), language assessment programs seem to exercise a positive impact on teachers' perspective towards what language assessment represents in instructional contexts. Some studies have shown that teachers have a limited view of language assessment and equate it with testing only (e.g., Díaz-Larenas et al., 2012), and this may be attributed to lack of training in LAL, especially in preservice teacher education (Lam, 2015; López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Studies such as López-Mendoza and Bernal-Arandia (2009) have indicated that teachers with limited training in language assessment tend to see this area negatively and equate it with grading only. Thus, the call to provide early and continuous education in LAL is necessary so that teachers can use assessment for positive impact on teaching and learning.

Rigorous Design of Assessments

The design of language instruments is another prominent positive impact the programs had on the participating teachers. As shown in previous findings, workshops for language assessment prioritize a design-based course. Particularly, the studies report that teachers become aware of the necessary procedures to create high-quality assessments and, as they do so, they intertwine knowledge of theory to either critique or improve their design. In other words, design is not a procedural task but one in which theory and practice converge. Arias et al. (2012) explain this trend: "Inter-rater reliability was possible thanks to the existence of instruments and formats that included a complete rubric, with explicit instructions, criteria and construct" (p. 118, translated from Spanish). Similarly, Kremmel et al. (2018, p. 187)

report the following based on the answers from the 56 participating teachers: "The item writing stage appears to have been particularly beneficial for their learning about validity (89%), item writing (88%), reliability (86%), selecting tests for their classroom use (79%) and authenticity (77%)."

The answers in both studies suggest that, as teachers are trained in designing assessments, the task itself triggers theoretical constructs from their LAL. This is perhaps why Fulcher (2012) places the practical aspect of language assessment as fundamental for teachers; the studies in this review seem to align well with this idea and, perhaps most importantly, the needs teachers report in diagnostic studies for LAL (for instance, Vogt & Tsagari, 2014, and others). In conclusion, LAL programs that prioritize design benefit not only the *skills* side of assessment but also *knowledge*, and more importantly, the needs that teachers have reported consistently. What remains open for further investigation is how *principles* in LAL intertwine with *skills* and *knowledge*.

Broader Constructs for Language Assessment

A last outstanding positive impact these programs had on teachers regards the *what* of language assessment: constructs. The studies report that, through these initiatives, teachers moved from assessing minor linguistic skills such as grammar and vocabulary to assessing language ability more holistically. The trend in the studies is that teachers become more aware of assessing listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and this may be attributed to the programs' emphasis on these skills. As Baker and Riches (2017) report, there was "a broadening of the teachers' understanding of the construct of language ability relative to what they had previously held" (p. 566). In this study, teachers thought assessing only grammar and vocabulary was enough but understood the need to assess reading skills as well. Restrepo-Bolívar (2020) also reports how her students understood language ability more intricately. As the author explains, a participant in her

study: “moved from considering mere development of knowledge and skills to focus on language use as the language to be assessed, which is consistent with what current views state about the ultimate goal of teaching and learning a language” (p. 46).

This impact on teachers reflects a need to which scholars have referred in LAL: that of understanding language ability as an intricate construct (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Stabler-Havener, 2018). Thus, these LAL programs may contribute to assessment practices that are more on par with current understandings of language ability models, which is a crucial component of LAL (Brindley, 2001; Davies, 2008). However, as I stated in the findings regarding content, teacher educators and the teachers themselves do not seem to bring up multilingual assessment as an issue in these courses, despite the growing consensus in language testing that this phenomenon is a crucial discussion. Like *principles* in LAL, professional development programs for teachers' LAL may lead to interesting findings when they explore the construct of multilingualism and the design of multilingual assessments.

Conclusions

My purpose with this literature review was to elucidate the nature of language assessment programs and their impact on language teachers' LAL. Data from all 14 studies suggest that training is conducted with language teachers in various educational settings and languages. Particularly, the studies remark the need to advance teachers' LAL through methodologies that use the critique and design of assessments as central tasks, that is, the *skills* component of LAL; such tasks lead to careful design of instruments, as the studies show. Besides, it appears that, with such a practice-based methodology, teachers learn more about conceptual aspects and expand the language ability constructs they assess, two aspects which are part of the *knowledge* side in LAL. Lastly, the *principles* component in LAL and core issues in language testing (e.g., multilingual

assessment) were not prominent in these studies, so further research may be needed to fully explicate the pertinence of these topics in teachers' LAL.

Taken together, the studies are in line with the needs that teachers have reported in the available LAL literature. Further, they exercised a highly positive impact on teachers, even in cases in which training was limited due to time constraints. A final call is that professional development programs for teachers' LAL should become more prominent in the literature so we can learn from others' experiences and then provide high-quality teacher education, which in turn should lead to positive consequences for those involved in language learning.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on my review of the literature, professional development programs for teachers' LAL started to become commonplace in the late 2010s. This is why, out of 14 studies, eight come from 2017 or later. Thus, the small corpus in this review may be considered a limitation. However, despite the limited number of papers and range of years among studies, the trends are clear and point to areas of consensus regarding programs in LAL for teachers. A related limitation is that each program had a particular impact on teachers, which made it difficult to synthesize and confirm other trends. As studies for teachers' professional development in LAL appear, more generalities and specificities might surface in the literature. Finally, the analysis of the data in the corpus for this review depended on my view entirely. Other analyses and conclusions may be possible given different research orientations and purposes.

The studies in this review suggest that as teachers engage in the development of assessments, they also use their theoretical knowledge in their LAL. This is what Davies (2008) conceptualized as a knowledge + skills angle on language testing. Thus, programs designed to foster teachers' LAL should definitely place major

emphasis on the analysis *and* design of assessments; theory-only courses may not be as successful to impact teachers' LAL or even be based on their actual needs for training. Another issue that requires attention is the role of principles in teachers' LAL education. Few studies in this review explicitly addressed them extensively. Thus, professional development programs should include principles such as ethics, fairness, and transparency as contents for teachers' LAL and careful observation as to how these principles can be meaningful for teachers' educational contexts. The feedback from research may be useful in LAL discussions to confirm the need for principles such as ethics and fairness, as authors have argued, or to challenge their presence in these discussions.

Based on the studies in this literature review, and the related conceptual review, LAL should become a core dimension of language teacher education. It may be a disservice not to include courses for language assessment in language teaching curricula, especially because learning about language assessment may lead teachers to become aware of its critical role on three fronts: current understandings of what it means to know and use a language; the impact of language assessment on teaching and learning; and the use of rigorously designed assessments to account for student learning.

References

- Arias, C. I., Maturana, L. M., & Restrepo, M. I. (2012). Evaluación de los aprendizajes en lenguas extranjeras: hacia prácticas justas y democráticas [Assessment in foreign language learning: Towards fair and democratic practices]. *Lenguaje*, 40(1), 99–126. <https://doi.org/10.25100/lenguaje.v40i1.4945>
- Babaii, E., & Asadnia, F. (2019). A long walk to language assessment literacy: EFL teachers' reflection on language assessment research and practice. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 20(6), 745–760. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2019.1688779>
- Baker, B. A., & Riches, C. (2017). The development of EFL examinations in Haiti: Collaboration and language assessment literacy development. *Language Testing*, 35(4), 557–581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532217716732>
- Berry, V., Sheehan, S., & Munro, S. (2019). What does language assessment literacy mean to teachers? *ELT Journal*, 73(2), 113–123. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy055>
- Boyd, E., & Donnarumma, D. (2018). Assessment literacy for teachers: A pilot study investigating the challenges, benefits and impact of assessment literacy training. In D. Xerri & P. Vella Briffa (Eds.), *Teacher involvement in high-stakes language testing* (pp. 105–126). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77177-9_7
- Boyles, P. (2005). Assessment literacy. In M. H. Rosenbusch (Ed.), *New visions in action: National assessment summit papers* (pp. 18–23). Iowa State University.
- Brindley, G. (2001). Language assessment and professional development. In C. Elder, A. Brown, E. Grove, K. Hill, N. Iwashita, T. Lumley, T. McNamara, & K. O'Loughlin (Eds.), *Experimenting with uncertainty: Essays in honour of Alan Davies* (pp. 126–136). Cambridge University Press.
- Coombe, C., Vafadar, H., & Mohebbi, H. (2020). Language assessment literacy: What do we need to learn, unlearn, and relearn? *Language Testing in Asia*, 10(3), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-020-00101-6>
- Crusan, D., Plakans, L., & Gebril, A. (2016). Writing assessment literacy: Surveying second language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. *Assessing Writing*, 28, 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2016.03.001>
- Davies, A. (2008). Textbook trends in teaching language testing. *Language Testing*, 25(3), 327–347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090156>
- Díaz-Larenas, C., Alarcón-Hernández, P., & Ortiz-Navarrete, M. (2012). El profesor de inglés: sus creencias sobre la evaluación de la lengua inglesa en los niveles primario, secundario y terciario [The English teacher: His/Her beliefs about English language assessment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels]. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 17(1), 15–26.

- Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 9(2), 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2011.642041>
- Giraldo, F. (2018). Language assessment literacy: Implications for language teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 20(1), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n1.62089>
- Giraldo, F. (2020). A post-positivist and interpretive approach to researching teachers' language assessment literacy. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 22(1), 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v22n1.78188>
- Giraldo, F. (2021). A reflection on initiatives for teachers' professional development through language assessment literacy. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(1), 197–213. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n1.83094>
- Giraldo, F., & Murcia, D. (2018). Language assessment literacy for pre-service teachers: Course expectations from different stakeholders. *GIST: Education and Research Learning Journal*, (16), 56–77. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.425>
- Giraldo, F., & Murcia, D. (2019). Language assessment literacy and the professional development of pre-service language teachers. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 21(2), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.14514>
- Hill, K. (2017). Understanding classroom-based assessment practices: A precondition for teacher assessment literacy. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, 6(1), 1–17.
- Hill, K., & McNamara, T. (2011). Developing a comprehensive, empirically based research framework for classroom-based assessment. *Language Testing*, 29(3), 395–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532211428317>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. *Language Testing*, 25(3), 385–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090158>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2012). Language assessment literacy. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 2923–2931). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbealo605>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2013a). Guest Editorial to the special issue on language assessment literacy. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 301–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480126>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2013b, November). *Language assessment literacy: What are the ingredients?* [Paper presentation]. 4th CBLA SIG Symposium, University of Cyprus, Cyprus.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2017). Language assessment literacy. In E. Shohamy, I. G. Or, & S. May (Eds.), *Language testing and assessment: Encyclopedia of language and education* (3rd ed., pp. 257–268). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02261-1_19
- Jaramillo-Delgado, J., & Gil-Bedoya, A. M. (2019). Pre-service English language teachers' use of reflective journals in an assessment and testing course. *Funlam Journal of Students' Research*, (4), 210–218. <https://doi.org/10.21501/25007858.3010>
- Jeong, H. (2013). Defining assessment literacy: Is it different for language testers and non-language testers? *Language Testing*, 30(3), 345–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480334>
- Kleinsasser, R. C. (2005). Transforming a postgraduate level assessment course: A second language teacher educator's narrative. *Prospect*, 20(3), 77–102.
- Koh, K., Burke, L., Luke, A., Gong, W., & Tan, C. (2018). Developing the assessment literacy of teachers in Chinese language classrooms: A focus on assessment task design. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(3), 264–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168816684366>
- Kremmel, B., Eberharter, K., Holzknicht, F., & Konrad, E. (2018). Fostering language assessment literacy through teacher involvement in high-stakes test development. In D. Xerri & P. Vella Briffa (Eds.), *Teacher involvement in high-stakes language testing* (pp. 173–194). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77177-9_10
- Kremmel, B., & Harding, L. (2020). Towards a comprehensive, empirical model of language assessment literacy across stakeholder groups: Developing the language assessment literacy survey. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 17(1), 100–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2019.1674855>

- Lam, R. (2015). Language assessment training in Hong Kong: Implications for language assessment literacy. *Language Testing*, 32(2), 169–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532214554321>
- Levi, T., & Inbar-Lourie, O. (2019). Assessment literacy or language assessment literacy: Learning from the teachers. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 17(2), 168–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2019.1692347>
- López-Mendoza, A. A., & Bernal-Arandia, R. (2009). Language testing in Colombia: A call for more teacher education and teacher training in language assessment. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 55–70.
- Malone, M. E. (2017). Training in language assessment. In E. Shohamy, I. G. Or, & S. May (Eds.), *Language testing and assessment: Encyclopedia of language and education* (3rd ed., pp. 225–240). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02261-1_16
- Montee, M., Bach, A., Donovan, A., & Thompson, L. (2013). LCTL teachers' assessment knowledge and practices: An exploratory study. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 13, 1–31.
- Nier, V. C., Donovan, A. E., & Malone, M. E. (2009). Increasing assessment literacy among LCTL instructors through blended learning. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 7, 95–118.
- O'Loughlin, K. (2006). Learning about second language assessment: Insights from a postgraduate student on-line subject forum. *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL*, 1, 71–85.
- O'Loughlin, K. (2013). Developing the assessment literacy of university proficiency test users. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 363–380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480336>
- Pill, J., & Harding, L. (2013). Defining the language assessment literacy gap: Evidence from a parliamentary inquiry. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 381–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480337>
- Restrepo-Bolívar, E. M. (2020). Monitoring preservice teachers' language assessment literacy development through journal writing. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 17(1), 38–52.
- Scarino, A. (2013). Language assessment literacy as self-awareness: Understanding the role of interpretation in assessment and in teacher learning. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 309–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480128>
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage.
- Stabler-Havener, M. L. (2018). Defining, conceptualizing, problematizing, and assessing language teacher assessment literacy. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics & tesol*, 18(1), 1–22.
- Sultana, N. (2019). Language assessment literacy: An uncharted area for the English language teachers in Bangladesh. *Language Testing in Asia*, 9(1), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0077-8>
- Taylor, L. (2013). Communicating the theory, practice and principles of language testing to test stakeholders: Some reflections. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 403–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480338>
- Tsagari, D., & Vogt, K. (2017). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers around Europe: Research, challenges and future prospects. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, 6(1), 41–63.
- Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2014). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers: Findings of a European study. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 11(4), 374–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2014.960046>
- Vogt, K., Tsagari, D., & Spanoudis, G. (2020). What do teachers think they want? A comparative study of in-service language teachers' beliefs on LAL training needs. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 17(4), 386–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2020.1781128>
- Walters, F. S. (2010). Cultivating assessment literacy: Standards evaluation through language-test specification reverse engineering. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 7(4), 317–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2010.516042>
- Yastıbaş, A., & Takkaç, M. (2018). Understanding language assessment literacy: Developing language assessments. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14(1), 178–193.

About the Author

Frank Giraldo holds an MA in English Didactics from Universidad de Caldas (Colombia), and an MA in TESOL from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (The USA). He works as a teacher educator in the Modern Languages Program and in the MA in English Didactics at Universidad de Caldas, Colombia.

Embracing Conceptualizations of English Language Teacher Education From a Complexity Perspective

Acoger conceptualizaciones de la formación del docente de inglés desde una perspectiva compleja

Martha Garcia-Chamorro

Universidad del Atlántico and Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta


Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia


Current conceptualizations of foreign language teacher education fail to represent the complexity of such education. This reflection highlights the need to embrace English language teacher education from a complex perspective. To explain this position, we define complex systems and complexity principles through examples of interconnected components of teacher education. Then, we trace emergent conceptualizations from theory and governmental documents that resonate with a complexity perspective. We suggest that efforts in this direction may better prepare prospective English teachers to face challenging realities in educational settings and will eventually improve students' learning, an outcome every stakeholder is aiming at.

Keywords: complex system, complexity perspective, complexity principles, English language teacher education

Las conceptualizaciones actuales de la formación de docentes de lenguas extranjeras no representan la complejidad de dicha formación. Esta reflexión destaca la necesidad de abordar la formación de profesores de inglés desde una perspectiva compleja. Para explicar esta posición, definimos los sistemas complejos y los principios de complejidad a través de ejemplos de componentes interconectados de la formación del profesorado. A continuación, rastreamos las conceptualizaciones emergentes de la teoría y los documentos gubernamentales que resuenan con una perspectiva de complejidad. Los esfuerzos en esta dirección pueden preparar mejor a los futuros profesores de inglés para enfrentarse a las desafiantes realidades de los entornos educativos y, en última instancia, mejorarán el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, un resultado al que aspiran todas las partes interesadas.

Palabras clave: formación de docentes de inglés, perspectiva de complejidad, principios de complejidad, sistema complejo

Martha Garcia-Chamorro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7329-9870> · Email: marthagarcia@mail.uniatlantico.edu.co

Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1865-2464> · Email: nrosado@uninorte.edu.co

How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Garcia-Chamorro, M., & Rosado-Mendinueta, N. (2021). Embracing conceptualizations of English language teacher education from a complexity perspective. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(2), 281–295. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.82765>

This article was received on October 9, 2019 and accepted on May 24, 2021.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Introduction

World changes affect economic, political, communicative, technological, and relational areas in society (Gómez-Francisco, 2010). These changes affect people's thoughts, perceptions, knowledge, and reactions to those dynamics (Vaillant, 2007). Also, people bi-directionally influence culture, family, society, educational settings, and relationships, which are historically located, diverse, and versatile (López-Rupérez, 1997). This "changeism" (Hill-Jackson & Lewis, 2010, p. xxi) affects education, given its socio-political and institutionalized nature (Morante & Gómez, 2007). For this reason, education is of great importance for societies (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2013; Rubiano, 2013) if they are to understand change and advance, progress and improve living and relational conditions of human beings. Therefore, it is important to inform education from perspectives that can take account of its bidirectional relationships with society and that recognize its inherent complexity.

Within a climate of constant change, teachers are fundamental agents in nations' achievement of their intended goals (García-Jaramillo et al., 2014; Schuck et al., 2018). Teachers' quality has been considered a key factor to assure that forthcoming generations maintain and upgrade their social and living conditions to their fullest. As scholarship shows (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hattie, 2008; McLean Davies et al., 2015; Vezub, 2007), teachers are crucial in guaranteeing students' improvement in the educational system provided other factors are also developed (Cochran-Smith et al., 2017; Morante & Gómez, 2007).

Global societal changes demand the alignment of education and teacher education (TE) to new visions. Societies need TE programs developed from perspectives that prepare teachers to respond to the increasing demands of educational settings (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Schuck et al., 2018; Vaillant, 2007). Programs are designed to equip teachers with knowledge, skills, and understandings so they can deal with changing

realities. Therefore, English language teacher education (ELTE) configurations should recognize TE is a complex phenomenon and use that understanding to include knowledge derived from other sciences, which have advanced in their comprehension of how such complex phenomena function. Programs should, for instance, demonstrate in their designs how multiple factors interconnect to influence teachers' learning thus ultimately affecting teacher quality. Therefore, we propose that ELTE should attempt to integrate complexity epistemologies into their proposals to allow both teacher educators and preservice teachers to develop the knowledge skills and understandings to face variant, diverse, unique, and intricate phenomena (Vaillant, 2007) that surface in their classrooms.

In line with this, this paper aims at highlighting the need for current ELTE theoretical approaches to recognize and act upon the understanding that TE is a complex phenomenon. We suggest that teacher educators and designers should start thinking of language teachers' preparation using those considerations. We pose that ELTE programs should be distanced from a simplicity paradigm, which focuses on content knowledge over other highly influential factors. These factors are frequently addressed in relevant research, but they are far from being integrated into theoretical underpinnings of ELTE programs. ELTE needs to be informed by knowledge areas able to explain how a complex phenomenon such as English language teachers' learning really emerges. Joint efforts to improve their quality can be made in this direction. Such efforts would better equip prospective English language teachers to face challenging realities in educational settings and would eventually improve students' learning and development, an outcome every stakeholder is aiming at.

A Brief Note on Paradigms

The concept of paradigm has two main characteristics: a certain way to conceive and interpret reality and a shared world vision by a group of people (Sandin, 2003,

p. 28). The scientific classical paradigm is grounded in positivist-rationalist perspectives and entails procedures that separate phenomena into their parts to make them understandable and tractable for human beings. This implies fragmentation, simplification, reduction, and determination of such phenomena to be able to comprehend them. Most known phenomena have been studied under this paradigm. This “classical” paradigm has had a strong influence on three major aspects in education: theoretical, epistemological, and methodological. At this point, most of the ELTE configurations have grounded their theoretical foundations on the classical paradigm (also found in the literature as positivist, rationalist, and empiricist), which usually translates into models of transmission of knowledge. This is what counts as valid knowledge, which in turn is able to explain educational phenomena (Arellano, 2016). However, teaching and learning in education and in ELTE cannot be explained merely on the bases of the classical paradigm (Davis & Sumara, 2012; Gómez-Francisco, 2010; Roa-Acosta, 2006; Tello, 2004) as we argue in this reflection.

As mentioned, our current paradigmatic comprehension of education has derived from the classical paradigm, and therefore our understandings of how knowledge should be taught and learned result from it. This may have an incidence in the crisis we are living these days, which the World Development Report (WDR) has labelled as a “learning crisis” (World Bank, 2018). The WDR notes the crisis is happening in developing countries and further underlines the lack of recognition from the educational agents: “The learning crisis is real, but too often education systems operate as if it is not” (p. 83). Part of this crisis derives from ignoring that TE is a complex phenomenon and to improve it we first need to understand it better.

Scholarship in education has gradually started to establish more complex relations among teaching and learning processes; however, only until recently, the analysis of theoretical reflections in ELTE models

has started to shift. There is a slow movement from traditional paradigms where knowledge transmission is equated to learning, to perspectives that integrate into the equation other interconnected factors such as reflection on teacher’s classroom actions. Recent perspectives resonate with constructivist and socio-critical underpinnings as well as humanistic theoretical foundations (for a review of models, see Fandiño-Parra et al., 2016). The paradigmatic stance taken by ELTE influences how teaching and learning are instantiated in the programs. As follows, we will illustrate this point introducing conceptual orientations that have been traced in various reviews.

Main Conceptual Orientations in Teacher Education

Feiman-Nemser (1990) indicates five conceptual orientations from her review of theoretical perspectives in TE. The author defines conceptual orientation as “a coherent perspective on teaching, learning, and learning to teach that gives direction to the practical activities of educating teachers” (p. 6). The first one is *academic orientation* understood as terms of transmission of knowledge and development of understanding. The teacher is considered an “intellectual leader, scholar, subject matter specialist” (p. 7). The second is *personal orientation*, in which the student teacher is the core of the teaching and learning process and the focus is on learning, instead of teaching: “Learning to teach is construed as a process of learning to understand, develop, and use oneself effectively” (p. 8). The third is *critical orientation*, which emphasizes the power of education in creating a fairer and more democratic society. The fourth is *technological orientation*, which centers on the idea that teachers are consumers of research in order to use principles and practices. The fifth is *practical orientation*; it revolves around “knowledge about teaching and a means of learning to teach” (p. 15). In this regard, Vieira and Moreira (2008, as cited in Fandiño-Parra et al., 2016) point out that ELTE still

tells teachers what and how to do things. Even though these orientations have marked ELTE configurations and made great contributions to the field, they have done so from a fragmenting view, thus falling short in preparing teachers from stances that recognize the multidimensionality of ELTE.

When TE is looked at from a diachronic historical perspective, one can say that it has transitioned from conceptions based on behaviorism and constructivism to humanistic and socio-historical views of teaching and learning. The underlying conception defines the main components of ELTE; therefore, ELTE has shifted from aiming that teachers exhibit desirable behaviors producing good teaching to focusing on their gaining awareness of the assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions that influence their classroom practices and promote effective teaching; to helping teachers design and experience practices that respond to local contexts and needs (Ell et al., 2017).

An illustration of such shifts is provided as follows. As has been explained frequently, the behaviorist view of learning translates into as a series of learned “skills, tasks, routines, and strategies” (Stuart & Tatto, 2000, p. 500) that student teachers need to put into action in the classroom. Instances of “what works best” in teaching can be seen in this conception (Richards, 1998). This understanding assumes traditional models isolated from contexts or classroom situations, “and despite this, prospective teachers are expected to reproduce what they learned in a ‘cascade’ or replica effect, in a kind of contagion of what they have learned” (determinism; Salas, 2006, as cited in Rodríguez & Alamilla, 2018, p. 16).

The constructivist view in ELTE entails that student teachers develop an understanding of subject matter and pedagogy with the purpose of reflecting and creating instances of theory and practice in context. The humanistic approach to ELTE considers that teaching is based on the interactions of human beings, highlighting that learning is a human experience (Iannone & Carline, 1971). This approach aims at meeting preservice teachers’

human needs and at preparing them to encounter students with a wide range of intellectual and humanistic needs. The ultimate goal is supporting human growth. Those conceptions have given support to different models which emphasize cores of intellectual, social (K. E. Johnson, 2009; Nguyen, 2016), humanistic, or technical stances (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Fandiño-Parra et al., 2016; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Freeman, 2006; Wallace, 1991) or more integrative ELTE proposals (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). This shows a gradual shift that acknowledges ELTE as a complex endeavor aimed at uncovering the relationship of the multiplicity of components that affect teachers’ learning.

Current Teacher Education Configurations

Morin (2005) remarks that to acknowledge a complexity perspective we first have to acknowledge the existence of a simplicity one. A simplicity or classical paradigm explains phenomena in terms of linear cause-effect, fragmentation, determinism,¹ and mechanism by separating their parts, in the understanding that to study the whole implies studying the sum of its parts. This paradigm is grounded on “evidence, fragmentation, lineal causality, exhaustivity, immutability, irrefragability, universality, and reversibility” (Roa-Acosta, 2006, p. 151).

To illustrate the linearity, we can consider the theory and practice dichotomy. This follows a cause-effect relationship, where teachers receive knowledge (the empty vessel concept) and consequently they will know how to apply it in class. In other words, the cascade effect: “A certain and linear process within which knowledge is transmitted more or less directly from teacher to student by following a fixed and scientifically predetermined sequence of instructions” (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 97).

¹ “The philosophical attitude . . . that everything that is going to happen is absolutely determined (fixed) by what has already happened; everything that has already happened can in principle be determined (calculated) by careful scrutiny of current conditions” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 9).

Fragmentation, in this context could be exemplified with the series of discrete components commonly found in ELTE programs, suggesting that separated learning components (or parts) will lead to effective preservice teacher learning and practice (the whole). Furthermore, ELTE and specifically, initial ELTE, in many contexts, have focused on training, which emphasizes the hierarchy of instructional methods as the priority of most programs' rationale. Fragmentation has resulted in the profession being instrumentalized or infused with a technical vision (Cárdenas et al., 2010; Schön, 1987). As Zemelman (1998, as cited in Tello, 2004) states, this represents a constraint since we simultaneously "have to ask ourselves the question about how to stimulate the willingness to think, especially when what is privileged is simply the ability of how to do" (p. 7).

We suggest that ELTE configurations have been fragmented and therefore instrumentalized. To overcome this, Aoki (as cited in Pinar & Irwin, 2004) proposes a movement towards a multidimensional curriculum and suggests that "we need to seek out new orientations that allow us to free ourselves of the tunnel vision effect of mono-dimensionality" (p. 1). Aoki advises the design and implementation of TE based on "human experiences within the classroom situation" (p. 3) allowing this way that preservice teachers "theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 15), contributing to a more multidimensional orientation in ELTE.

Aoki (as cited in Pinar & Irwin, 2004) also recommends those experiences be undertaken on the basis of reflection. Being a teacher means more than performing skills and delivering content. He highlights the issue of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived in the "in between" that emerges from these two perspectives, which call for "an understanding of our own being as teachers" (p. 15). He indicates that attention has been focused on the outcomes of teaching (the *what* and *how to*) instead of on the "understanding of teaching" (p. 17) (the *whys*). Within the outcome orientation,

effective teaching has been reduced to views of "doing," sidelining that teaching "may have more to do with the being of teacher—who a teacher is" (p. 17) than with outcomes. In our reflection, we subscribe to Aoki's view. In his interpretations of curriculum-as-lived, this author has connected the complexity of the classroom to the teaching world: multiplicity, layers, spaces of difference, in a more humanized frame for understanding teaching and teachers, thus moving away from an understanding of teaching and teachers as means: a complex view of ELTE.

Teacher Education and Its Instantiation in the Colombian Context

Given the fact that global TE has been developed mainly under the simplicity perspective, it is not surprising that TE in Colombia has also been permeated by this worldwide perspective, and traces of this vision might persist in some educational settings. The Decree 18583 (2017) comprises the four components for TE programs in Colombia: (a) general foundations, (b) subject matter and disciplinary subjects, (c) the foundations of education and pedagogy, and (d) didactics. However, the document makes no explicit reference to attitudes and aptitudes to support the development of teachers as agents of social change; also, there is not much reference to schools as places of social and cultural development. This perspective does not seem to be enough to explain complex phenomena such as knowing and learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) in education or ELTE.

Calls for a more complex perspective are found in the literature. Arismendi (2016) acknowledges the need to recognize the cultural and plurilingual Colombian diversity; Giraldo et al. (2019) challenge the traditional and fragmented curricular foundations; Fontalvo (2017) suggests curricular views be "open, critical, decolonizing, complex, non-linear, and self-organizing" (p. 228); the OECD report underscores the need for contextualized

Colombian Initial Teacher Education (Radinger et al, 2018); and Castañeda-Londoño (2019) highlights language teachers' necessity to construct local knowledge base mindsets. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure ELTE programs embrace diversity and increase contextualization to prepare teachers for the challenges of our variegated educational contexts.

Teacher training and reflective practices play a key role in ELTE but are not sufficient on their own to account for the complexity of this phenomenon. Evidently, teachers need to learn "how to do things," and exhibit effective techniques and skills in classrooms; they also need to reflect on their experiences undergone during practices, what went wrong or right, to improve their practices. However, the classroom scenario challenges teachers to do more than that; they need to integrate other factors that contribute to the whole of teaching. ELTE needs to recognize the influence of factors such as the context itself, and the interactions between teachers and students in the background of the school context, for instance. Such factors affect teachers' actions and students' learning and development. This perspective understands education as a complex system, embracing the "new relationship[s] between the whole and its parts" (Gómez-Francisco, 2010, p. 191). This new understanding should assume "that teaching is a complex and somewhat uncertain process with knowledge constructed in the interactions of particular teachers, students, materials, texts, and prior experiences" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 97).

A Complexity Perspective to Support Understanding of Teacher Education

ELTE programs should acknowledge advances deriving from complexity perspectives and incorporate what is pertinent from these advances into their theoretical approaches to infuse curricular plans, methodologies, and didactics (Roa-Acosta, 2006). Current ELTE theoretical perspectives recognize some

components which are instantiated in subjects related to instructional methods, pedagogy, disciplinary matters, and theories of education; other components related to English language teachers' learning are not easy to grasp and evidence such as teachers' beliefs, assumptions, reflections, learning experiences, and personal values, to name just a few. These components seem to be interrelated, enriched, and affected by the interactions of teachers, students, educational policy, curriculum (as agents), as well as the environment (context and setting dynamic conditions; society and culture). These interactions are complex and affect TE, teacher development, and practices. So, efforts should be made to understand the complexity of ELTE. This raises the question of what a complex system is, what complexity is, and how these concepts relate to teacher education.

Systems and Complex Systems

To understand why education and, consequently, ELTE are considered complex systems, one must start with a definition of system. Morin (1990) explains that a system is "an interrelation of elements which constitute an entity or a global unit" (p. 123). According to Morin (1990), two important conditions stand out here: elements are interrelated, and the unit, understood and constituted by those interrelated components. Also, when this unit and its interrelated components have a regular and stable relation, the system is said to be organized.

Morin (1990) explains that systems organization entails the disposition among components or individual's relations which produces a complex unit or system. This one possesses unknown qualities in the elements level. Organization brings together elements, events, or individuals that end up forming a unit (a whole). Organization in the system "transforms, produces, gathers, and maintains" (p. 126) the system itself. Complexity is conceived at this point because the unit reveals "infinite combinations of simultaneous interactions and that

abounded in non-linear interrelations” (Barberousse, 2008, p. 99). This means that complexity is born within the same system. As in education, multiple interactions of agents result in multiple decisions. Problems originate from diverse and varied situations and decisions occurring on a daily basis in schools as well as varied ways of solving problems. These interactions, problems, and decisions are not evident in curricula or syllabi. This illustrates that systems cannot be explained by only the elements that constitute it, but also by the multiple interactions of its components and the agents in it.

Key Principles of Complexity and of Complex Systems

N. Johnson (2009, pp. 13–16) identifies some key principles of complexity evident in any complex system as follows:

1. “The system contains a collection of many interacting objects or agents” (p. 13). To illustrate this, notice that education is considered a complex system due to the multiple agents that constitute it: students, teachers, supervisors, coordinators, and educational stakeholders that take part in this context and share information, duties, and so on. Therefore, individual agents cannot be conceived out of the system (for example, teachers cannot be conceived without their relations to students). According to N. Johnson (2009), these agents interact physically as members of the same group, and share information as a group. Within a given group, some subcommunities emerge as well because they share other types of information or features with certain members. These interconnected networks and agents are one of the most important characteristics of a system.

2. “The agents’ behavior is affected by feedback” (N. Johnson, 2009, p. 14). This means that actions in the past have effects in the present. Also, actions of an event or context can have an effect in another context. Therefore, systems have memory of actions which they can use to transform or have an effect on the present.

3. “The objects/agents can adapt their strategies according to their history” (p. 14). This means, according to N. Johnson (2009), that they can improve their performance by adapting their own behavior by themselves.

4. “The system is typically open” (p. 14). N. Johnson (2009) explains that a system can be influenced or affected by its environment. In education, this can easily be registered when schools need to adapt their own curriculum due to policy reforms or technological changes that influence schools to transform their own functioning.

5. “The system appears to be alive” (p. 14). N. Johnson (2009) indicates that a system’s evolution occurs in a highly “non-trivial” (see Morin, 2005) and most of the time “complicated” way. Complicated means determined by agents’ ecology who interact and adapt thanks to memory or feedback, as explained previously.

6. “The system exhibits emergent phenomena which are generally surprising and may be extreme” (N. Johnson, 2009, p. 15). This means that systems are “far from equilibrium” (N. Johnson, 2009, p. 15); which means that everything could happen and that the resulting phenomena cannot be predicted based on the information (based on the properties) each object/agent has.

7. “The system shows an intricate mix of ordered and disorder behavior” (p. 15). Systems are considered to operate in a sort of flow between order and disorder.

We suggest, as other authors, that TE is a complex system (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Koopmans, 2017; Michel, 2016; van Geert & Steenbeek, 2014). Hence, we think that many of the principles of complexity allow for better understanding of how TE works as such perspective “aims to account for how the interactive parts of a complex system give rise to the system’s collective behavior and how such a system simultaneously interacts with its environment” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 1). In that sense, a complexity perspective could trace how ELTE components and their articulation infuse prospective teachers’

responses to problems, decision-making, and professional growth in a multiplicity of school contexts and occurrences. It could also trace how the components' multiple interactions and use of information, both past and present, inform preservice teachers' learning and the role of the environment in teachers' learning and self-organization; in short, how this information is understood to enhance teachers' learning. Carta de Fortaleza (2010) proposes thinking of education from a complexity and transdisciplinary view supported by three formative dimensions: auto formation, hetero formation, and eco-formation, which are pivotal to revitalize TE as well as acceptance of "openness, flexibility, dialogue, self-eco-organization and autonomy, in addition to greater attention to emergencies, to the ecology of action, to intersubjectivity enriched by multiple references" (p. 4).

A complexity perspective does not reject knowledge derived from classical perspectives; it advances from it to solve its limitations to understand complex phenomena (López-Rupérez, 1997) and account for the relationships between the whole and the parts; therefore, we need to inquire how they interconnect and interact to produce and acquire knowledge leading to meaningful outcomes for all agents. Tello (2004) highlights that all agents in the TE system are active agents; therefore, able to transform knowledge. We concur with Tello (2004) that those in charge of education are obliged to revisit education concepts and "vary the training and profession categories" (p. 7) consistent with their particular necessities, as well as "deepen the education analysis from a multidimensional opening of social reality and senses, without anticipating what the teacher's role will be because it will surely be different from what the teacher 'is being prepared' for" (p. 7).

We suggest that TE, and specifically initial TE research, should continue to deemphasize the linearity still persistent in how we approach and understand TE. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2014) argue:

In many countries, there are multiple studies intended to improve initial teacher education. These have generally focused on pieces of teacher education rather than wholes, and have used an underlying linear logic. It may be, however, that what is needed are new research questions and theoretical frameworks that account for wholes, not just parts, and take complex, rather than reductionist perspectives. (p. 1)

In fact, educational research has gradually unveiled other bodies of knowledge that have demonstrated the exertion of great influence on teachers' education and their professional performance in the classroom: school culture and beliefs (Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014), beliefs affecting different teachers' performances and behaviors (García & Rey, 2013; Gómez-Muñoz, 2010; Mansfield & Volet, 2014), empowerment (Fandiño-Parra, 2010), more contextualized reflective practice and resistance to dominant discourses (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2009; Torres-Martínez, 2009), identity (Arvaja, 2016; Hamilton & Clandinin, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 2015; Santoro, 2014). Therefore, ELTE should expand its knowledge bases to improve prospective teachers' education with what best supports their learning and future classroom practices. Such components also encompass the development of critical and reflective attitudes, autonomy, and awareness of classroom and students' particularities (Martínez Agudo, 2011). In a similar vein, Livingston and Flores (2017) report a 40-year review on research and highlight a variety of topics that suggest meaningful emerging areas enriching the "how to" in TE:

Teacher professional learning, research and enquiry in TE, partnerships in teacher education, linking research and the use of data to teaching, teacher leadership, intercultural and multicultural issues, inclusive education, diversity, mentoring, reflective practice, digital competence, teacher portfolios, teacher retention, identity, motivation for teaching and teacher educators. (p. 551)

Livingston and Flores (2017) report the theory and practice divide as a matter of constant inquiry and indicate that “identify[ing] the professional learning needs of teachers at the initial teacher education is necessary.” There is also recognition of “the complexity of learning and teaching as a social, moral, political and economic endeavor” (p. 555). Findings from this review suggest that TE is moving (but probably too slowly) in the acceptance and acting upon the knowledge of the multiplicity of existing components that should be considered in TE conceptualizations.

Authors as Ling (2017) make a strong call for the recognition of complexity in TE if we are to respond to the challenges posed by our present and future societal demands. The author explains current challenges faced in TE conceptualization:

Teacher education needs to be an iterative process rather than a linear one and needs to be backwards, forwards, inside-out and outside-in somewhat simultaneously, because it is complex, recursive and has multiple layers. Add to this the broader issues faced within a super complex, twenty first century knowledge society, where the future is not only unknown but unknowable, and where the frameworks by which we make sense of our world are moving, blurring and shifting as well as being highly contested and contestable. (p. 562)

We suggest it is possible to conceptualize ELTE as a complex system. It seems that some ELTE components and agents are more visible (performance in classroom) than others (decision-making, identity, beliefs, assumptions, ideologies, moral and ethical values) that may be revealed through discourse. They can also influence and interact with teachers’ learning. Furthermore, they interact following principles of complex systems, that is, contexts and educational settings provoke emergence of new responses, new learning, and growth. Teachers have the potential to improve their own behaviors.

Conceptualizations of Teacher Education in Colombia

In terms of conceptualization of teacher preparation, the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN, 2013) gave its first steps by acknowledging that TE needs to be recognized as a complex system. This stance presents TE as a complex system in its general structure, recognizing it as an organization with its inherent dynamics. According to the MEN (2013), this system consists of three interrelated units that connect in different ways: initial TE, in-service education, and professional teacher development. Within this system, there are three recognized articulation axes: pedagogy, research, and evaluation (p. 59).

Accordingly, the MEN (2013) considers it important to highlight the purposes that the *Sistema Nacional de Formación de Educadores* (National System of Teacher Education) proposed in the 1996–2016 ten-year educational development plan, namely, teacher education and initial and ongoing integral development as key factors to guarantee the quality of education. However, the MEN claims these components do not function in isolation and quality should be articulated with the education system, policies, and other areas such as labor, infrastructure, and supplies.

The document also states that teachers are agents who should recognize their role in constructing quality in three dimensions: personal, social, and professional. Teachers are considered social agents, with knowledge and pedagogical experiences, in relation to their socio-cultural contexts and are able to build innovation through their own praxis with a great role in social transformation (MEN, 2013, p. 44). However, Decree 18583, enacted in 2017, does not deepen in these instances.

The MEN document defines the importance of teachers as social agents seeking for social transformation. The document presents teachers as embedded in four types of learning: doing, knowing, living, and being;

these learnings happen through teachers' pedagogical experiences, not in isolation but in a given socio-cultural context (p. 44). The MEN document puts forward a complexity perspective for teacher preparation in order to improve teachers' human development from the very initial phases (MEN, 2013):

The main issue is that of the educators themselves, since it is a matter of preparing not a process and procedure operator, but a qualified human being for a very significant social task, whose horizon must impact not only the country's economic development, but also social and moral development in general, quality life and human well-being. (p. 20)

Global challenges and national societal demands call for ELTE configurations from a complex view to tackle the complexities of ELTE itself; as well as to respond to the different and diverse educational settings claiming for social transformation in our context. The MEN has kept in mind that teacher quality requires the coordinated process of different stakeholders with the intention of improving education in the nation. Within this context, the MEN recognized the complexity of systems as a way to respond to the rapid changes of transformations in the knowledge society; these demand the reorganization of the processes of teacher qualification and education. "Therefore, teacher education goes beyond enabling professional and labor function for the educational system; it aims at an integral teacher's formation: of being, knowing, doing, and living with others" (MEN, 2013, p. 46).

This multidimensionality requires assuming a different conceptual stance that acknowledges other interconnected aspects. The MEN (2013) also recognizes that due to its nature, TE should be approached from a complexity view, "supported in social and cultural dynamics, which in turn also demand its transformation" (p. 46).

At this point, ELTE, approached under a complex perspective, may reveal some components which are

invisible in ELTE configurations, their interrelations, and operation, and how they affect preservice teachers' growth and learning such as "personal beliefs and values as strong influences" (Ell et al., 2017, p. 341). Consequently, research to help identify and recognize invisible components, their influences, interactions, and emergence in teachers' formation is essential.

Moving From Conceptualization to Design

The need to comprehend and research the different components that constitute ELTE (initial and ongoing) is increasing as highlighted by different scholars (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Ell et al., 2017; Gray & Colucci-Gray, 2010; Ludlow et al., 2017; Ricca, 2012; Smitherman Pratt, 2011). However, there is a long way to go in that direction.

ELTE naturally evolves as a complex system in which known components (disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, teaching practice, culture, educational setting, identity, conceptions, perceptions, and beliefs) interact with each other and influence preservice teachers' learning and development; as well as their practices in classrooms and in the world. These elements that make up part of a teacher's system interact as well with students and communities which are complex systems too. They all come into play, interacting, making relations, influencing each other, emerging as new systems to prompt for making decisions; consequently, teachers themselves become the key to unveil the phenomena, as suggested by Phelps (2005):

No-one knows the complex interplay of factors that impact on an individual, or the significance of any one factor, greater than the individuals themselves. This is not to assume for a moment that the individual learner is fully aware of all these factors, but rather that they are in a better position to understand them than anyone else. (p. 40)

English language teachers in processes of initial education as well as all other teachers are always

developing, learning, knowing, being, and constantly becoming social and human beings. This implies not stable, but permanent formation and transformation, not only for teachers, but also for the reality around them: “The educator listens to the word of the other and her or his own voice; from here, he/she is transformed and renewed. An educator who is not formed him/herself in ‘formation’ does not form, only informs” (Mèlich, 2011, p. 50).

As highlighted by Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005), people, when asked, would agree that teacher education needs to be improved, but there is a vast disagreement about how, why, and for what purposes. Calls for change stem from complex social, political, and organizational goals that are quite different from one another in history and tradition. (p. 43)

More than ever, ELTE cannot be regarded as an isolated area, where pedagogy and content override other type of influences in teachers’ learning; instead, it should be seen as operating within human actions for future transformation and empowering teachers for social design. Instances of theory and practice cannot be explained in only epistemological frames of knowledge transmission, or linear cause–effect. Calls to develop more integrative, complex analysis of teachers’ learning should be happening.

ELTE programs systematically and intentionally designed and studied from a complex perspective could facilitate the understanding of the complex nature of teachers’ learning and development. This understanding would lead to new ways of working and enhancing prospective teachers’ professionalism as well as their learning and developmental conditions. Understanding TE in such an integral way will go beyond listing components to understand their relations, interdependencies, interactions, and influences; in other words, how the TE system works and emerges.

It is time to further acknowledge ELTE as a complex system and, as such, start working to see how as a

system it is entangled and nested in multiple classroom dynamics that comprise connected, dependent, and interdependent phenomena. Nevertheless, according to Davis and Sumara (2006), this complexity perspective cannot be seen as

an explanatory system. . . . The fact that complexity thinking pays attention to diverse sensibilities should not be taken to mean that the perspective represents some sort of effort to embrace the “best” elements from, for example, classical science or recent postmodern critiques of scientism. (p. 4)

There are no doubts English language teachers play an important role in society’s transformation, therefore ELTE demands continuous efforts to comprehend the complex nature of teachers’ learning and development. How do interactions of components in teacher education occur? What aspects emerge as a result of individual and collective interactions, associations, and connections? How can we start visualizing these aspects in concrete images or understandings? Can they be materialized in a curriculum? If so, how? Could a better understanding of this complexity help to improve and transform societies? Can “good teaching” and “effective teaching” be materialized as one if we develop a better understanding of ELTE complexity? These questions should guide ours as well as other teacher educators’ reflections and actions to enrich conceptualizations of ELTE.

References

- Arellano, M. C. (2016). El paradigma de la complejidad: su impacto en la educación y el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas-culturas extranjeras. *Kimun: Revista Interdisciplinaria de Formación Docente*, 2(3), 22–48.
- Arismendi, F. A. (2016). La competencia plurilingüe y pluricultural en la formación de futuros docentes de lenguas extranjeras en una universidad pública en Colombia. *Folios*, 1(44), 109–125. <https://doi.org/10.17227/01234870.44folios109.125>

- Arvaja, M. (2016). Building teacher identity through the process of positioning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 392–402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.024>
- Barberousse, P. (2008). Fundamentos teóricos del pensamiento complejo de Edgar Morin. *Revista Electrónica Educare*, 12(2), 95–113. <https://doi.org/10.15359/ree.12-2.6>
- Cárdenas, M. L., González, A., & Álvarez, J. A. (2010). In service English teachers' professional development: Some conceptual considerations for Colombia. *Folios*, (31), 49–68. <https://doi.org/10.17227/01234870.31folios49.67>
- Carta de Fortaleza. (2010, September 24). [http://www.comitepaz.org.br/download/Carta de Fortaleza 2010.pdf](http://www.comitepaz.org.br/download/Carta%20de%20Fortaleza%202010.pdf)
- Castañeda-Londoño, A. (2019). Revisiting the issue of knowledge in English language teaching: A revision of literature. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 18(18), 220–245. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.452>
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2003). Teaching quality matters. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(2), 95–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102250283>
- Cochran-Smith, M., Baker, M., Burton, S., Chang, W.-C., Cummings Carney, M., Fernández, M. B., Stringer Keefe, E., Miller, A. F., & Sánchez, J. G. (2017). The accountability era in us teacher education: Looking back, looking forward. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(5), 572–588. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1385061>
- Cochran-Smith, M., Ell, F., Ludlow, L., Grudnoff, L., & Aitken, G. (2014). The challenge and promise of complexity theory for teacher education research. *Teachers College Record*, 116(5), 1–38.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249–305. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X024001249>
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.). (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300–314. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105285962>
- Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (Eds.). (2006). *Complexity and education: Inquiries into learning, teaching, and research*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (2012). Fitting teacher education in/to/for an increasingly complex world. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 9(1), 30–40. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmplct16531>
- Ell, F., Haigh, M., Cochran-Smith, M., Grudnoff, L., Ludlow, L., & Hill, M. F. (2017). Mapping a complex system: what influences teacher learning during initial teacher education? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(4), 327–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2017.1309640>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J. (2010). Research as a means of empowering teachers in the 21st century. *Educación y Educadores*, 13(1), 109–124. <https://doi.org/10.5294/edu.2010.13.1.7>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J., Bermúdez-Jiménez, J., Ramos-Holguín, B., & Arenas-Reyes, J. C. (2016). Nuevos discursos en la formación docente en lengua materna y extranjera en Colombia. *Educación y Educadores*, 19(1), 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.5294/edu.2016.19.1.3>
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (1990). Conceptual orientations in teacher education. *National Center for Research on Teacher Education*, (90–2), 1–23.
- Fontalvo, R. (2017). Complejidad y educación: lecciones que humanizan el cambio. *Educación y Humanismo*, 19(33), 226–229.
- Freeman, D. (2006). Teacher training, development, and decision making: A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(1), 27–45. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587506>
- García, M., & Rey, L. (2013). Teachers' beliefs and the integration of technology in the EFL class. *How*, 20(1), 51–72. <https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/23>
- García-Jaramillo, S., Maldonado-Carrizosa, D., Perry-Rubio, G., Rodríguez-Orgales, C., & Saavedra-Calvo, J. E. (2014). *Tras la excelencia docente: cómo mejorar la calidad de la educación para todos los colombianos*. Fundación Compartir. <https://doi.org/10.17227/0120391.67rce89.105>

- Giraldo, E., Cadavid, A. M., & Flórez, S. (2019). Posibilidad de acuerdos sobre las concepciones de currículo para la formación de maestros. *Educación y Educadores*, 22(1), 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.5294/edu.2019.22.1.1>
- Gómez-Francisco, T. (2010). El nuevo paradigma de la complejidad y la educación: una mirada histórica. *Polis, Revista de la Universidad Bolivariana*, 9(25), 183–198. Retrieved from <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=30512376010>
- Gómez-Muñoz, G. (2010). *Las creencias de los profesores de ele acerca de la práctica de la expresión escrita: estudio de caso* [Master's thesis, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain]. ResearchGate. <https://bit.ly/2YANbS9>
- Gray, D. S., & Colucci-Gray, L. (2010). Challenges to ITE research in conditions of complexity. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(4), 425–439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2010.513856>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H., & Quintero-Polo, A. H. (2009). English as a neutral language in the Colombian national standards: A constituent of dominance in English language education. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 135–150. <https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/11447>
- Hamilton, M. L., & Clandinin, D. J. (2011). Becoming researchers in the field of teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(4), 681–682. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.02.001>
- Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible learning*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887332>
- Hill-Jackson, V., & Lewis, C. W. (Eds.). (2010). *Transforming teacher education: What went wrong with teacher training, and how we can fix it* (1st ed.). Stylus Publishing.
- Hongboontri, C., & Keawkhong, N. (2014). School culture: Teachers' beliefs, behaviors, and instructional practices. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(5). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2014v39n5.7>
- Iannone, R. V., & Carline, J. L. (1971). A humanistic approach to teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 22(4), 429–433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248717102200409>
- Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878033>
- Johnson, N. (2009). *Simple simplicity: A clear guide to complexity theory*. Oneworld Publications.
- Koopmans, M. (2017). Perspectives on complexity, its definition and applications in the field. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 14(1), 16–35. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmplct27611>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2012). *Language teacher education for a global society: A modular model for knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing, and seeing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203832530>
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Ling, L. M. (2017). Australian teacher education: Inside-out, outside-in, backwards and forwards? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(5), 561–571. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1385599>
- Livingston, K., & Flores, M. A. (2017). Trends in teacher education: A review of papers published in the European journal of teacher education over 40 years. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(5), 551–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1387970>
- López-Rupérez, F. (1997). Complejidad y educación. *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, 55(206), 103–112.
- Ludlow, L. H., Ell, F., Cochran-Smith, M., Newton, A., Trefcer, K., Klein, K., Grudnoff, L., Haigh, M., & Hill, M. F. (2017). Visualizing teacher education as a complex system: A nested simplex system approach. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 14(1), 36–79. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmplct26053>
- Mansfield, C. F., & Volet, S. E. (2014). Impact of structured group activities on pre-service teachers' beliefs about classroom motivation: An exploratory study. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40(2), 155–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2013.869967>
- Martínez Agudo, J. de D. (2011). Perfil profesional idóneo del profesor de lengua extranjera: creencias del profesorado en formación. *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos (México)*, 41(1–2), 103–124.

- McLean Davies, L., Dickson, B., Rickards, F., Dinham, S., Conroy, J., & Davis, R. (2015). Teaching as a clinical profession: Translational practices in initial teacher education – an international perspective. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 41(5), 514–528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2015.1105537>
- Mèlich, J.-C. (2011). *Filosofía de la finitud*. Herder Editorial. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvt7x7d8>
- Michel, A. (2016). Complex education systems: From steering change to governance. *European Journal of Education*, 51(4), 513–521. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12186>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2013). *Sistema colombiano de formación de educadores y lineamientos de política* (1ª ed.). Imprenta Nacional de Colombia.
- Morante, J., & Gómez, A. (2007). ¿Sirven las políticas y prácticas de formación del profesorado para mejorar la educación? Una respuesta desde el análisis de la construcción social de la docencia. *Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, 15(19), 1–25.
- Morin, E. (1990). *El Método I*. Cátedra.
- Morin, E. (2005). *Introducción al pensamiento complejo* (8ª ed.). Gedisa.
- Nguyen, M. H. (2016). Responding to the need for re-conceptualizing second language teacher education: The potential of a sociocultural perspective. *International Education Studies*, 9(12), 219. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v9n12p219>
- Pennington, M. C., & Richards, J. C. (2015). Teacher identity in language teaching: Integrating personal, contextual, and professional factors. *RELC Journal*, 47(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631219>
- Phelps, R. (2005). The potential of reflective journals in studying complexity “in action.” *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 2(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmpltct8726>
- Pinar, W. F., & Irwin, R. (Eds.). (2004). *Curriculum in a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410611390>
- Radinger, T., Echazarra, A., Guerrero, G., & Valenzuela, J. P. (2018). *OECD reviews of school resources: Colombia 2018*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264303751-en>
- Resolución 18583, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Diario Oficial No. 50.357 (2017). <https://bit.ly/3f6svYo>
- Ricca, B. (2012). Beyond teaching methods: A complexity approach. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 9(2), 31–51. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmpltct17985>
- Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training: Approaches to teacher education in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roa-Acosta, R. (2006). Formación de profesores en el paradigma de la complejidad. *Educación y Educadores*, 1(9), 149–157.
- Rodríguez, J., & Alamilla, P. (2018). La complejidad del conocimiento profesional docente y la formación del conocimiento práctico del profesorado. *Actualidades Investigativas en Educación*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.15517/aie.v18i2.33129>
- Rubiano, C. I. (2013). A critical exploration of Colombian teacher education from Freire’s “directivity” perspective. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 39(5), 574–589. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2013.836341>
- Sandín, M. P. (2003). *Investigación cualitativa en educación: fundamentos y tradiciones* (1ª ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Santoro, N. (2014). Identity and pedagogy in higher education: International comparisons. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40(4), 442–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2014.930260>
- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., Burden, K., & Brindley, S. (2018). *Uncertainty in teacher education futures*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8246-7>
- Smitherman Pratt, S. (2011). Emerging changes in teacher education. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 8(1), 43–49. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmpltct10023>

- Stuart, J. S., & Tatto, M. T. (2000). Designs for initial teacher preparation programs: An international view. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33(5), 493–514. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355\(00\)00031-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(00)00031-8)
- Tello, C. J. (2004). La formación docente en Argentina: abordaje epistemológico desde el paradigma de la complejidad. *Profesorado: Revista de Currículum y Formación del Profesorado*, 8(1), 1–9.
- Torres-Martínez, S. (2009). Las vicisitudes de la enseñanza de lenguas en Colombia. *Diálogos Latinoamericanos*, (15).
- Vaillant, D. (2007). Do initial and continuing professional development sufficiently prepare teachers to understand and cope with the complexities of today and tomorrow's education? *Journal of Educational Change*, 8(2), 175–179. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-007-9028-8>
- van Geert, P., & Steenbeek, H. (2014). The good, the bad and the ugly? The dynamic interplay between educational practice, policy and research. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 11(2), 22–39. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmplt22962>
- Vezub, L. F. (2007). La formación y el desarrollo profesional docente frente a los nuevos desafíos de la escolaridad. *Profesorado: Revista de Currículum y Formación del Profesorado*, 11(1), 1–23. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=56711102>
- Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- World Bank. (2018). *World development report: Learning to realize education's promise*. The World Bank Group. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0484-7_world_development_report

About the Authors

Martha Garcia-Chamorro is an associate professor at Universidad del Atlántico in pedagogy, English and research for the foreign language teaching program. She holds a specialization in English teaching and a master's degree in education.

Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta is a language teacher and teacher educator at Universidad del Norte in Colombia. Her research interests reside in the complex intersection of students and teacher learning and how language affects the construction of reality in contexts such as classrooms and in other institutions that surround us.

Accumulative index of published articles in *Profile* Vol. 23 (2021)

Number	Pages	Articles
2	151-166	<p><i>Alemi, M., Rezanejad, A., & Marefat, B.</i> “Exploring the Reasons Behind Iranian TEFL Graduate Students’ Academic Failure” [“Explorando las razones detrás del fracaso académico de los estudiantes iraníes de posgrado en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera”]</p>
2	17-33	<p><i>Argudo, J.</i> “Expressive Writing to Relieve Academic Stress at University Level” [“Escritura expresiva para aliviar el estrés académico a nivel universitario”]</p>
1	75-88	<p><i>Ariza-Pinzón, V.</i> “Analysis of MA Students’ Writing in English Language Teaching: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach” [“Análisis de la escritura de estudiantes de maestría en la enseñanza del inglés: un enfoque lingüístico sistémico funcional”]</p>
1	181-196	<p><i>Barahona, M., & Davin, K. J.</i> “A Practice-Based Approach to Foreign Language Teacher Preparation: A Cross-Continental Collaboration” [“Un enfoque basado en la práctica para la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras: una colaboración internacional”]</p>
2	245-261	<p><i>Bata, S., & Castro, C.</i> “English as a Foreign Language Students’ Emotional Intelligence Management When Taking Speaking Exams” [“El manejo de la inteligencia emocional en los estudiantes de lengua extranjera mientras presentan sus exámenes orales de inglés”]</p>
1	57-73	<p><i>Benavides, J. E.</i> “Level of English in Colombian Higher Education: A Decade of Stagnation” [“Nivel de inglés en la educación superior colombiana: una década de estancamiento”]</p>
2	137-150	<p><i>Bonilla-Medina, S. X., Varela, K. V., & García, K.</i> “Configuration of Racial Identities of Learners of English” [“Configuración de identidades raciales de aprendientes de inglés”]</p>
1	41-55	<p><i>Burgin, X. D., & Daniel, M. C.</i> “Examining Current and Future Ecuadorian Educators’ Experiences Using Action Research in the English as a Second Language Classroom” [“Análisis del rol de la investigación-acción en la práctica de futuros docentes en Ecuador en aulas de inglés como segundo idioma”]</p>

- 2 67-85 *Cadena-Aguilar, A., & Álvarez-Ayure, C. P.*
“Self- and Peer-Assessment of Student-Generated Podcasts to Improve Comprehensibility in Undergraduate EFL Students”
 [“Autoevaluación y evaluación por pares de *podcasts* generados por alumnos para mejorar la comprensibilidad de estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como lengua extranjera”]
- 2 51-66 *Carabelli, P.*
“English for Academic Purposes Related to Dentistry: Analyzing the Reading Comprehension Process”
 [“Inglés con fines académicos vinculado a la odontología: análisis del proceso de comprensión lectora”]
- 2 9-14 *Cárdenas, M. L. & Nieto-Cruz, M. C.*
“Editorial: Profile in Quartile 1 of the scimago Journal Rank”
 [“Editorial: Profile en el cuartil 1 del scimago Journal Rank”]
- 1 7-10 *Cárdenas, M. L., Nieto-Cruz, M. C., & Martínez, E.*
“Editorial: Possible Research Paths for English Language Teacher-Researchers in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic”
 [“Editorial: Posibles rutas de investigación para profesores-investigadores de inglés a raíz de la pandemia COVID-19”]
- 2 35-50 *Castañero-Roldán, J. D., & Correa, D.*
“Critical Reading With Undergraduate EFL Students in Colombia: Gains and Challenges”
 [“Lectura crítica con estudiantes del pregrado de inglés como lengua extranjera en Colombia: logros y desafíos”]
- 1 161-177 *Duque-Aguilar, J. F.*
“Teachers’ Assessment Approaches Regarding EFL Students’ Speaking Skill”
 [“Enfoques de evaluación de los maestros con respecto a la habilidad oral de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera”]
- 1 145-160 *Durán, E., & García, K.*
“Exploring EFL Teaching and Learning Processes in Two Undergraduate Mandatory Courses”
 [“Exploración de los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje en dos cursos de inglés obligatorios de pregrado”]
- 2 281-295 *García-Chamorro, M., & Rosado-Mendinueta, N.*
“Embracing Conceptualizations of English Language Teacher Education From a Complexity Perspective”
 [“Acoger conceptualizaciones de la formación del docente de inglés desde una perspectiva compleja”]

- 1 197-213 *Giraldo, F.*
"A Reflection on Initiatives for Teachers' Professional Development Through Language Assessment Literacy"
[“Una reflexión sobre iniciativas para el desarrollo profesional docente mediante la literacidad en evaluación de lenguas”]
- 2 265-279 *Giraldo, F.*
"Language Assessment Literacy and Teachers' Professional Development: A Review of the Literature"
[“La literacidad en evaluación de lenguas y el desarrollo profesional docente: una revisión de la literatura”]
- 1 107-124 *González, E. F.*
"The Impact of Assessment Training on EFL Writing Classroom Assessment: Voices of Mexican University Teachers"
[“El impacto de la capacitación en evaluación de la escritura en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera: voces de profesores mexicanos universitarios”]
- 1 27-40 *Guerrero-Nieto, C. H., & Quintero, A.*
"Elementary School Teachers in Neoliberal Times: The Silent Voices That Make Educational Policies Work"
[“Maestros de primaria en tiempos de neoliberalismo: voces silenciosas que hacen que las políticas educativas funcionen”]
- 2 121-135 *Juárez-Díaz, C., & Perales, M.*
"Language Teachers' Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences During the COVID-19 Confinement"
[“Experiencias con la enseñanza remota de emergencia de docentes de lenguas durante el confinamiento por COVID-19”]
- 2 183-198 *Lucero, E., & Cortés-Ibañez, A. M.*
"Pedagogical Practicum and Student-Teachers Discursively Conceived in an ELT Undergraduate Program"
[“Práctica pedagógica y docentes en formación concebidos discursivamente en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés”]
- 1 89-106 *Meza, A., Rodríguez, I., & Caviedes, L.*
"Fostering EFL Preservice Teachers' Academic Writing Skills Through Reflective Learning"
[“Escritura académica de profesores de inglés en formación mediante el aprendizaje reflexivo”]

- 1 125-142 *Paredes-Mendez, L., Troncoso-Rodriguez, I. A., & Lastra-Ramirez, S. P.*
“Enacting Agency and Valuing Rural Identity by Exploring Local Communities in the English Class”
[“Promoción de la agencia y valoración de la identidad rural mediante la exploración de la comunidad en la clase de inglés”]
- 2 87-102 *Quintero, J., Álvarez, D. Y., & Arcila, A.*
“Cross-Disciplinary Lessons in an Elementary Public Institution”
[“Lecciones interdisciplinarias en una institución pública de básica primaria”]
- 1 13-26 *Romero, G.*
“Deconstructing Novice Teachers’ Actions and Reactions to Nonharmonic Chilean School Communities of Practice”
[“Deconstruyendo las acciones y reacciones de profesores novatos ante comunidades de práctica no armónicas en Chile”]
- 2 103-120 *Romero, Y., & Pérez, A.*
“Fostering Citizenship and English Language Competences in Teenagers Through Task-Based Instruction”
[“Fomento de la ciudadanía y las competencias del idioma inglés en adolescentes mediante la instrucción basada en tareas”]
- 2 215-230 *Rosas-Maldonado, M., Durán-Castro, M., & Martin, A.*
“The Socio-Emotional Influence of Past Teachers on Novice English Teachers’ Beliefs”
[“La influencia socioemocional de los docentes anteriores en las creencias de profesores noveles de inglés”]
- 2 167-182 *Sanchez-Aguilar, J.*
“Tutors’ and Tutees’ Behaviors, Attitudes, and Perspectives Regarding EFL Peer Tutoring in Higher Education in Mexico”
[“Comportamientos, actitudes y perspectivas de tutores y tutorados hacia la tutoría entre pares en un contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera en educación superior en México”]
- 2 199-214 *Ubaque-Casallas, D.*
“Language Pedagogy and Teacher Identity: A Decolonial Lens to English Language Teaching From a Teacher Educator’s Experience”
[“Pedagogía de la lengua e identidad docente: una lente decolonial para la enseñanza del idioma inglés desde la experiencia de un formador de maestros”]
- 2 231-242 *Villegas-Torres, P., & Lengeling, M. M.*
“Approaching Teaching as a Complex Emotional Experience: The Teacher Professional Development Stages Revisited”
[“Abordando la enseñanza como una experiencia emocional compleja: las etapas de desarrollo profesional del maestro revisitadas”]

Guidelines for Contributors

PROFILE

Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

This journal is led by the PROFILE research group at Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras—Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus. It is a publication mainly concerned with sharing the results of classroom research projects, reflections, and innovations undertaken by teachers of English as a second or foreign language as well as by teacher educators and novice teacher-researchers. Starting from the assumption that our professional knowledge is enriched by different members of our academic community, the journal welcomes papers from different parts of the world, diverse educational levels, and wide-ranging contexts. In sum, the *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development* journal (Henceforth *Profile*) belongs to the area of education; it deals with topics regarding the learning and teaching of English as a second or foreign language and teacher education in the same field. It is addressed to an international readership of pre- and in-service teachers.

Profile is registered in Scopus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Latindex, EBSCO, Informe Académico, Academic OneFile, Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico - REDIB, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Dialnet. It is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Educational Research Abstracts online (ERA), the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), The Emerging Sources Citation Index (Clarivate Analytics), The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS), IRESIE, LatAm Plus, the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database (LLBA), Redalyc, Scielo Citation Index (Web of Science), CLASE, The Education Resources Information Center – ERIC, Publindex-Minciencias (classified in category A2), and SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) 2020: Quartile 1 (Linguistics and Language), Quartile 3 (Education).

Our Purpose

The *Profile* journal is published twice a year (January and July). Its main goal is to share the results of research carried out in the field of English language teaching and learning. As such, this publication can be classified in the big areas of Language Education and Applied Linguistics. This journal accepts mainly three types of documents: research articles, articles of revision, and reflections. Research approaches can have a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed orientation and they include but are not limited to, action research, narrative inquiry, discourse analysis, case studies, statistical analysis, and so on. The journal also includes articles written by teacher educators and guest teachers who are willing to disseminate their reflections, innovations, and research findings.

Sections of the Journal

Issues from Teacher Researchers: This section includes in-progress and final research reports.

Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers: This section contains articles based on research conducted by new teachers as part of the monographs they prepared to obtain their BED or BA degrees or for the theses to obtain a master's degree.

Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations: This section gathers reflections about a specific topic with analytical, interpretative or critical perspectives that are supported by different sources. Innovations include justifying, describing, explaining and providing examples of pedagogical interventions in specific teaching fields.

Submitting an Article

Submission, review, and publication of manuscripts in the *Profile* journal are free of charge for authors. To be considered for publication, you should complete the submission process via our platform. There, you should upload your manuscript, the consent form—if applicable—the cover letter, and the figures, tables, etc. Go to the web page of the journal and register as a user: <http://www.revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile>

Please follow the “register” option at the top of the page. You will be asked to fill in a form with your information. Please do not forget to choose, at the end of the form, the option “Register as: Author”. This option will allow you to upload your submission. As stated in our Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement, authors must send contributions that are original (not previously published), valid (containing data that can be replicated and processed according to given method and processes), and relevant (information that advances the knowledge in the field).

Once you are registered as an author, you can start the five-step submission process. Be careful to follow each step and to upload your manuscript and all of the complementary files as requested in the checklist for submissions.

You do not have to send printed copies. *Profile* does not accept multiple submissions from the same author (or coauthor). Authors must wait until an editorial decision has been made on their active submission before submitting a new one. Please keep this in mind in your academic chronogram.

Paper Format

The manuscript should be saved in single-column format, double-spaced as a Word document, in Times Roman 12, and have margins of three centimeters. Block quotations and samples taken from data should be in Times Roman 10 and indented at 1.25 centimeters. Only use single spacing for the contents of footnotes, appendices, figures and tables. Number all pages of

the manuscript. Insert the page number at the top of the page. Indent the first line of every paragraph. For consistency, use the tab key, which should be set at 1.25 centimeters. Do not do this in the abstract, block quotations, titles, headings, tables and figures titles. Please use titles and subtitles judiciously to clearly identify the different sections and subsections in your manuscript. Avoid labeling titles with numbers or letters. Instead, please use the levels of heading recommended by APA:

First Level Heading Centered

Second Level Heading Flush Left

Third Level Heading Flush Left

Fourth level heading. Indented and with text following the period.

Do not include your name or biographical data within the article. Manuscripts should contain an abstract of no more than 120 words and should include keywords (no more than five). Avoid the use of abbreviations and references in the abstract. Remember that a good abstract offers a succinct account of the problem, methods, findings, and conclusions of the study. The abstract and the keywords should be in both Spanish and English. Keywords should be organized in alphabetical order. To guarantee the impact of the keywords, authors are advised to contrast them with a thesaurus (two samples of online, free access thesauruses are those by UNESCO and ERIC). Similarly, the complete bibliographic information for each citation must be included in the list of references following the American Psychological Association (APA) style, 7th Edition (see some samples of references below).

Translate all excerpts, appendices, quotes, and other long pieces of information into English, indicating in a footnote the original language and that the translation was made for publication purposes. Keep the original language of excerpts only when it is necessary for the objectives of the study; in this case, provide the English translation as well. When the samples from participants

are just texts, these should be transcribed. Please avoid pasting text as images unless the characteristics of the study require it.

All quoted material must be cited as such in the text. All references cited in the text must be in the list of references, and all works included in the references section must be cited in the text. Please cite only primary sources, that is, the works you actually consulted when composing your manuscript. Do not include in the list of references material that is cited within an excerpt or a direct quotation except when such material is also a primary source in the manuscript.

Besides the guidelines included here, manuscripts are expected to follow the standards of high quality academic papers as regards structure, clarity of language, and formal style. Manuscripts lacking these basic elements will not be included in the process of evaluation.

Plagiarism and Self-Citation

Self-citation should not be over 15% of all of the material quoted throughout the text. However, failure to properly cite your own previous work, when this is used within the article, will result in self-plagiarism, with the same consequences as in plagiarism cases. Manuscripts will be screened with a similarity detector software at two points: When they are first submitted to the journal and after the evaluation process is finished and the Editor and reviewers recommend publication.

Profile will reject papers with evidence of plagiarism, and its decision will be final. Manuscripts by authors whose articles have been rejected because of plagiarism will not be considered for evaluation in future issues.

Number of Words

Papers cannot exceed 8,000 words, including the abstract, keywords, references, appendices, and footnotes. Footnotes should appear on the same page, not at the end of the document. Please indicate the

number of words at the end of the article. The title of the manuscript should have a maximum of 13 words.

Graphics, Tables, and Figures

When possible, design the figures or graphs directly in Microsoft Word or Excel. Regarding images (photographs, pictures), please send them as independent files and with high resolution in a standard graphic format (e.g., JPG, PNG). Inside the manuscript, you can paste the images with a lower resolution (black and white versions will be used in print). Please, make sure you have the necessary authorization to reproduce images that are copyrighted. In this case, attach the permission as a supplementary file.

Tables should be created in Microsoft Word (because tables must be included in the word count of the document, please do not paste them as images). Appendices, figures, and tables should include a title. They should be centered and follow these models:

Table 1. Ways of Doing Compositions

Figure 2. Results of the Diagnostic Survey

Appendix A: Lesson Plan Sample

Write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these) and make sure grammar, punctuation, and style have been revised. Italics are not to be used for expressions of Latin origin; for example, *in vivo*, *et al.*, *per se*.

Ethical Issues

One of the requirements for the publication of articles about teaching or research experiences in which others have participated is to have a consent form signed by them or their parents—if they are under 18—to authorize the use of the information in the publication. If your article contains information provided by participants, please obtain consent forms

and send the format used to get them to the editor, together with your manuscript. *Profile* does not provide the forms; they are the ones designed by the teachers while they do their projects. Identify samples from participants using codes and maintaining anonymity. Be consistent in doing so and follow samples included in our latest issue.

If acknowledgements are included, do so in a short paragraph of no more than 100 words at the end of the presentation letter (not in the manuscript).

Cover or Presentation Letter

Please address a cover or presentation letter to the editor specifying the following: title of the article (in both English and Spanish; the title in English with a maximum of 13 words), author's(s') name(s), ORCID, institution, address, a short biographical statement (biodata) of no more than 50 words per author, and the date or period of time the document was written. Please note that the way your name is written in the biodata (pen name) is the one that will be followed once the article is published. For multiple authors, the order in which they are mentioned in the biodata will also correspond to the order in the published article (order of authorship). If the paper presents initial or final results of a project, please indicate so. Include the name of the code number (if there is one) and the name of the institution that sponsored the project. Similarly, if the paper is based on an unpublished thesis or dissertation, please clarify this in a note and indicate the kind of thesis work (undergraduate, master's, doctoral dissertation), the degree obtained, and the university that granted such degree. Additionally, you should include a statement indicating that your article has not been submitted to another publication and that it has not already been published elsewhere.

The letter to the editor must contain the list and the order of authorship approved by all authors. Modifications to the list or the order of authors are not allowed after submission. Otherwise, the manuscript will be

withdrawn from the editorial process and the authors should present it as a new submission.

All the requirements mentioned above will be checked, and no evaluation will start until all of them are met. Delay in complying with our policies will have an impact on the time required for the evaluation process.

References

For the list of references use a hanging indent (the first line of each reference is flush left and subsequent lines are indented.) Only sources that can be accessed or recovered in any way (even when access is restricted) should appear on the reference list. Treat sources that cannot be recovered by the reader as personal communications. The following samples illustrate some common cases. For more examples, please check the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) or our latest issue, in its electronic version, on our website: <http://www.revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile>

Book

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). Bloomsbury. (Original work published 1968)

Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (n.d.). *Lineamientos curriculares para el área de idiomas extranjeros en la educación básica y media* [Curriculum guidelines for foreign language teaching in basic and secondary education]. <https://bit.ly/3d2byo5>

Chapter in an Edited Book

Richards, J. C. (2012). Competence and performance in language teaching. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching* (pp. 46–56). Cambridge University Press.

Conference Session or Paper Presentation

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2017, July 17–21). *Language assessment literacies and the language testing community: A mid-life identity crisis?* [Conference session]. 39th Language Testing Research Colloquium, Bogotá, Colombia. <https://www.iltaonline.com/page/2017InvitedPlenaries>

Proceedings Published in Book Form

Bailey, K. M. (2004). Plenary: Language teaching journals and reflective teaching. In A. Pulverness (Ed.), *IATEFL 2003 Brighton Conference Selections* (pp. 80–91). International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

Entry in a Dictionary

Provide a retrieval date for sources from the Internet that are likely to be continuously updated or that are meant to change over time.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Feedback. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved January 28, 2020, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feedback>

Journal Article

Mesa Villa, C. P., Gómez-Giraldo, J. S., & Arango Montes, R. (2020). Becoming language teacher-researchers in a research seedbed. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 22(1), 159–173. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v22n1.78806>

Dissertations and Thesis

Unpublished dissertations or theses are only available in print in an institution's library.

Ariza, A. (2004). *efl undergraduate students' understanding of autonomy and their reflection in their learning process* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

Risto, A. (2014). *The impact of texting and social media on students' academic writing skills* (Publication No. 3683242) [Doctoral dissertation, Tennessee State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Webpage on a Website

A URL shortener may be used for long or complex URLs (see first example below). If you want to refer to a complete website, do so in text (there is no need to add a reference entry), for instance: the New York Public Library website (<https://www.nypl.org/>). For specific pages within a website, you have to provide a reference entry:

Sigee, R. (2020, January 16). *Are authentic accents important in film and tv?* BBC. <https://bbc.in/2uBtygp>

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Education under attack*. Retrieved January 19, 2020, from <https://www.unicef.org/education-under-attack>

Books and Articles Published in Other Languages

For titles of books and articles in languages other than English, please provide an English translation in square brackets. For example:

Bastidas, J. A., & Muñoz, I. G. (2011). *Fundamentos para el desarrollo profesional de los profesores de inglés* [Foundations for the professional development of teachers of English]. Graficolor.

Evaluation and Publication

All submissions go through a double blind peer review process provided that all requirements have been met. This process takes four to five months, provided that there are no unexpected delays. Reviewers' names will not be made available to authors under any circumstances. Authors should wait approximately four to five months until notification of a decision by the editor. If your article is accepted after having been read by at least two evaluators, you should be ready to revise it if necessary and to meet deadlines established by the editor to complete the editing processes. The *Profile* editor reserves the right to make editorial changes in the manuscripts recommended for publication for the purpose of clarity, concision, or style.

Evaluators will have four weeks to prepare their feedback and they can give one of three possible recommendations after reviewing a manuscript: accepted,

revise and resubmit, rejected. If the concepts from the two reviewers are at odds, the following scenarios may arise:

Accepted + Revise and resubmit = The manuscript will be sent to the author for revision and resubmission.

Rejected + Revise and resubmit = The manuscript will be rejected.

Accepted + Rejected = The article will be sent to a third reviewer. Only the two concepts that are similar at the end of the review will be taken into account to reach a final decision.

If major changes are required by the evaluators or the editor, the article will be returned to you for amending, indicating that revision and resubmission is required. The improved version should be submitted within three weeks. After this period, the article will be regarded as a new submission.

The revised version of the manuscript should be sent to the editor together with a cover letter. It should include the authors' explanations of how they addressed (or did not address) the reviewers' comments. The resubmission will then be submitted again for evaluation. The final evaluation will determine whether the article can be published. The date of publication will depend upon the amount of time taken for revision and resubmission.

Once the article is accepted, the edited version will be sent to you for approval. Upon publication, authors will receive a PDF copy of their articles. *Profile* does not provide printed versions of the article or of the complete issue to authors. If authors are interested in acquiring a printed version of the journal, they should contact the editor.

Copyright

Once your article is accepted, you should authorize us to reproduce the full text on the Internet and in any other source sponsored by Universidad Nacional de Colombia. This will entail filling in a nonexclusive publication license as indicated by the editor. Authors retain the intellectual property of their manuscripts with the following restriction: first publication is granted to the *Profile* journal.

If you wish to use the article again in a publication written or edited by you, you may do so provided that its original publication in the *Profile* journal is acknowledged.

Sending Contributions

We accept submissions all year round, and manuscripts are reviewed in order of arrival. Date of publication of a manuscript, if accepted, depends on the duration of the peer-review process which lasts, at least, four months.

Letters to the editor should be sent to the following address:

Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development
Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras,
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Ciudad
Universitaria. Carrera 30 # 45-03, Bogotá,
Colombia and to: rprofile_fchbog@unal.edu.co
Phone: 57(1) 316-5000 ext. 16780.

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

PROFILE

Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development journal is committed to following the international standards for scientific publications, guaranteeing the ethical and fair use of the content submitted to and published in the journal. To this end, the following guiding aspects, based on the recommendations by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), have been identified to facilitate and clarify the work of the editor, the authors, and the reviewers.

Editor

The Editor is responsible for the overall quality of the journal (content, editorial processes, design and publication) and should ensure that the articles published are relevant to the academic community and that the journal in general complies with accepted publication guidelines for scientific journals.

The Editor must follow practices of "fair play" in the sense that manuscripts are evaluated for their intellectual content without regard to the race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, institutional affiliation, or political philosophy of the authors.

The Editor should maintain constant and prompt communication with authors and reviewers throughout the evaluation process to keep them informed about the state of any given manuscript.

The Editor assigns reviewers based on their expertise in the topic of a given manuscript. Initially, each manuscript is revised by two reviewers. However, if the concepts from the two reviewers are at odds, the Editor should assign a third reviewer to help reach a decision. The Editor takes into account the reviewers' suggestions, but the final decision on accepting or rejecting a paper lies with the Editor.

The Editor must ensure that the information gathered during the evaluation of a manuscript (evaluation forms, reviewers' comments) is kept confidential and disclosed only to those involved in the process.

In collaboration with the editorial staff and/or the publisher (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), the Editor must decide how to proceed in cases of a legal nature (libel, copyright infringement, plagiarism). In the case of plagiarism, the Editor will proceed according to the journal's guidelines and policies.

Author

Authors must send contributions that are original (not previously published), valid (containing data that can be replicated and processed according to given methods or processes), and relevant (information that advances the knowledge in the field). Falsification and manipulation of data are unethical and unacceptable practices. Manuscripts must also be written with clarity, and authors are encouraged to proofread their manuscripts before submission.

Parallel submission (submission of a manuscript to more than one journal at a time), plagiarism, and self-plagiarism are unacceptable practices and may result in the retraction of an article. Manuscripts by authors whose articles have been rejected because of these practices will not be considered for evaluation in future issues.

Authors must carefully read the "Guidelines for authors" and prepare their submissions accordingly. Any submission that fails to comply with the guidelines will not be sent for evaluation until the problems are addressed by the authors.

As expressed in the “Guidelines for authors”, authors must include in the list of references and properly acknowledge throughout the manuscript all of the works that were directly consulted in the composition of the paper.

Authorship of a manuscript can be granted only to the people who made significant contributions either during the development of the study or in the composition of the manuscript. Practices such as including “guest” or “ghost”¹ authors must be avoided. People who made contributions that were not as important as those of the author(s) can be treated as collaborators, and their help may be acknowledged in a note at the end of the manuscript. *Profile* accepts submissions of articles by a maximum of three authors. In the case of multiple authors, they all need to previously agree on the version of the manuscript that will be submitted (or resubmitted when reviewers ask for changes to be made).

As stated in the “Guidelines for authors”, the consent form used to ask for permission from participants to use their data must be provided by authors. In case the participants are underage, the consent form must be signed by their parents or legal guardians. It is highly advisable that in the manuscript, the participants’ identities always be concealed by the use of either pseudonyms or codes. Authors are also responsible for obtaining permission to replicate any copyrighted material used within the manuscript.

Authors must disclose any potential conflict of interest² that may arise during the evaluation of their

manuscript. Authors are requested to provide information about the sources that funded their study.

Authors should maintain respectful and professional communication with the Editor. They are entitled to appeal a review if they consider it to be poorly performed or without enough arguments.

After publication, authors still hold the copyright for their manuscript (the right to first publication being granted to *Profile*), and therefore, it is their responsibility to notify the Editor if they find any error. They will work with the Editor on how to better address the error, whether through an erratum or, in an extreme case, by retracting the article.

If the work described in the manuscript involves animal subjects, psychological procedures, or any hazardous element (e.g., chemicals), the authors must provide the necessary information to verify that they followed the international ethical standards for these cases.

Reviewer

Based on their expertise, reviewers should assist the Editor in evaluating and selecting manuscripts.

Reviewers must respond promptly to the Editor’s evaluation requests, whether to accept them or decline them.

Reviewers must comply with the deadline established by the Editor to complete the review. The corresponding evaluation form must be adequately filled in, and reviewers are also entitled to write comments to the authors directly on the manuscript. Reviewers must perform their evaluations in a respectful and objective manner, attempting to provide the necessary arguments to support their comments or suggestions.

As part of the evaluation process, reviewers must treat the information used or produced with confidentiality.

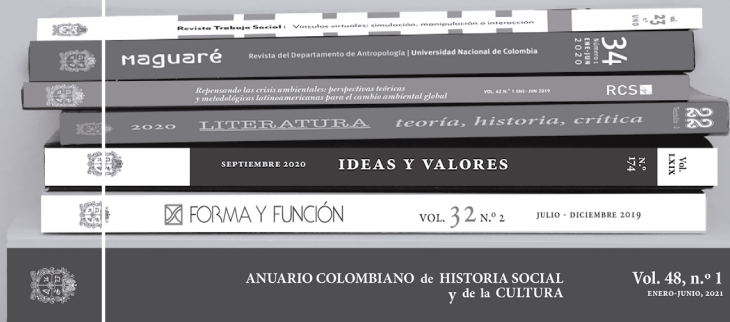
Reviewers must also disclose any potential conflict of interest as well as any other major problem that they may detect during evaluation (falsification of data, plagiarism, parallel submission, etc.).

¹ “Guest authors” are those who are included because of their supposed prestige or enforced by an outside party (such as the institution where the authors work). “Ghost authors” are those who actually made a significant contribution but who, for some reason, are not listed as authors of the manuscript.

² An instance of conflict of interest is when the authors have some kind of relationship (relative, work) with a journal’s reviewer. The authors should inform the Editor of this situation when submitting the manuscript.



NUESTRAS REVISTAS



Facultad de Ciencias Humanas

Portal de revistas Universidad Nacional de Colombia

www.revistas.unal.edu.co

PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

Vol. 23, N.º 2 • July-December 2021
Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras
www.profile.unal.edu.co
rprofile_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Revista Colombiana de Psicología

Vol. 30, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Psicología
www.revistacolombiana-psicologia.unal.edu.co
revpsico_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Forma y Función

Vol. 34, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Lingüística
www.formayfuncion.unal.edu.co
fyf_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Cuadernos de Geografía:

Revista Colombiana de Geografía

Vol. 30, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Geografía
www.cuadernosdegeografia.unal.edu.co
rcgeogra_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura

Vol. 48, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Historia
www.anuariodehistoria.unal.edu.co
anuhisto_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Literatura: Teoría, Historia, Crítica

Vol. 23, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Literatura
www.literaturathc.unal.edu.co
revliter_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Ideas y Valores

Vol. LXX, N.º 176 • mayo 2021
Departamento de Filosofía
www.ideasyvalores.unal.edu.co
revideva_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Revista Maguaré

Vol. 35, N.º 1 • enero-junio 2021
Departamento de Antropología
www.revistamaguare.unal.edu.co
revmag_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Revista Colombiana de Sociología

Vol. 44, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Sociología
www.revistacolombianasociologia.unal.edu.co
revcolso_fchbog@unal.edu.co

Trabajo Social

Vol. 23, N.º 2 • julio-diciembre 2021
Departamento de Trabajo Social
www.revtrabajosocial.unal.edu.co
revtrasoc_bog@unal.edu.co

Desde el Jardín de Freud

N.º 20 • enero-diciembre 2020
Escuela de Estudios en Psicoanálisis y Cultura
www.jardinfreud.unal.edu.co
rpsifreud_bog@unal.edu.co

Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras

N.º 13 • enero-diciembre 2019
Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras
www.revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/male
revlenex_fchbog@unal.edu.co

PUNTOS DE VENTA

en la librería, Bogotá Plazoleta de Las Nieves • Calle 20 N.º 7-15 • Tel. 3165000 ext. 29494 | **Campus Ciudad Universitaria** Edificio Orlando Fals Borda (205) • Edificio de Posgrados de Ciencias • Humanas Rogelio Salmona (225) • Auditorio León de Greiff, piso 1 • Tel.: 316 5000, ext. 20040
www.unalibreria.unal.edu.co | libreriaun_bog@unal.edu.co

Todas nuestras revistas académicas se pueden consultar on-line bajo la modalidad de acceso abierto.

CENTRO EDITORIAL

Edificio de Posgrados de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas (225), sótano • Tel: 3165000 ext. 16139, 16141
editorial_fch@unal.edu.co | www.humanas.unal.edu.co

P R O

F The current issue was printed
in July 2021
in Bogotá D.C., Colombia.

L Printed by Xpress Estudio Gráfico
y Digital SAS
Ancizar, Minion Pro and frutiger
fonts were used. **E**