HOW

ASOCIACIÓN Colombiana
ASOCOPI
DE PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

ASOCOPI Board of Directors 2020

Reviewers for this issue

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Editorial

Edgar Lucero[1]

These are times when upgrades, changes, and new ideas in English language education seem to gain more and more terrain within routinary or established manners of doing and being in this field. Movements and turns that started to walk among the big ideas since the beginning of this century are now more visible and considered as possible forms of knowing and being. This has made English language researchers look more into themselves and around their own contexts.

In this new issue of HOW Journal, we present five research articles that give evidence of a deeper exploration of unconventional looks. In the first, Diego Ubaque-Casallas and Harold Castañeda-Peña present a study on non-normative corporalities, transgender and blind identities, of an EFL student teacher in Colombia. These authors sustain the idea of identity as multiple and fluid; however, they demonstrate that it is molded from experiences that modify or reconstruct the self of an individual. The study revealed how the notion of gender/disability is contested when the idea of transgender/blind works as a personal mechanism.

In the second research article, Rigoberto Castillo and Laura-Stefany Flórez-Martelo contribute to the study of English language learners; but in this time, they present a case study that looks into the inclusion perspectives and retrospectives of three hard-of-hearing students' during their schooled EFL learning. From the participants' autobiographical writings and a set of interviews with them, these authors state valuable insights about the way hard-of-hearing learners of English perceive this process. A call for truly inclusive policies and practices about hard-of-hearing individuals and their learning perspectives is remarkable in the article.

In the third research article, Juan Carlos Montoya López, Aida Vanessa Mosquera Andrade, and Oscar Alberto Peláez Henao present a narrative inquiry about the incorporation

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1   Edgar Lucero is a full-time teacher educator for Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia. He currently studies a PhD in Education at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia. He holds an MA in Applied Linguistics. He is specialized in English language Teaching-Didactics. His research interests are in Classroom Interaction and Pedagogical Practicum.
     elucerob@unisalle.edu.co
     ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2208-5124

of policy agency within the construction of five pre-service teachers' identity during their academic practicums. This turn of studying identity construction in student teachers broadens the panorama of the multiple aspects that should be considered in English language teacher education. These authors illustrate how the participants' critical reflections on and decision making from the current language policy regulate their pedagogical practices, contributing to the construction of their identities as language teachers. This study also poses challenges to language teaching programs to build a micro-political agency supported on solid theoretical knowledge.

The fourth research article presents a study that uses a different angle, the self-determination theory, to assess the levels of attitude and motivation that tenth-graders at a public school in Bogotá manifest during their English language classroom activities. The authors, Yendli Soranny Molina Leal and Paola Lizeth Peña Cerón, demonstrate that the participating students express distinctive levels of motivation and attitude to four different types of classroom activities. Motivation has varied levels of perceived competence that contrasts with attitude, which shows low levels of pressure and tension.

Finally, Kobra Ghayebi and Parisa Farrokh, in the fifth research article in this current issue, present a quasi-experimental study that investigates the possible effects of speech acts strategies on Iranian beginner and intermediate English as a foreign language learners' speaking ability. The study also aims to see a possible relation between the development of this ability and the learners' gender. In the findings, these authors state that, after a series of awareness-raising activities on speech acts, the participants demonstrate better speaking abilities regardless of their gender.

In this new issue of HOW Journal, we also present three reflection articles that include day-by-day more considered movements and turns towards knowing and being in context. In the first, Astrid Núñez Pardo enquires into three aspects of coloniality -knowledge, power, and being- that are present in English as a foreign language textbooks in Colombia. The research proposal that this author proposes from her inquiries aims at unveiling the ontological, epistemological, and power criteria that may orient the development of other contextualized materials that embrace the voices of Colombian teachers, authors, and experts.

In the second reflection article, Frank Giraldo explains how a series of statistical calculations can be used meaningfully to examine test scores and assessment decisions in the language classroom. This author discusses limitations and recommendations for teachers to use, basically, criterion-referenced assessment in the language classroom. In the last reflection article in this current issue, Razieh Gholaminejad reviews the currently-used Paul Nation's word classification system of academic vocabulary in English. This author deliberates the fact that the system has sacrificed function for form in the lexical layers, as it equates academic words with high-frequency words and lacks an independent lexical layer for

discipline-specific academic vocabulary. This review can be useful for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) materials developers, teachers, test developers, and syllabus/curriculum designers.

With these articles, HOW Journal continues sharing outcomes of educational and research experiences that look to add understanding to English language teaching practices. The journal keeps communication among English language teachers and researchers both in Colombia and abroad by offering opportunities to disseminate knowledge concerning English language education.

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From the President of ASOCOPI
Dr. Carlo Granados-Beltrán

"We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them."
Epictetus

I started this short text by the quote because it is evident these have been times for us all. COVID-19 has posed many challenges in all spheres of our lives; however, I think this situation has offered a chance for us to think about what is truly important such as the connection we establish with others and gratitude for all the opportunities life offers to us and that the daily grind makes us take for granted. Many associations and institutions have faced difficult situations and have been forced to cancel their events, at ASOCOPI we see this current situation as a challenge, yet as an opportunity to grow.

The work ASOCOPI has been doing during this time aims at the consolidation of an ELT community by networking with local schoolteachers and international scholars. For the upcoming October conference, we join efforts with Grazzia Mendoza and Ulrich Schrader as leaders of the Caribbean and Central America TESOL group to bring representatives from different Latin American countries to share the experiences in teaching and learning English in their contexts. In this way, we will be able to offer the first international ASOCOPI conference. Moreover, COVID-19 has also provided a learning opportunity for the team at ASOCOPI to organize our first online conference, with the support of Diana Margarita Araque and her team from Universidad Santo Tomás. Based on the results we have this year, we will be able to offer the Conference in a blended format, which will allow us to reach more teachers in distant places in Colombia and internationally.

We have also worked towards strengthening the connection with Colombian schoolteachers by opening a special call for them and inviting two of them to make part of the pool of plenary speakers with full support from the Board of Directors. We want to acknowledge our treasurer Dr. José Aldemar Álvarez Valencia for the support and effective execution of this proposal and his constant contact with schoolteachers countrywide. In this same direction, thanks to Prof. Clara Inés Lozano Espejo, leader of Bilingualism from IED La Felicidad, we have been able to promote the Association and the Annual Conference during the schoolteachers' colloquia from Fontibón in Bogotá.

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We have consolidated our communication mechanisms by setting up a series of webinars on different topics (technology, gamification, growth mindset, material design, multimodal pedagogies, skills, teaching pre-k, assessment, and socioemotional skills, among many others. We want to thank Colombian scholars Diana Margarita Araque, Raúl Alberto Mora, Isabel Tejada Sánchez, Martha Ramírez, Juan Carlos Torres, Adriana Sánchez, Carolina Rodríguez-Buitrago, Mónica Rodríguez-Bonces, Astrid Núñez-Pardo, Claudia Uribe, and international scholars Elsa Fernanda González and Mónica Rodríguez-Salvo for their joyful disposition to support us in these webinars. I also thank in advance those who will offer more webinars after this publication. Besides, we have re-started the publication of only monthly newsletters.

In terms of benefits for our affiliates, we have signed an agreement with Bridge Education Group, a Denver-based company, to offer a variety of teacher education courses with discount for ASOCOPI members. These courses range from micro-credentials to certifications in specific topics such as teaching English online, teaching teenagers and teaching young learners. We signed another agreement with International Language Testing Organization so that our affiliates could take the Test of English Communication Skills (TECS) with 20% discount. We continue searching for alliances to offer new services to our affiliates.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all the members of the ASOCOPI Board of Directors: our vice-president, Jair Ayala Zárate; our treasurer, José Aldemar Álvarez; our secretary, Kaithie Ramírez Correa; and our spokesperson, Jairo Castañeda-Trujillo, and, of course, Miryan Cristina Vera, our manager. To close, I invite you to participate in our annual Conference, whose topic this year is *Building Communities in English Language Teaching: Sharing classroom experiences* and will be held online this coming October 8th to 10th. See you there!

HOW

Non-Normative Corporalities: Transgender/Blind Identity in an English as a Foreign Language Student Teacher

Corporalidades no-normativas: Identidad transgénero/ciega en un estudiante profesor de inglés como lengua extranjera

Diego Ubaque-Casallas[1]
Harold Castañeda-Peña[2]

Abstract

Little international research exists on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) student teachers regarding non-normative corporalities: transgender and blind identities. Similarly, few studies in Colombia have investigated transgender/blind EFL student teachers to understand the various dimensions of their identities. This research study explores the transgender/blind identities of an EFL student teacher in Colombia. The study interpreted identity as multiple and fluid in order to understand how transgender identity serves as a lens to shape the process of becoming a teacher. Findings suggest that transgender/blind identities are molded from experiences that either modify or re-construct the self. The study revealed that the notion of gender/disability is contested when the idea of transgender/blind works as a personal mechanism to question the existing normativity of one's own body and self.

1   Language teacher and teacher educator who currently works at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, (Bogotá, Colombia). He holds an MA degree in Applied Linguistics to TEFL from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Bogotá, Colombia).
dfubaquec@udistrital.edu.co
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8116-9163

2   He is currently the Director of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (ELT Education Major) at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Bogotá, Colombia). ASOCOPI President 2017-2018. His research interests revolve around information literacy, videogaming, and gender in ELT. COLCIENCIAS Senior researcher. PhD in Education from Goldsmiths University of London.
hacastanedap@udistrital.edu.co
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6828-8712

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Diego Ubaque-Casallas
Harold Castañeda-Peña

Identity is then presented as a series of choices and performances situated in time that are validated in the transgender and blind status.

Keywords: blind, EFL, non-normative corporality, transgender, student teacher

Resumen

Existe poca investigación internacional sobre estudiantes en formación docente EFL (inglés como lengua extranjera) con respecto a corporalidades no-normativas: la identidad transgénero/ciega. Del mismo modo, pocos estudios en Colombia han investigado a los estudiantes de EFL que son transgénero/ciegos para comprender las diversas dimensiones de sus identidades. Este estudio de investigación explora la identidad transgénero/ciego de un profesor de inglés en Colombia. El estudio interpretó la identidad como múltiple y fluida para comprender cómo la identidad transgénero/ciego sirve como lente para dar forma al proceso de convertirse en maestro. Los hallazgos sugieren que la identidad transgénero/ciego se moldea a partir de experiencias que modifican o reconstruyen el yo. El estudio reveló que la noción de género/discapacidad se cuestiona cuando la idea de lo transgénero/ciego funciona como un mecanismo personal para cuestionar la normatividad existente del propio cuerpo y de uno mismo. La identidad entonces se presenta como una serie de elecciones y actuaciones situadas en el tiempo que se validan en el estado transgénero y ciego.

Palabras clave: ciego, corporalidad no normativa, EFL, estudiante docente, transgénero

Introduction

This study seeks to explore the identities and non-normative corporalities of an EFL teacher student through border thinking and queer theory lenses. We, the researchers, want to generate a dialogue to question some practices that involve discourses of inequality, exclusion and 'identity theft'[3] when educating. Yet, we are also interested in developing a perspective of knowledge from a specific time/space, where the locus of enunciation, understood as "the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5), does not come exclusively from us, the researchers, but from the *other* that has been historically marginalized and ignored: Valentina, a blind and transgender EFL student teacher. We aim to do this by exposing and rethinking mechanisms or techniques that frame how student teachers relate to the world within the ongoing processes of normalization; and how they become language educators.

14   This study also intends to provide some ground for future studies based on an interest in exploring blindness and transgenderism as non-normative corporalities for student teachers in EFL. As such, this study has no other purpose than to provide some accounts of teacher-identity formation that might better unpack the ideologies and discourses which, in Colombia, those who want to become language teachers confront inside and outside the

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[3]   Although identity is "a diverse, dynamic, often contradictory, multiple rather than unitary concept" (García-Pastor, 2017, p. 39), it has been constructed from essentialist perspectives.

classroom. We also want to make the connection to non-normative corporalities (e.g. being transgender and blind) since we hold the view that they are personal dimensions of teaching that have been subjected to the hegemony of normative discourses and as such need to be multi-signified from the local.

Theoretical Considerations

The rationale underpinning this theoretical section draws on Galafassi, Daw, Thyresson, Rosendo, Chaigneau, Bandeira, Munyi, Gabrielsson and Brown's (2018) metaphor of weaving along with the movements of unraveling, meshing, and raveling. Firstly, we aim to disentangle normalized notions of (trans)gender and disability (blindness). Secondly, we will explain border thinking and queer theory which constitute an interlaced theoretical net supporting (meshing) the unraveled concepts of (trans)gender and blind for them to become newly raveled, as Figure 1 illustrates.
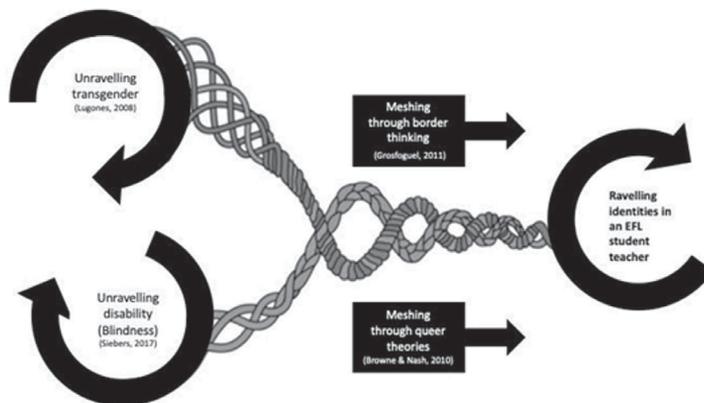
Figure 1

Theoretical Framework Based on Galaffasi Et Al's (2018) Metaphor of Weaving

For the purposes of this study, we use the term non-normative corporalities to interpellate established sexual orders regarding the sexual and corporal norms the study refers to. Therefore, not only do we want to discuss gender from the notion of colonization itself, from which gender is understood as an act to build colonial societies (Connell, 2014), but we also want to question blindness as a marker of 'ab'normality.

Becoming a language teacher is much more than acquiring a set of linguistic skills. Instead, it appears to be a journey in which places, people and experiences are used to construct and

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narrate our identities as individuals, language learners, student teachers, and future EFL teachers. For some scholars, developing a professional identity involves finding a balance between the personal and professional side of becoming and being a teacher (Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999). However, to do so, it is important to understand how identities get to be developed in an ongoing process, and how identities are influenced by personal and social representations of the self, where 'who I am' is most of the time what others make of me.

Identity and Non-Normative Corporalities: The Transgender

This article acknowledges that by being "Euro-centered, global capitalism was constituted through colonization, [and] gender differentials were introduced where [potentially] there were none" (Lugones, 2008, p. 7). Given that gender is a complex biosocial–cultural construct (Steensma, Kreukels, de Vries, & Cohen-Kettenis, 2013), we hold the view that to be able to comprehend student teachers' identities, these must be seen as rooted in the individual performance of identity, as identities *in the plural*, are acts, but not facts (Nelson, 1999). However, since notions of gender and identity are also colonial remnants of the coloniality of power, this study is interested in moving away from certain discriminatory discourses that have generally been used as tools for domination (Connell, 2014) by understanding gender identities from the notions of trans and cross (e.g. unravelling).

In as much as "the terms homosexual/heterosexual and transsexual as well as other markers like man/woman, masculine/feminine, whiteness/blackness/brownness are all historically variable terms, untethered in fixed or for that matter natural or inevitable ways to bodies and populations" (Halberstam, 1961), we take on the notion of trans to refer to " individuals whose gender presentation is so different from ideals for the sex assigned to them at birth that it defies traditional notions of what it means to be male or female" (Levitt & Ippolito, 2014, p. 1728). Similarly, we regard the notion of cross as an imaginative gendered embodiment conceived through self-identification (Halberstam, 1961).

In spite of this, it is pivotal for us to refer to both concepts to raise some awareness of the onto-epistemological orientation both notions offer this study. Even though transgender identities have been commonly referred to as a condition in which the "transgender person may have any sexual orientation and may or may not present a biological intersex condition" (Quintanar, García, Medina-Mora, and Pérez, 2019, p. 53), we hold the view that transgender and cross gender identities are self-representations of individuals who not only reject binary notions of gender, but also to individuals who refuse to be linked to "a final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity" (Halberstam, 1961, p. 4).

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Identity and Non-Normative Corporalities: The Blind

Most of the time, students who do not meet the normative profile are referred to as people with special education needs (SEN). This term has been coined to group certain populations that are in a physical or mental condition different from the general one at schools. In the literature, a person who is visually impaired is one who has some sight, but a blind person is one whose sight is absent (De Witt, 1991). Even though this might sound a bit technical, this definition serves this article as it touches upon many visually-impaired people in Colombia that are involved in learning activities.

Regarding learning a foreign language, this activity requires students to make use of different yet specific skills. Arguably and to unravel the notion, **"**foreign languages are considered difficult for blind and visually impaired people who have to learn them by using memory, spelling, and oral ability" (Arenas-González, 2012, p. 147). In a more personal dimension, some others argue, "certain emotional and social problems of people with disabilities are due to the attitude and behavior of society rather than the actual disability" (Punia & Berwal, 2017, p. 429). In fact, Siebers (2017) echoes this by presenting identity, from the perspective of a disability, as something "not based on impairment similarity but on social experience that includes a shared encounter with oppression and discrimination" (p. 119). Therefore, we believe this is quite important as identity in the ELT field has been mainly an epistemological construction that has been subjected to fixed categories in which the body has not been taken into account when it comes to identity formation. Then, no matter what the context may be, in most countries of the world, including Colombia, the social model of disability is grounded on the notion of institutions and their repressive and discriminatory discourses (Mittler & Mittler, 2000).

Border Thinking

Mignolo (2000) coined the term border thinking to express and explain all subaltern knowledge that can be generated (meshed) from the opposition of modern/colonial world systems. "Critical border thinking", understood as the epistemic and ontological "response of the subaltern to the Eurocentric project of modernity" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 26) is in fact "the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside" (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006, p. 206). It could be argued that within the Colombian teaching context, most of the principles that support teaching and learning regarding student teacher's identity have been taken from Western traditions. Consequently, there is room to criticize systems of coloniality that are embedded in the educational setting of the country as there is an axiomatic need to highlight local epistemologies that can help rethink/mesh the language-teaching field.

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In this study, we also want to echo Cervantes-Soon and Carrillo's (2016) notion of border thinking. They argue that border thinking encompasses the embodiment of epistemological processes emerging from and responding to colonial domination (Grosfoguel, 2011). As border thinking originates from coloniality and subalternity, and it confronts Western thought, we hold the view that understanding teacher transgender identities and non-normative corporalities, from a border thinking perspective, has the potential to offer a new logic and to decolonize dominant constructions of identity in (language) teacher education that have been replicated and reinforced in Colombia.

Queer Theory

To understand transgender identity, queer theory may serve as the framework for this study. Queer theory draws upon poststructuralist notions of identity and "challenges the normative social ordering of identities and subjectivities along the heterosexual/homosexual binary as well as privileging of heterosexuality as its deviant and abhorrent 'other'" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 5). Then, when referring to the 'cross' and the 'trans' to understand teacher identity, we aim to destabilize (e.g. mesh) notions of the sexual and gender in teacher education; we then try to disrupt fixed biological notions of sexuality and gender, to allow non-licensed teachers to challenge current pedagogies. Lastly, queer theory provides this study with a more political stance from where to foster social change (Plummer, 1995) within the context of teacher education.

Methodology: Queer Narratives

In this study, narratives are the life stories represented in discourse. Since the life story is in essence the story one chooses to tell about life or life as lived (Atkinson, 1998), queer narratives may serve as an answer to the heteronormative cultural norms of classrooms discourses pre-service teachers encounter in their process of becoming EFL teachers. As Andrews (2007) reminds us:

> Stories are not only the way in which we come to ascribe significance to experiences [...] but they are one of the primary means through which we constitute our very selves [...] we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell. (pp. 77-78)

Our approach to narrative research aims to portray narratives not just as a means of empowering participants since this, we believe, has been a fallacy installed by the rationale of modernity. Instead, we mean to advocate that narrative research should no longer be limited to the voices we report and analyze but to a more multidirectional endeavor in which the mere act of listening to those voices brings forth what Barkhuizen (2011) refers to as narrative knowledging (e.g. raveling).

We hold the view that narrative inquiry as a decolonial option implies breaking down the "culture of silence" which still allows the oppression of certain groups (Cole, 2009, p. 569) within the educational field in teacher education. Therefore, narrative research, within a decolonial spirit, intends to move away from what many critical feminist academics have argued in terms of the amount of qualitative research that has "reproduced, if contradiction-filled, a colonizing discourse of the other and can be a tool of domination" (Fine, 1994, p. 70). All in all, we hope both to comprehend those multiple subjectivities that make of identity a life story (McAdams, 2003) and to learn from and with those who have been constructed as subalterns (Mignolo, 2000).

Context and Contextualization

The study inspected the narrative experience of a transgender EFL student teacher in a public university in Bogota (Colombia). The study made use of a set of life story interviews to dig into the different queer narratives. Valentina, the participant of the study, is a 25-year-old student of the languages department and is the spokesperson for a Foundation which fights in favor of guarantees of rights for dissident corporal, sexual and gender populations within high impact areas in Bogota She also belongs to a group of educators which moves between popular education and alternative pedagogical projects.

Valentina was invited to cooperate in this study since we, the researchers, were interested in exploring the different identity constructions a transgender pre-service teacher had gone through as an individual. Thus, by considering that not only had Valentina recently crossed certain normative lines to become a transgender woman, but also that she was in the process of becoming a language teacher and possessed a varied social experience, she seemed to be really close to our interests as researchers. However, this does not imply that Valentina's role was merely to tell her story. Rather, she worked alongside us, the researchers, to trace the constructions of identities in the stories collected regarding non-normative corporalities. Regarding this, Valentina was asked to give further interpretation on several moments we found relevant to understand her narrations. This approach served as a member check technique to find out "whether the data analysis was congruent with the experiences" (Curtin & Fossey, 2007, p. 92) and made part of the raveling process of co-constructed knowledge (Galafassi et al, 2018). Finally, to start building bridges (e.g. meshing, Galafassi et al, 2018) between decolonial border thinking, queer theory, and narrative inquiry, Valentina's own way(s) of understanding identity were highlighted. So, it was her thinking and the narration of her own experiences in the life world.

Data Analysis Procedures

However, we kept traditional ways of dealing with data to (co)construct such bridges. Interviews were transcribed to get closer to the information provided by Valentina. This

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data analysis procedure agrees with Ochs (1979), who argues that transcription is theoretical in nature, and therefore, "transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions" (p. 44); the study also relied on Lapadat (2000, p. 208), who contends that transcripts are "theoretical constructions".

As for the coding process to analyze those transcriptions, the study, firstly, used the coding elements of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) to approach Valentina's oral narrations understood as life stories in more depth, and secondly, discourse analysis principles since it is through our language choices that we build a version of the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

As its approach is neither reductionist nor positivistic, the analytical elements of grounded theory were mostly geared towards abstracting and relating 'personal' categories to each other in the data analysis. Coding and analytical procedures under the frame of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) and discourse analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002) were adopted in order not to generate theory from the data, but to approach them from a more reliable and holistic perspective. Regarding this, we attempted to understand Valentina's views and actions from her own perspectives by exploring language as a tool for saying, doing, and being, and not simply as a passive tool for representing reality.

Nonetheless, the process carried out took into consideration that narrative analysis can assume multiple forms in a variety of analytical practices in diverse disciplines (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Some narrative approaches can employ literary tools (such as metaphors), linguistic devices (such as pronouns), or cultural conventions (such as time) to generate insights (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) since there is no single or right way to analyze stories (Riessman, 1993).

Data Analysis and Findings: A Short Notice

The following analysis aims to break the 'conventional' understandings of identity and gender in teacher education. It intends, for the most part, not to replace incorrect or lesser knowledge with correct or better knowledge but to present some subaltern positions and voices that contest the dominant positions that have so clearly depicted who and how a teacher should be.

Valentina

Identity is in essence an ontological construct of the self. As such, "individuals may have as many identities as they have distinct networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and take on the associated roles" (Pekerti & Thomas, 2016, p. 110). Arguably, in acquiring these identities individuals may either construct themselves or be constructed in

particular ways that can in fact validate or contest certain existing dominant and normative roles in society. It is argued that identity, although affected by forces outside the individual, is primarily situated internally (Gee, 2000). We understand subjectivity as a situated discourse that is "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33).

The following discussion revolves around Valentina's life story regarding her status as a trans and blind student teacher. Nevertheless, since this study aims to provide more evidence to understand identity construction during teacher education by touching upon notions of cross and trans gender, the subsequent analysis also presents our personal views on the issues of gender and identity. Our voices as researchers interplay with Valentina's own narrations as an individual. We assume that her life story, here reported in a narrative form, is "the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33).

By identifying herself with feminist struggles and the demands of people with non-heteronormative sexual orientations, gender identities, or non-normative corporalities, Valentina decided to materialize her transit as trans-gender in 2016. Interestingly, from her career as an activist, she has fought to display actions in support of sexual, corporal and gender divergence in Colombia. These networks of relationships, associated with the groups she ideologically identifies herself with, have had an impact on Valentina's identity construction.

Having been born in Bogotá (Colombia), not only has Valentina validated her transit to identify herself as a transgender woman but she has also identified herself with the struggles of many who, by being labelled 'abnormal', have been silenced, isolated, or just publicly excluded from the different scenarios of the country. Thus, Valentina, in narrating her life story, demonstrates what it takes to become a woman in a society that often obscures that same sense of femininity.

As gender is "a relational construct embodied in social structures, rather than a common sense essentialist view" (Francis, 2014, p. 540), Valentina narrates her life story by giving a central place to the patterned relationship that constitutes gender as a social structure (Connell, 2012).

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P 1: Codes: [featured identity as a woman] [Where I come from][4]

My name comes from struggles against the established formation in the search for an identity; and it is in the encounter of that identity that precisely I have seen that being a woman implies losing many privileges that I had as a man. Assuming the female role implies eating all the shit and all the

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[4]   P stands for Primary Document which is a narrative excerpt. The codes in brackets are the names we assigned to parts of the narrative excerpts.

violations that being a woman in a society as macho and hetero-patriarchal as this implies. All the misogynistic comments, all that social pressure that you put up with for being a woman. It is to assume those social costs, get off privileges and lose many comforts that you once had.

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain (1998) echo what is stated by Valentina since identity exists within the tension between obligations to cultural norms and expressions of individual agency. For Valentina, her personal decision to become a woman implies being shaped by the conditions of the particular circumstances of the Colombian society where she lives. Importantly, by stating that she is "struggling against the established formation", she posits that there are tensions between diverse social discourses of masculinities that are constructed.

According to Quijano (2000a), there exist patriarchal and heterosexual understandings of the disputes over control of sex. Regarding this, there seems to be a permanent remnant of coloniality that has worked as a mechanism of social identification becoming the expression of colonial domination (Quijano, 2000b). Since this colonial notion Valentina presents about being a woman is indeed rooted in the complex societal structure she is immersed in, there is a personal dispute over what being a woman is.

Valentina narrates and positions herself against reproduced gender norms, and she resists hegemonic forms of masculinity that for her have influenced how she decided to stop enacting this masculine hegemonic role. Valentina denounces the hegemonic hierarchical status men have exercised in society. Connell (1995) claims that men take up subjective positions in relation to this dominant enactment of masculinity getting in exchange benefits of patriarchy.

For Valentina, becoming a woman implies losing certain privileges she had as a man. Regarding this, Johnson (1997) states that "privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they have done or failed to do" (p. 23). Valentina's struggle to be a transgender woman has meant giving up privileges she was attributed when she was a man in order to deliberately be part of a group of individuals made to feel powerless in a variety of ways because of systems and institutions that act as oppressors (Pedersen, Crethar & Carlson, 2008).

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P 1: Codes: [My right to be a woman]

I have to be defending my femininity, my right to be a woman as I want to be a woman; being a woman without the need to have breasts, to use hormones; if I want to use the clothes that are commonly assumed to be feminine, because if I want to wear sweatshirts and tennis, I can also be feminine as I want, it's a struggle for the defense of that, of femininity, of my own dynamics as a trans.

Valentina's own sense of femininity departs from her own understanding of what being a trans woman is for her. Since masculinity is a cultural construct that influences notions of gender, Valentina's idea of femininity is constructed in opposition to these socio-cultural notions endorsed through her own agency. If agency is conceived in terms of "the capability of individual human beings to make choices and act on these choices in a way that makes a difference in their lives" (Martin, 2004, p. 135), agency is pivotal to understanding Valentina's personal struggle to defend her right to be a woman. Her identity is something actively constructed on an on-going basis; this is why the notion of identity could be thought of as something not merely conditioned by cultural, national, or external exigencies, but more on the individual's ability and willingness to exercise agency (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). As such, Valentina's identity as a trans woman has been an object of normative characterization inasmuch as she has been depicted in many ways that differ from the depiction she took on for herself.

In her narration, Valentina addresses the social constructions that validate her condition as blind but disprove her identity as a trans woman. Regarding this, Valentina claims that her condition as a blind person is socially accepted since being blind seems to be more 'normal' than being a trans woman. This validation is made through several discourse constructions she has been exposed to and that have exercised some power to constitute a social identity as blind. On this, Norton (2010) argues that:

> Every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world and reorganizing that relationship across time and space. Our gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among other characteristics, are all implicated in this negotiation of identity. (p. 350)

Valentina's understanding of her own identity also presents a second dimension of the self that has to do with her identity as a blind trans woman. Even though this identity can be a personal or social construction, Valentina's identity as a blind trans woman emerges as well as a self-driven space in which she depicts and is depicted by others and society. Explaining this, Howell (2016) argues that "individuals understand themselves according to the language they are given and the structures in which they are fixed" (p. 86). Nonetheless, Valentina seems not to conform to these interplays of subjectivities.

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Therefore, to understand Valentina's identity from the perspective of non-normative corporalities, it is essential to explore her personal narrative to comprehend the extent by which being blind redefined her status as trans.

P 1: Codes: [How others see me] [What I will fight against as a teacher]

I am aware of how people see me. They accept the fact I'm blind, but not trans. Discriminations come from different sides in these two contexts; trans struggles and disability struggles are very

similar; [therefore,] in the sense that we are fighting for the social stigma as blind, people feel sorry for me [and] I am underestimated: then if I do something different [it] is something admirable because nothing was expected of me. But as a trans, we are sexed, bitches, because children are given a bad example, the boys start with the question, and if there is one of them who has feminine expressions or a woman's feminine expressions, the father will think that this will be promoted by me and they're going to see that as something that needs to be corrected and not something to be applauded. Then it will generate new social charges.

According to Valentina, being a blind person is something others conceive as 'normal'. A social category emerges that, by being acknowledged and validated by others, challenges the non-normative narrow understandings of modern/colonial constructions of an individual. As a blind woman Valentina feels some oppression not for being blind, but for being trans. This normative understanding of being blind and trans is linked to notions of the coloniality of being (Quijano, 2000a) since there is a particular identification of an individual according to some normative attributes recognized by society and that, in turn, position Valentina in a subaltern condition ascribed to her to maintain her in an inferior category.

Following this, being a blind individual makes Valentina the recipient of social stigma. For Valentina, being blind is a status that positions her as someone who deserves recognition for minor accomplishments. Nonetheless, it is at this juncture of Valentina's identity in which we could start 'decolonizing' the violent reality, of any kind, identity construction is subjected to.

P 1: Codes: [Defining my femininity] [How I understand some discourses of Inclusion]

I think beyond fighting for the same, it is a fight for the defense of that, of femininity, of my own dynamics as a blind person to defend my ways of visualizing the world, of assuming it. For example, the discourse of inclusion also has its problem, it is about cutting off the person's identity, and homogenizing it, making it normal, that is the problem of assuming inclusion of gender, disability, race, anything, it is to remove the person's own expressions.

The fact of homogenizing a person's identity is indeed problematic. If definitions of identity are revised, identity will be framed under two main paradigms. For Kumaravadivelu (2008), identity can be either explained by a modernist view where identity is pre-existent, fixed, and we might say it is a subject of unchanging societal norms; or on the other hand, identity can also be seen from a more postmodernist view where it is constructed on an ongoing basis e.g. it is fragmented. Thus, if identity, as a dynamic concept, is homogenized, it is framed within the modernist and static paradigm.

Ontologically speaking, Valentina's identity may come into play as a two-way process: the way she speaks about herself as a blind-trans woman (affiliation) and the way she is spoken about (attributions) (Fairclough, 1992). This study attempts to contribute to this by exploring teacher identity through the transgender lens. By doing this, we can see that Valentina's life

experience reveals certain social discriminatory practices that involve inequalities and that, in turn, marginalize those who are subjects of these positionings.

As this study seeks to create space to question some discriminatory practices that involve inequalities when educating, it is important to explore Valentina's narrative on this issue. Regarding pre-service teachers, we need to acknowledge that "a teacher's personal sense of identity lies at the forefront of everything the teacher thinks, does and reflects upon in the classroom" (Woods, Barksdale, Triplett, & Potts, 2014, p. 112); and so, teacher identity is what shapes one's own pedagogy and as such it is who one is in a classroom (Duru, 2006).

P 1: Codes: [How I imagine my future as a blind-trans teacher]

First, I think my speech of resistance will go no matter what! I did not learn this in vain, I have given workshops in public schools, I think I will have to soften it. How[ever,] I will not take away the forcefulness, but I will adapt words so that it is not violent in the verbal [sense]; yet in the ideological it has to be violent. Second, I cannot talk about an emancipatory speech and make rows of boys and girls, or say if a person has a piercing, he has to remove it, or if a girl puts on makeup, she has to remove it. I cannot contradict that; their parents are something else but my classroom will be my space.

If what we are is what makes our pedagogy, Valentina has certainly imagined herself spreading and defending what she believes in as a teacher. For Wenger (1998), imagination can be conceptualized as "a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p. 176). Thus, this process of extending one's identity in the future may be the key to decolonizing pre-service teacher conceptions and practices in teacher education programs. For Valentina, being a teacher implies opening spaces for accepting personal identity performance. It will imply contesting normative discourses of masculinity and femininity and even contesting discourses of being blind.

Valentina's status as a blind student is also worth inspecting. Learning to become a teacher, in personal or structural matters, implies adapting to certain circumstances. In Valentina's narration, being a blind student teacher has also been a burden.

P 1: Codes: [Learning as a blind student]

As a blind student, I have to do a whole process. If there are photocopies, I then need to convert them to Word to be able to read them; if they are language readings, either in French or in English, I have to print them in Braille to be able to read them, especially those in French that have so many accents and things. Therefore, they are still major social burdens, but if it is the challenge to fulfill, I feel that I have to work harder than the rest, that makes me feel tired and exhausted.

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If these behaviors are then interpreted as social burdens, Valentina's identity as a student struggles with this conception of assimilationist education in which personal processes of learning are determined by normative factors already common in the academy. We might think, then, that Valentina's personal experience would be a primary reference to the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language teacher education.

Since Valentina has dealt with traditional methodologies of education, she has had to adapt to given materials to make meaning out of them. Above all, not having access to material in Braille seems to work as an emotional catalyst to condition Valentina's personal understanding of her own learning process. Regarding this, it is acknowledged, "the importance of previewing material for students is becoming more widely recognized for all students, including those with learning disabilities and those who are learning English" (Topor & Rosenblum, 2013, p. 81). We might argue then that Valentina's identity as a student language teacher is not just defined by 'people's judgements of her capabilities' but also defined by her own beliefs of her capabilities to perform a learning task.

Final Thoughts

As teacher educators, we are urged "to recreate the space for construction of an individual, meaningful, resilient professional identity underpinned by strong beliefs and values" (Smethem, 2007, p. 478). Nonetheless, to do such a thing, there must be room to contend already existing identity discourses within the educational field which operate inhibiting the emergence of other identities through the colonial mechanisms rooted in global capitalism (e.g. initial language teacher education that 'ignores' the existence of trans and blind students who will be future teachers). Thus, as far as this article is concerned, the impact of a teacher's gender and recognition of his/her own corporality in language classrooms are crucial elements. If more thought is given to these issues, we might argue that there is a strong relationship between language students' achievement as well as their attitude and motivation toward language and the gender of their language teacher (Manjari, 2005). We could also argue that apart from the binarism that characterizes gender, the teacher's gender and normative or non-normative corporality are linked to traits that can have an impact on the personal construction of the self, regarding the teaching education milieu.

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This study aimed to provide more ground to understand student teacher identity. As such, we might say that "the formation of teachers' identities has emerged as an area worthy of study over the last decade" (Kukari, 2011, p. 134), yet we also hold the view that we must keep on studying this issue due to the multiple biographical events student teachers can narrate. We strongly believe that it is in these narrations of life, before and while being a teacher, where we can trace how identity shapes and is shaped by personal and external circumstances.

To move away from existing colonial paradigms in teacher education, we need to open spaces for recognizing the *other* far from the normative constructions of gender and self. Valentina's self-constructions as a teacher shows traces of agency and role reversal. Nonetheless, her own construction of self as a trans-blind student teacher exposes colonial notions of gender and sexuality that are contested; yet, these discourses continue to maintain dominant discourses of 'normality'.

Since Valentina's idea of herself as an individual contains her identity in terms of resistance and in constant change, there is an urgent need to get rid of fixed and monolithical understandings of identity within the language-teaching education panorama. Pre-service language teachers need to begin conceptualizing themselves and their identities within existent normative discourses that need to be torn down in order to question and contest some discriminatory practices that hinder the construction of new knowledge in teacher education. In a decolonial perspective, the emergence of *non-previously* acknowledged/existent identities such as the trans-blind language student-teacher could inform differently processes of initial language teacher education where these non-existent identities dialogue with the 'normalized' ones in a sort of epistemological healing.

As far as this article is concerned, we might argue that teacher identity construction at the pre-service teaching stage is a process that is not only individualistic but also reliant on social interaction in a range of socio-cultural groupings (Twiselton, 2004). As such, personal constructions of gender as well as the personal understanding of one's own corporality can provide meaningful data to comprehend and resist the nature of symbiotic relationships and discourses that modify and help construct teacher identity.

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HOW

Hard-of-Hearing Individuals' Narratives of Inclusion and Exclusion of their Schooled EFL Learning

Narrativas de personas con dificultades auditivas sobre su inclusión y exclusión en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera

Rigoberto Castillo[1]
Laura-Stefany Flórez-Martelo[2]

Abstract

This paper deals with research on inclusion concentrating on the pedagogical implications derived from a qualitative case study that looked into three hard-of-hearing (HHs) students' perspectives and retrospectives on their schooled EFL learning. Data came from narratives gathered in autobiographical writings and interviews. Although there is a good body of literature on pedagogy in terms of strategies for dealing with HHs, few works have counted on the student's perspectives. The authors' insights, one of them being hard-of-hearing, call for truly inclusive policies and practices that address the categories developed in this case study, namely: 1. Deafness separates HHs from people. 2. Hearing aids are not like glasses, and 3. An exemption is not inclusion. The authors feel that the recommendations made are valid for learners with or without disabilities.

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[1]   Rigoberto Castillo holds a Ph.D. and an M.A in Applied Linguistics from The University of Texas at Austin. Professor at Universidad Distrital, Colombia, and a member of the research group Formación de Educadores. Fulbright alumnus and recipient of the National Award of ASOCOPI. He serves on the Advisory Committee of several scientific journals.
rcastillo@udistrital.edu.co
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9527-0120

[2]   Laura-Stefany Flórez-Martelo holds a B.A. in Education from Universidad Distrital, Colombia where her research work received recognition. Currently works in Texas. Recipient of the Turkish Language School Scholarship. She has published and participated in conferences to advocate for inclusion and debunk the myths and misconceptions about hard-of-hearing individuals, like herself.
lsflorezm@correo.udistrital.edu.co

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Rigoberto Castillo
Laura-Stefany Flórez-Martelo

Keywords: foreign language, hard of hearing, inclusion pedagogy, inclusion policies, learning rights, special education

Resumen

Este artículo reporta una investigación cualitativa de estudio de caso sobre inclusión que indagó las perspectivas y retrospectivas de tres estudiantes hipoacúsicos sobre su aprendizaje del inglés en las aulas. Los datos provinieron de narrativas registradas en entrevistas y escritos autobiográficos. Las recomendaciones pedagógicas son igualmente válidas para estudiantes sin deficiencias auditivas. Aunque hay bastante literatura sobre pedagogía para los hipoacúsicos, pocos cuentan con la perspectiva de los afectados. La mirada de los autores de este artículo, una de ellas hipoacúsica, hacen un llamado a políticas y prácticas incluyentes que están contenidas en las categorías de este estudio de caso: 1. La sordera separa a los hipoacúsicos de la gente. 2. Las ayudas auditivas no son como los anteojos y 3. Una exoneración o excepción no es inclusión.

Palabras clave: educación especial, derechos básicos de aprendizaje, hipoacusia, inclusión lenguas extranjeras, políticas de inclusión

Introduction

Our inquiry puts a piece of a puzzle in the landscape of hard-of-hearing individuals (HHs). There was a piece missing: the students' perspectives and retrospectives on their schooled learning. The general objective of this research study was to understand how three hard of hearing participants made sense of their L2 learning. The specific objectives were to make recommendations supported by data. Three participants from 18 to 25 years old, who took English as a foreign language (EFL) in integrated classrooms, joined the inquiry. The setting of the study was at Mediglobal I.P.S., a private medical institution specialized in hearing loss (Consent form in Appendix D). One of the authors of this paper, with a hard-of-hearing condition herself, did volunteer work there. The qualitative case study used autobiographical narratives (Appendices A and B) and interviews (Appendix C). For clarity, the authors of this article paraphrased in English the excerpts of the participants' narratives cited in Spanish.

Some of the key aspects of the condition of hard-of-hearing individuals (HHs) provide a background. Hearing loss distorts the mode in which people perceive words. Most HHs cannot hear word endings such as –*s* or –*ed*. This wrong discernment disturbs verb tenses, plural forms, non-agreement of subject and verb, and possessives (ASHA, 2005). It affects L2 learning because the HHs find it challenging to identify suffixes that add meaning to words. Furthermore, there is an inability to perceive voiceless sounds such as /f/, /k/, /p/, /s/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /t/, and /θ/ which, in turn, are omitted in speech.

Additionally, HHs may not hear their voices when they speak so they may seem too loud or not loud enough, or as if they were mumbling because of poor stress, poor inflection, or poor pace of speaking. This limitation is not a predictor of success or failure. They need the support of schools and homes teaming up to facilitate language acquisition and enhance their academic achievement. Although the diagnosis of impairment is mandatory to prevent delay in language acquisition, some institutions fail to comply with this.

Laws and declarations aim toward more inclusive education; however, in several communities, these demands are unreachable. The perspectives and retrospectives collected from HHs prompted the recommendations given for EFL teaching/learning under the umbrella of the categories that emerged. Their voices constituted layers of understanding of the struggles of other individuals with disabilities.

Method

This study employed grounded theory and case study. Discussing qualitative research, Laws and McLeod (2020) explain that by combining methods, advantages of each methodology complement one another, and make for stronger design and results, and more valid and reliable findings. The analysis of the participants' perspectives suited a case study method since "qualitative research is characterized by an interpretative paradigm which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual" (Rebojli, 2013, p. 30). This is consistent with our purpose of exploring the HHs' views from a personal dimension of experience for building meaning and understanding of how they made sense of their L2 acquisition.

For Alzaanin (2020, p. 1367), "Case study design promotes the collection of rich data from multiple sources and the constructivist grounded theory approaches to data analysis enable researchers to generate theoretical models from within the data". This approach allowed us to gather and analyze data simultaneously. We collected discourses in autobiographical narratives and interviews (see Appendices) from the perspectives and retrospectives of three actors, the hard-of-hearing individuals. From official documents, we also reported the discourses of those who designed the policies.

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The three participants were named after well-known HHs: Edison for the inventor Thomas Alva Edison, Clinton for U.S. President Bill Clinton and Ludwig for van Beethoven. Table 1 summarizes their characteristics. The diagnoses of the participants occurred in their early childhood, and included technical and medical support. They communicated orally; never learned sign language. They went to integrated schools where they took EFL in Colombia and later on stayed in English-speaking countries.

Table 1

Characterization of the Participants

Participant One: Edison
Age: 26 years old
Age at time of diagnosis: 1-year-old
Diagnosis: Profound bilateral hearing loss
Technical help: Cochlear Implant both ears
Language Therapy: Yes.
The main form of communication: Oral language
Sign language: No
Level of Education: Mechanical Engineer
English level: B1 Certified. He took 500 hours of English in a language school.
Six months of English course in the U.S.
Participant two: Clinton
Age: 20 years old
Age at time of diagnosis: 3 years old
Diagnosis: Profound hearing loss in the left ear, severe hearing loss in the right ear.
Technical help: Hearing aids
Language Therapy: Yes
The main form of communication: Oral language
Sign language: No
Level of Education: undergraduate industrial design student 2nd year
English Level: B1 certified
One year study of English in New Zealand
Participant three: Ludwig
Age: 18 years old
Age at time of diagnosis: 3 years old
Diagnosis: Profound bilateral hearing loss.
Technical help: Hearing aids and cochlear implant
Language Therapy: Yes
The main form of communication: Oral language
Sign language: No
English Level: B1 certified –10 years at a Bilingual School
Level of Education: Freshman in economics

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In the sessions for data collection, participants did autobiographical writings and related their experiences in interviews. The HHs' perspectives and retrospectives on their schooled L2 learning appear in the narratives gathered. As Guerrero (2011) states, "Narrative is a system of understanding that we use to construct and express meaning in our daily lives" (p. 89).

Data Analysis and Results

Following grounded theory principles, the data collection and analysis became interrelated and guided the exploration. Coding of data analysis and filtering emerging categories met the objective of establishing the categories, which underwent a transformation, reduction, and simplification (Creswell, 2007). For interpreting, we compared and simultaneously coded the data to develop concepts, identify data incidents, properties, similarities, differences, and interrelationships. In this process, we spotted patterns that triggered the emergence of the main categories that denote the factors that influence the HHs' struggles and achievement with the foreign language (FL).

The resulting categories were: (1) Deafness separates us from people, a reality which refers to the social dimension that needs to be understood by educational communities, (2) Hearing aids are not like glasses, which addresses misconceptions about hearing loss, and (3) an exception is not inclusion, which raises doubts on the policies and practices of inclusion in the educational sector. The categorization allowed building systematically a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, as well as patterns of behavior related to the problem for explaining how the HHs made sense of their L2 learning.

Participants deemed the support of the school staff, classmates, and relatives to be crucial. Additionally. they also reported that some practices like listening exercises and tests with loudspeakers --via CD's or television screens-- did not allow them to understand; they also declared that teaching and testing in this way were unfair. They spoke of the discrimination in policies and reporting of their scores on standardized national tests.

Category 1. Deafness Separates Us from People

HHs tend to feel more isolated because their condition separates them from others due to misunderstandings or prejudice. Helen A. Keller who was the first deaf-blind person to earn a university degree affirmed that blindness separates us from things but deafness separates us from people. The testimonies of the participants went in that direction. Ludwig detested that his classmates perceived him as someone distant, weird, or resented. In his words:

> *"Mis compañeros de clase me ven como alguien que los tiene alejados. Extraño, pues ellos perciben que los odio, detesto un sinnúmero de vainas. Da rabia haber generado esa percepción". (Appendix E, structured interview)*

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Regarding social isolation and self-concept, the three participants declared that at school, they made extra efforts to be accepted. Thus support is essential for every student with or without a limitation or disability. HHs understand their struggles and instructors need to be open to suggestions that reduce anxiety. Edison declared:

> *"The [English] teacher was talking, talking, talking all the time, and all my classmates understood. The teacher got angry because I did not understand, and he continued talking, talk, and talk, and I didn't understand anything. And I wanted to go out but I couldn't because the teacher was at the door so… it was scary for me in general".* (See Appendix C. Excerpt from group interview, English original)

Frustration and isolation derive from the lack of support or underestimation, especially in an attempt to learn an L2. Segregation comes from the prejudices and doubts about the learners' capacity to do things.

Category 2. Hearing Aids Are Not like Glasses

Some affirm that wearing glasses can make people look 'intellectual' while wearing a hearing aid makes them look impaired. This could explain some people's low expectations and negative attitudes towards HHs. Hearing aids (HAs) are not like glasses, and once one wears a HA, her/his hearing is NOT restored to normal. HAs make all kinds of sounds—including picking up background noises—louder but not always clearer, making it difficult for the HA wearer to understand speech. The underlying beliefs of a community lead to segregation. Clinton remembered one day his batteries ran out and he had no spare ones, so he could not hear or understand much. But his teachers were not very cooperative when he asked them to speak louder. About this aspect, Edison mentioned that:

> *"When I got my first hearing aids I learned to speak, but somehow I did not speak well since my classmates looked at me strangely. I eventually got used to it until I got my first friends and they accepted me as I was".* (Appendix F. Autobiography extract, Spanish original)

Furthermore, Edison mentions misconceptions:

> *"Classmates sometimes ask me what I have in my ears; then I tell them that I cannot hear, and then they say, ah so you speak sign language, and I say, No, I was never taught signs. Sometimes people ask me to take off my hearing aids to check that I cannot hear, and then I tell them that obviously, I am not going to hear".*

Ludwig used a strategy to manage:

> *"Let's say that what I did first always was to help my classmates understand and know very well what I face, what happens to me, and what can happen to me."* (Appendix C. Excerpts from group interview, Spanish original)

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The extracts above exemplify the importance of educating others to recognize hearing loss, understand its implications, and learn to support the HHs. The educational community should be informed that hearing aids have a limitation for the discrimination of speech from tracks or loudspeakers or even for natural conversations. Along those lines, Jambor and Elliott (2005) state that:

HHs often need further cues, such as face-to-face communication with constant eye contact, lip-reading, and understanding body language. Since these are rarely completely available in encounters with hearing people, deaf individuals are likely to lose a lot of information during the communication process. Even the use of hearing aids cannot fully solve the problem since these assistive devices cannot make other people's speech clearer, only a bit louder. (p. 66)

In contrast, HHs with the help of their residual auditory capacity acquire the mother tongue as L1 and another language as L2, but the obstacles in communication are permanent in both. Marschark, Spencer, Adams, and Sapere (2011) explain that HHs, rely on visuospatial processing. They require more visual than auditory stimuli for their cognitive development. In this respect, the three participants coincided that the use of recorded material and loudspeakers was too hard to understand and that their instructors continued using them with the HHs despite their complaints. This denied access to the information and insertion in the schoolroom dynamics.

Category 3. An Exemption Is Not Inclusion

The Ministry of Health of Colombia (Ministerio de Salud, 2016, p. 77) indicated that the statistics from 2009 to 2016 about medical consultation related to hearing showed that 27% corresponded to hard-of-hearing and that numbers are increasing. Similarly, the Ministry of Education of Colombia (M.E.N., 2017, p. 25) informs "that 12% of the cases reported with a disability do not have a clear diagnosis" and that 20% of students with a disability drop out of the system. These figures suggest the need for implementing pedagogical strategies, follow-up, and assessment for this particular population. The same document mentions that 4% of the registration in primary and secondary schools are hard-of-hearing individuals.

The HHs cannot fully function as hearing in a world that relies on hearing and speech and in classrooms that do not make adaptations. Teacher-centered practices and normative quantitative evaluation of learning do not help. These may lead to frustrating experiences and diminished self-regard (self-esteem) (Jambor & Elliott, 2005). For example, in the narrative of Appendix A, Clinton affirms that when he went to a large school the noise was unbearable and classmates could not understand why he spoke 'foreign'.

The three participants mentioned that most of their EFL teachers exempted them from doing listening tasks or tests that used recordings. However, they saw no efforts of offering work on listening with face to face interaction or adjusting materials for them which signals inequity in the classroom. Clinton affirms in the interview:

> *"When I see a track transcription, I can understand 100% of the conversation, because I am reading. But I had like homework, like practice listening, a lot of tracks to improve my skills to listen to the tracks. Anyway, it still will be difficult."* (Appendix C. Excerpts from group interview, English original)

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Both the regular student and the HHs would benefit from a healthy environment and an opportunity to develop their competencies. Any exception or exemption should be a barrier to discrimination. School staff that relies on this defense should act accordingly. Beyond school boundaries, the organization that administers national standardized tests, ICFES, had failed to take affirmative action. It expressed that those who, due to a proven diagnosis, present limitations to learning foreign languages will be excluded from taking that section of the standardized exam and their results excluded from aggregated scores. For ICFES (2018, p. 10), "*Este informe no considera los resultados de los estudiantes en condición de discapacidad puesto que estos son excluidos en los resultados agregados.*" Although HHs take English and have the ability to demonstrate that they learned it, their scores are not included in the high school leavers' (graduates') national test or the undergraduate exit exam.

The English tests section of the national exams Saber 11 and Saber Pro do not test listening. Hence, exempting HHs to take this exam does not have a solid basis, it is rather a bias that reflects the limited expectation governments have of them. Paradoxically, to obtain the high school or the undergraduate degree, HHs must achieve a level of FL proficiency. Exempting them from the requirement with the excuse of incapability is a mistake. In the scoring of standardized national exams for school leavers (Pruebas Saber 11) and (Saber Pro) for college leavers, the scores of HHs do not count. The testing organization does not take into account the English section in the added scores. Test-takers with special conditions become invisible and cannot access potential benefits like student loans since they do not appear in the official score records. These facts echo the isolation already described in the school system.

When Clinton took Saber 11, he registered as a regular student; with a sense of humor, he said he did not want to be remitted to a 'sign language college', for he did not know sign language. He was aware of the stigma and if registered with a disability, it would be to his disadvantage. His actual words in Spanish were: "*No, ja, ja regular, porque si lo hacía, por la discapacidad, me mandaban a una universidad con lengua de señas.*"

Ludwig, on his part, argues that excluding students from taking the English test goes against public policy. Edison concurs that examining bodies limit opportunities for the HHs:

> "*Me parece que es una discriminación pues ellos no saben de qué es capaz la persona, que puede hacer, o sea hablar, escuchar, todo, así que tenemos el derecho de presentar todo, todo lo que está ahí.*" (Appendix C. Excerpts from group interview, Spanish original)

In 2019, one of the writers of this paper took Saber Pro and registered as a HH individual because she was concerned about probably not being allowed to use her hearing aid during the examination. On the day of the test, her classroom had all of HHs test-takers, but the proctor did not have any idea of this; this person asked the group if an interpreter of sign language was needed, which was not the case. This episode relates to Ludwig´s narrative, in

which he complained that HHs are not treated as equals, nor given appropriate conditions, or allowed to take all of the sections of tests and compete with regular students:

> *"Deberían tratarte en iguales condiciones al resto de los demás que presentan la prueba, Además deberían garantizar que estés en el ambiente adecuado para presentarla. Debes seguir insistiendo en que te permitan presentar la prueba sin limitaciones, ni impedirte competir a un mismo nivel con personas que no tengan ningún tipo de discapacidad."* (Appendix C. Excerpts from group interview, Spanish original)

Test administrators fail to consider that students with auditory difficulties do not always need an interpreter but need other adaptations; for example, explaining to the person in charge of transmitting the dynamics of the exam how to make sure the information should be delivered properly.

The scores of the test-takers with a special condition do not count in the statistics, they cannot appear in the honors list of Saber Pro, and then they cannot apply for government financial aid. Communities should take positive steps to help disadvantaged groups by using special measures. When an exception, exemption, or special measure discriminates, that goes against the policy, then against the law. For instance, Saber Pro, the college leavers' standardized test does not include the score of the English section of the test because of the HH condition, even if the taker is an English major.

The data gathered suggest that there are difficulties derived from policymakers', administrators' and teachers' lack of understanding of HH's needs. They need to enter into a dialogue with the students and their families to identify ways to facilitate coping with school duties and with standardized tests given the students' particularities and concerns. Fortunately, late in 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled that the testing organization, ICFES (2019), had to adjust the application of the tests to guarantee the participation of students with a reported disability. This report should not impede them to choose (i) the type of exam, (ii) the adjustment and support, and other favorable conditions to take the test, and (iii), taking or not taking the section of the English test:

> *La Corte Constitucional, en la Sentencia T-039 de 2019, ordenó al ICFES que mediante el procedimiento que la entidad considere pertinente, ajuste el proceso de inscripción de los exámenes de Estado, a fin de que este permita la participación de los estudiantes reportados con alguna de las condiciones de discapacidad, con el propósito de que el reporte de discapacidad no les impida poder elegir (i) el tipo de examen a aplicar, ya sea que este consista en el cuadernillo especial o el estándar; (ii) los ajustes, apoyos y otras condiciones de presentación del examen; y (iii) la presentación o no de la prueba de inglés. (p. 4)*

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This paper calls for school districts and educators to follow suit to change the rules, regulations, and practices of exclusion. It requires gaining knowledge of the psychological and social functioning of the deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals (D/HHs) as expressed in Dogamala-Zyśk and Kontra (2016).

Discussion and Recommendations

To sensitize audiences to see that recommendations go beyond instruction, data were grouped into three categories, namely: *Deafness separates us from people*, *Hearing aids are not like glasses*, and *An exception is not inclusion*. ASHA (2005) says that hearing loss causes a delay in speech and language, reduces academic achievement, and results in social isolation and poor self-concept. The first recommendation relates to the isolation that hearing-impairment causes to which schools should become sensitive and make efforts to understand the HHs' needs through dialogue. The involvement of the school community to become truly inclusive should be on the agenda. Instructors should notice students' struggles and accompany HHs in walking the extra mile and helping them build rapport with classmates and school staff.

Teachers need the training to adapt teaching techniques to monitor the learning process and achievement, and to guide the HHs' classmates in avoiding chatting or noisy situations that reduce hearing capacity. Teachers should promote silence as a sign of awareness and respect towards HHs. Awareness, dialogue, and trust should unite the HHs to other people.

The second recommendation is that instruction should be multimodal and multisensory. Even if HHs wear a hearing aid to figure out messages, they require analyzing the environment, the facial expressions, how people talk, and the tone of voice, the behavior, the movements, the place and the moment. Therefore, receiving information through more than one perception channel benefits not only the HHs but the regular students. Marschark et al. (2011) claim that teachers *"need to guide D/HH children's visual attention towards information targets, explaining their importance if necessary, in order to provide them with full access to instruction"* (p. 25). This recommendation is in line with the institutional support, meaning that schools provide equipment and adaptations of the spaces. The noisy environment represents a challenge. Dogamala-Zyśk (2013) suggests adapting the schoolroom by softening floors with carpets and walls with soft coverings. Keeping HHs close to the speaker proves useful as well.

The third recommendation goes to educational organizations, policymakers, teachers, and society in general. Inclusion demands to adjust policies, spaces, teaching approaches, and assessment. For example, examining boards should offer a face to face interaction for the listening section, and it makes up part of the overall score as the standardized international TOEFL exam does. This is a lesson to be learned by other communities of practice in the EFL profession. For teaching and testing, the participants considered the selection of materials necessary. For example, the use of audio tracks alone has proved inadequate (Appendix C). Materials should provide high contextualization through images, figures, and background information to facilitate understanding, remembering, and recalling (Castillo, 2008).

Similarly, classroom adjustments in terms of visibility of the speakers, places, and situations provide information that allows learners to get the gist of a conversation or message.

For instance, the pedagogical adjustments entail accompanying texts with visual support that also benefits regular students in terms of meaningful and contextualized interactions. Classroom accommodations to reinforce speech comprehension and noise reduction are crucial; both the interference from outside, and from inside the classrooms. For better communication, instructors should stand in front of the class, in a visible position close to the HHs, and avoid moving around the classroom during the explanations. The position of the instructor and classmates needs to be within a distance that allows lip reading. These recommendations coincide with Dogamała-Zyśk (2013) and Dogamała-Zyśk and Kontra (2016), who identified effective techniques to teach the deaf or HHs. These authors also recognized that shouting does not help HHs at all; articulating, pausing between sentences, repeating, rephrasing, and writing key concepts do.

For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2013 declares that discrimination undermines efforts by people with disabilities to receive an education. The ADA (2020, p. 3) lists some of the auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication with individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing or who are blind/have low vision, to wit:

> Qualified interpreters on-site or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services; note-takers; real-time computer-aided transcription services; written materials; exchange of written notes; telephone handset amplifiers; assistive listening devices; assistive listening systems; telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; open and closed captioning, including real-time captioning; voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices; videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making aurally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Breaking down barriers and misconceptions about disabilities enables societies to benefit from the skills, talents, and contributions of HHs and leads to fuller, more empathetic, solidary, and productive lives for all. The M.E.N (2016) acknowledges that basic learning rights should offer an umbrella of protection to guarantee equity and thus developed a guide to comply with. After the expedition of the Government Decree 1421 of 2017, the Ministry of Education issued a guide for attending students with disabilities (M.E.N. 2017). However, the narratives of the three participants and the work conducted by one of the authors at Mediglobal coincide that the promise of equal education is far from implementation, and hard-of-hearing remains an invisible disability.

The recommendations identified in this inquiry derived from several disciplines. Avila (2011) proposed Blended Learning to deal with the visual and written necessities of the deaf. Szymanski, Lutz, Shahan, and Gala (2013, p. 4) reported "Inadequate understanding by educators of what it takes to have a fully accessible, linguistically rich environment," while

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Mapepa and Magano (2018, p. 5) claimed that support to schools in organizing, training and provision of adapted teaching materials is important:

> This study recommends that adapted books and materials be available to facilitate learning across all subjects. These books and materials would encourage visualization… This study recommends that there is a need for schools to have non-teaching professionals within the school setting to support [the] social, emotional, career, spiritual and physical needs of learners.

Participants also felt they had to advocate as regards their educational rights and access to opportunities by demanding respect and inclusion. They recalled what helped them learn, and they would like to see enhanced educational practices in integrated classrooms. Exploring the perspectives and retrospectives of three individuals helped us identify critical aspects of teaching that are useful not only for HHs but for regular students.

According to the pieces of evidence gathered, the promises of the Ministry of Education of Colombia have fallen short. The M.E.N. (2007) spoke of moving from integration to inclusion by providing information and training that encompass not only intangible support but also the access to the equipment, resources, and personnel that are valuable in supporting schools. Institutions, policymakers, teachers, and all of society need to understand that inclusion does not mean excepting but adapting. Actual equity is achieved by adapting spaces, materials, teaching, and assessment. The reduction of noise, the provision of high contextualization, and visual support facilitate learning. Along those lines, Ochoa, Angulo, & Aparicio (2017) called for an inclusive educational model in Colombia by supporting the design of a curriculum for pupils with linguistic and affective needs.

This inquiry heard authorized voices that struggled with adaptation, exclusion, and disrespect, because of their disability. The episodes in the narratives suggest the need to destigmatize hearing impairment by promoting knowledge about it as well as emphasizing the importance of a pedagogy that provides emotional support and care to enable successes in an integrated classroom. This work constitutes an approximation to the perspectives and retrospectives of a group of HHs. This constitutes a study of relevance to contextualize and make visible a situation that can no longer be ignored.

42 Readers interested in a full discussion of the case study should refer to the publication by Florez-Martelo (2019) whose findings are summarized here. (1) HH individuals felt capable of mastering another language in integrated classrooms, (2) cognitive, affective, and social support contributed to the HH's school success, and (3) Educational institutions should provide training and resources to support the HH.

Since this paper centered on the HHs' perspectives, its scope did not comprehend the discourse of the educational administrators who execute the policies. The readership interested in such analysis can refer to Gónzalez-Portillo and Jaraiz-Arroyo (2020) who

compared the voices of politicians and technicians on inclusion. On the other hand, readers may refer to Avila (2011), who discusses web resources for promoting a collaborative atmosphere in a flexible learning environment, while Tilano-Vega et al. (2014) review human tools, software, televised tools, cochlear implants, and recognition systems.

Conclusions

This case study discussed and analyzed three individual cases and characterized the actors and the recollection of their L2 events, as well as a discussion of how they would like to see L2 taught in schools. The analysis of the participants' narratives shed light on the understanding of how HHs made sense of their L2 learning in regular classrooms, which was the objective of this study. The recommendations the participants made and the corresponding literature helped achieve the specific objective of applying the new knowledge to current practices. Accordingly, the evidence indicated that the three proactive HHs perceive L2 learning as a process in which they develop strategies to cope with the multiple misconceptions of their real needs. The main standpoints of this study are:

- First, the misconceptions and prejudices isolate the HHs more than the deafness itself. These come from the lack of knowledge and understanding of the condition that triggers misinterpretation of the real needs of the students that experience hearing loss. Listening to them is key to understanding their individualities, expectations, and necessities.

- Second, HHs require community support. HHs try to interact in the hearing world, however, the communities need to adapt to the hearing loss as well. This adaptation cannot rely on hearing devices but in facilitating communication through the multiple strategies available for this means.

- Third, an exemption is an exclusion. Inclusive practices need to point out to adaptation instead of an exemption, especially when this exoneration is based on misconceptions regarding HHs' capacities resulting counterproductive. Practices and policies must no longer turn around this. Finally, point out that inclusion is a matter of listening more instead of just hearing.

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Appendix A. Clinton's autobiographical writing sample.

mediglobal|ips

SESION No 1

Cuéntame sobre ti!

A continuación puedes contarnos sobre ti , puedes compartir lo que tu desees, contar experiencias o escribir una breve autobiografía.

Mi nombre es _____ , tengo 20 años y me diagnosticaron de hipoacusia cuando tenía aproximadamente de 3 a 4 años, en ese momento no entendía nada pero cuando tuve mis primeros audífonos, aprendí a hablar pero de alguna forma no hablaba bien ya que mis compañeros del colegio me miraban extraño, con el tiempo me acostumbre hasta que tuve mis primeros amigos y me aceptaban como soy.

Estudié hasta cuarto de primaria en un colegio pequeño (caso), desde quinto grado me cambié a otro colegio y fue un gran reto para mi ya que era en otro ambiente, lugar más grande y mayor concentración de ruido, muchos me preguntaban qué es lo que tengo en los oídos y que parecía extranjero pero yo les expliqué y me entendieron y de esa forma empecé a tener nuevos amigos. En esa misma época todavía seguía con las terapias de lenguaje hasta que terminé, después de eso empecé a hacer cursos de inglés para aprender ya que es el idioma universal.

Me gradué de bachiller y al mismo tiempo como técnico del SENA me fui a los Estados unidos a perfeccionar el idioma por 6 meses y volví a Colombia para empezar mi carrera universitaria en la universidad Tadeo, actualmente estudio Diseño Industrial y voy en el 3er semestre.

Sé que se me dificulta comunicarme o entender a veces pero eso no es imposible ya que yo puedo hacer muchas cosas, por ejemplo, en una época fui bailarín de salsa cuando estaba en el colegio, aprendí a tener más ritmo, también puedo defenderme con el idioma inglés gracias a mi esfuerzo.

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Appendix B. Clinton's autobiographical writing sample.

mediglobal lips

SESIÓN No 1

Cuéntame sobre ti!

A continuación puedes contarnos sobre ti, puedes compartir lo que tu desees, contar experiencias o escribir una breve autobiografía.

Mi nombre es _____ y tengo 26 años, tengo hipoacusia profunda en ambos oídos y cuento con un implante coclear en el oído derecho, el cual me fue implantado cuando tenía 7 años.

Mis padres se dieron cuenta de mi sordera cuando tenía 1 año y medio de edad, por lo cual con ayuda de fundaciones como la cinda y médicos como el Dr. Juan Manuel García me colocaron audífonos en ambos oídos, del cual dependía más por el lado izquierdo, todo que tenía hipoacusia severa. Adicionalmente a los 7 años de edad comencé a tener terapias de lenguaje con la fonoaudióloga (comienza ( ) Acevedo para poder dominar la lengua nativa, Español. Sin embargo mi audición era una montaña rusa, pues se me bajaba o subía de manera frecuente por lo que se requería cambiar de audífonos.

Dado lo anterior, los médicos me recomiendan implantarme c) implante coclear en el oído derecho, que hoy en día dando plenamente con buena calidad de audición.

Estudié en un colegio de cuentos, en el Gimnasio Moderno en donde los maestros y compañeros tomaron conocimiento de mi situación auditiva, lo que hizo más sencilla mi proceso educativa la me gradué de Ingeniero Mecánico en la Universidad de los Andes, en donde se encontré dificultades debido a las clases grandes, razón por la cual tuve que depender plenamente de monitorías para poder mantener activamente el ritmo académico.

Después de mi grado fui a vivir un año en Nueva Zelanda, para poder reforzar el inglés, en donde trabajé como chef. Al principio fue todo un desafío manejar el inglés, especialmente en la pronunciación, pero con la práctica, pude dominarla poco a poco.

Appendix C. Excerpts from group interview [unedited]

Entrevistador: Bueno chicos ahora voy a hacerles una pregunta sobre el área de inglés.
Volvemos al inglés, ¿sí?¿Les parece?
Clinton: yes, back to English
Interviewer: I would like you to narrate a negative experience that you had in an English class? Did you understand the question yeah? the most negative like…
Clinton: well… a very bad negative experience that I had was when the teacher decided, well two negative experiences. The number one, when the teacher decided to make a walk b.. among the people when I have to keep a conversation with a person that person speaks English so slow and not vocalizing the mouth, I can't get what the person is talking about. And the second one is the track when the teacher puts a [sound] track. I have to say the teacher that I am not going to understand anything, I prefer that if we go to other room, I can connect my special devices to the computer and in this way I can understand better.
Interviewer: And the teacher did?
Clinton: Hmm sometimes, not always because, the teacher prefers puts is closer.
Clinton: well, when I think when teacher, in that moment, the teacher was.. talk, talk, talk all the time, and all my classmates understand,
Teacher become furious because they did not understand, and he continues talk, talk, and I didn't understand anything, and I wanted go out but I can't because the teacher came to the door.so, it was scared for me but in general.
Clinton: When I see a track transcription. I can understand 100% of the conversation, because I am reading but I had like a homework like a practice listening lot of tracks and I can do improve my skills to listen the tracks, anyway, it still will be difficult.
Interviewer: Yes, the difficulties are always there no? Ok… I would like to ask you also, well, you finished the university and you are?
Edison: I´m in third semester
Interviewer: so English is mandatory, in both? You have to attend English classes?
Edison: Yes, and English is mandatory, in both.
Interviewer: ¿Como se siente con respecto a la excepción de las pruebas de inglés en los exámenes nacionales para personas en condición de discapacidad?
Edison: Me parece que es una discriminación pues ellos no saben de qué es capaz la persona, que puede hacer, o sea hablar, escuchar, todo, así que tenemos el derecho de presentar todo, todo lo que está ahí.
Ludwig: Deberían tratarte en iguales condiciones al resto de los demás que presentan la prueba, Además deberían garantizar que estés en el ambiente adecuado para presentarla. Debes seguir insistiendo en que te permitan presentar la prueba sin limitaciones, ni impedirte competir a un mismo nivel con personas que no tengan ningún tipo de discapacidad.

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Appendix D. Signed consent.

Bogotá, 25 de Septiembre de 2018

Apreciados participantes:

A continuación se encuentra una breve descripción de la investigación a realizar, por favor lea el documento completamente y si tiene alguna pregunta no dude en manifestarla.

El objetivo de la Investigación titulada **"I cannot hear but you do not listen! Unveiling Hard of Hearings Experiences and Perspectives Toward ELL"** con su traducción en español No oigo pero tú no escuchas! Develando las experiencias y perspectivas de hipoacusicos sobre el aprendizaje de inglés.

Es el de mostrar las perspectiva y experiencias que tenemos como hipoacusicos a la hora de aprender una lengua extranjera como el inglés, como una forma de relatar a la comunidad académica cuáles son nuestras necesidades reales en este contexto, las dificultades a las que nos enfrentamos, como nos sentimos, para que otros puedan entender un poco estas realidades.

Con este trabajo buscamos contribuir para la construcción de una sociedad más inclusiva y empática, una sociedad con más entendimiento de nuestra condición, por esta razón, para mí es un honor invitarlos a participar en este proceso que contara con 3 sesiones que serán grabadas en las cuales tendremos la oportunidad de compartir nuestras experiencias de manera oral y escrita.

Estas sesiones se llevaran a cabo en las oficinas en **MEDIGLOBAL I.P.S.** ubicada en la Calle 90 No 19 A-49 torre Bambú en la ciudad de Bogotá. Mediglobal es una Institución que de manera amable ha apoyado esta investigación proporcionándonos el espacio y la colaboración para que este proyecto sea una realidad.

En este sentido, solicito de manera atenta su participación, puntualidad y compromiso durante el proceso para el cual se establecerán unas fechas acordadas entre los participantes.

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Firma del Participante

Appendix E.

Mi familia me ve
como una persona muy resiliente, aunque no percibe que
estén muy convencido de mis capacidades para llevar a cabo
mis sueños.

Mis compañeros de clase me ven
como alguien que los tiene alejados. Extraño, pues ellos perciben
que les exijo, detesto o un sinnúmero de varias cosas. De
rabia haber generado esa percepción.

Appendix F. Autobiography extract

mediglobalips

SESION No 1

Cuéntame sobre ti!

A continuación puedes contarnos sobre ti, puedes compartir lo que tu desees, contar
experiencias o escribir una breve autobiografía.

Mi nombre es _____ _____, tengo 20 años y me
diagnosticaron de hipoacusia cuando tenía aproximada-
mente de 3 a 4 años, en ese momento no entendía nada
pero cuando tuve mis primeros audífonos, aprendí a hablar
pero de alguna forma no hablaba bien ya que mis compañeros
del colegio me miraban extraño, con el tiempo me acostumbre
hasta que tuve mis primeras amigas y me aceptaron como
soy.

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HOW

Inquiring Pre-service Teachers' Narratives on Language Policy and Identity during their Practicum

Investigando narrativas de docentes en formación sobre política lingüística e identidad durante su práctica

Juan Carlos Montoya López[1]
Ayda Vanessa Mosquera Andrade[2]
Oscar Alberto Peláez Henao[3]

Abstract

This narrative inquiry aims to unveil the incorporation of policy agency within the construction of teacher identity of pre-service teachers in their academic practicums. Drawing on a critical-sociocultural approach to narrative inquiry, language policy, and teacher identity, the narratives of five students of an English teaching program in Medellín, Colombia, were examined. Their reflections

[1]   Juan Carlos Montoya holds a Master's in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning at Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. He is a researcher in foreign language policies and member of the research group GIAE. He works as a language teacher and teacher educator at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó and Universidad de Antioquia.
       juan.montoyazc@udea.edu.co
       ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2159-164X.

[2]   Aida Vanessa Mosquera is an advance student at the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó in Medellin. Currently, she is a founder member of the Student Research Group on Foreign Language Police from the same university. She works as English Teachers for kinder garden students and adults.
       ayda.mosqueraan@amigo.edu.co
       ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5341-7166

[3]   Oscar Peláez is a teacher educator and researcher in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, Medellín. He is a member of the Evaluation and Action Research Group in Foreign Languages (GIAE), Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. He researches and publishes in the area of Foreign Language Policy.
       oscar.pelaezhe@amigo.edu.co
       ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3202-036X

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Juan Carlos Montoya López, Ayda Vanessa Mosquera Andrade
and Oscar Alberto Peláez Henao

and decision making on foreign language policies regulating their pedagogical practices at various schools show their social and critical awareness. Teaching represents a high moral load for them as they embrace a humanistic perspective. However, their narratives also pose challenges to language teaching programs in helping pre-service teachers to build micropolitical agency supported on solid theoretical knowledge to participate in policymaking. On the one hand, their narrations of the policy appropriation process they undertook show their frustration and disappointment in trying to participate when policy structures and other policy arbiters were close to them. On the other hand, when policy structures and arbiters openly allowed their policy participation, their actions and reflections focused on methodological concerns but rarely addressed social or critical awareness regarding curriculum design and development. Therefore, supporting pre-service teachers in strengthening their identities with solid theoretical constructs should be a priority because they will build micropolitical agency to overcome political tensions and negotiate their policy participation.

Keywords: agency, language policy, narrative inquiry, pedagogical practicum, policy appropriation, pre-service teacher, teacher identity

Resumen

Esta investigación narrativa tiene como objetivo develar la incorporación de la agencia política dentro de la construcción de identidad docente de los docentes en formación en sus prácticas académicas. Partiendo de un enfoque crítico-sociocultural de investigación narrativa, política lingüística e identidad del maestro, se analizaron las narraciones de cinco estudiantes de una licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés en Medellín. Sus reflexiones y decisiones sobre las políticas de lenguas extranjeras que regulan sus prácticas pedagógicas en varias escuelas muestran su conciencia social y crítica. La enseñanza representa una gran carga moral para ellos, pues adoptan una perspectiva humanista.Sin embargo, sus narrativas también plantean desafíos a los programas de enseñanza de idiomas al ayudar a los docentes en formación a construir una agencia micropolítica apoyada en conocimientos teóricos sólidos para participar en la creación de políticas. Por un lado, sus narraciones sobre el proceso de apropiación de políticas muestran su frustración y desilusión al intentar participar cuando las estructuras de políticas y otros árbitros de políticas se les cerraban. Por otro lado, cuando las estructuras políticas y los árbitros permitian abiertamente su participación política, sus acciones y reflexiones se centran en preocupaciones metodológicas, pero rara vez abordan la conciencia social o crítica con respecto al diseño y desarrollo del currículo. Por lo tanto, apoyar a los docentes en formación en el fortalecimiento de sus identidades con construcciones teóricas sólidas debería ser una prioridad porque construirán una agencia micropolítica para superar las tensiones políticas y negociar su participación política.

Palabras clave: agencia, política lingüística, investigación narrativa, práctica pedagógica, docente en formación, apropiación de políticas, identidad docente

Introduction

To respond to global demands, Colombia has implemented educational reforms in agreement with international organizations. In 2018, the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) accepted the Country as its 37th member. However, the OECD Better Life Index presents Colombian education ranking under the average. Only 54% of adults have completed upper secondary education when the OECD average is 78%. Students scored 410 in literacy, mathematics, and sciences when other OECD students score 486. This picture of the nation's education achievements disappoints despite two decades of reforms.

Colombia's education reforms have emphasized foreign language policies. Several programs and actions have been implemented to strengthen English teaching and learning for a more competitive country able to join the global market (Peláez & Usma, 2017). From the National Plan of Bilingualism 2004-2019 to Bilingual Colombia 2014-2018, the government has adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, issued The Basic English Standards, the Basic Learning Rights, the Suggested English Language Curriculum Structure, a series of audiovisual material, and the Law of Bilingualism 1651 of 2013, and imported foreign teachers of English.

Besides the school system, foreign language teaching programs have been reformed. The reform followed the report: *Tras la Excelencia Docente* (In Pursuit of Teacher Excellence) issued by the *Compartir* foundation in 2014, highlighting the flaws in teachers' profile, education, and job conditions. The report denounces the low performance of student-teachers on the national tests PruebasSaber 11 and Pro (pp. 24, 27). It advocates for an emphasis on practice in teacher education (p. 6). It also acknowledges the difficult job conditions and low prestige and appreciation affecting school teachers. The report's logic goes from improving teacher education quality to dwindling social inequality and raising Colombian education quality to international standards (p. 7).

In response, the government proposed mandatory high-quality accreditation for teacher education programs in Article 222 of Law 1753 of 2015, National Plan 2014-2018: *Todos por un nuevo País*. In 2015, the government issued Decree 2450 to regulate the granting of the accreditation and, in 2017, issued Resolution 18583. The reform aimed to improve teacher education quality by normalizing program names, reinforcing classroom research, demanding higher language proficiency certifications, and allocating 2400 hours for practicum experience. In 2018, the newly-elected government repealed Article 222, but teaching programs had already started their reform and were in the process of accreditation.

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This is the case of a foreign language teaching program in Medellín committed to educating integral human beings with general, professional, language, and research competences. Its mission comprehends the preparation of teachers of English capable of contextualizing English language teaching practice and pedagogical knowledge according to the national education and language policies. For these reasons, student-teachers learn language education

policies and educational reform to foster critical reflection and conceptualization of social problems to propose solutions.

Considering the teacher education landscape, this study examines the pedagogical practices five pre-service teachers have enacted as a result of their reflections upon national and institutional language policies encountered during their practicum. This inquiry also questions what reflection processes they undergo; how pre-service teachers position themselves as policy actors; and how their narrations map the emergence of agency in the constructions of their teacher identity. To respond to this inquiry, the theoretical framework, the research design, and the data collection and analysis chosen aimed at understanding pre-service teachers' inner- and micro-level worlds.

Theoretical Framework

Despite the University spaces for instruction and reflection on foreign language policy and educational reform, pre-service teachers struggle with the institutional realities that greatly differ from idyllic conditions national policies depict (Durán, Lastra, & Morales, 2017; Pinzón & Guerrero, 2018). Poverty, violence, low academic skills, demotivation, lack of resources, and overcrowded classrooms (Correa & González, 2016; Miranda & Giraldo, 2019) challenge and discourage them (Durán et al., 2017). Additionally, schools have the autonomy to produce their policies that student-teachers need to follow. Under such practicum conditions, prolific foreign language policy production, and teaching program reform, student-teachers construct their teacher identities and test their self-understanding while navigating and negotiating school policy structures (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Guerrero & Meadows, 2015; Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018).

Such interplay between institutional conditions, foreign language and education policy, and pre-service teachers' practicum experience have raised concerns among teacher educators. Teacher educators as Suárez and Basto (2017), for instance, have followed the evolution of teacher students' beliefs during their practicum. Others have studied the opportunities for teachers in training to reflect upon beliefs and pedagogical experiences within Colombian demands in English teaching (Durán et al., 2017; Morales, 2016; Pinzón & Guerrero, 2018; Quintero, 2016). In the line of reflection, Castañeda-Peña, Rodríguez-Uribe, Salazar-Sierra, and Chala-Bejarano (2016) have focused on the role of the practicum advisor in the construction of the practicum student's self. Likewise, Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) use narratives to raise awarness of the ways pre-service teachers experience their practicums accompanied by their mentor teachers. Castañeda-Trujillo and Aguirre-Hernández (2018) also nurish this tradition of inquiring and systematizing pre-service teachers' experiences during the practicum and urges for their voices to be heard in teaching programs reform (p. 169).

Focusing on education reforms and national policies as well as contributing to analyses of pre-service teachers' reflection opportunities and growth, Granados-Beltrán (2018) and Abad and Pineda (2017) argue for a pertinent inclusion of research training in language teaching programs. Whereas Granados-Beltrán (2018) advocates for critical research, Abad and Pineda (2017) especially argue for training in research for language teachers. Granados-Beltrán (2018) argues for educating pre-service teachers in critical research instead of the training in the dominating action reseach paradigm. He emphasizes a critical research role in responding to a growing instrumentalization of language education and research, the post-conflict national situation, and Colombia education policies. Abad and Pineda (2017) contend that training in education research must include language teaching and language classroom inquiry. Otherwise, they warn, the last governmental reform's emphasis on classroom research would be a contradiction. In brief, researchers have inquired about students' belief dynamics, students' narratives, identity, pedagogical experiences, mentorship, and teacher research. However, none of them has directly studied pre-service teachers' reflection upon national and institutional language education policies encountered during their practicum and the construction of their teacher identities as policy agents.

To understand the relationship between the reflections pre-service teachers made upon language policy and their pedagogical practices, the study drew on a critical-sociocultural approach to narrative inquiry, language policy, and teacher identity (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). Reading narratives from a critical-sociocultural approach permits us to see the interplay between language policy and teacher identity (Lasky, 2005). This approach implies inquiring about the suitability of teaching English within pre-service teachers' morals, beliefs, and values (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Lasky, 2005).

To investigate the appropriateness of language education within pre-service teachers' principles, researchers must recognize practicum students' investment in setting the conditions to teach (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Peirce, 1995) and their participation in particular historical, social, and cultural contexts (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Because their sociocultural context frames their narratives, they make sense of reality through their stories (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) in which they express their experiences as they lived them (Alsup, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018).

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Narratives give meaning to experiences of a place and time (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018) because the order of the narration depends on the narrator's subjectivity (Kelchtermans, 2018). Therefore, pre-service teachers make sense of professional their lives through their narratives, enabling their building a self-understanding of themselves (Gómez & Guerrero, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018). The practices they narrate depict what really matters to them as these constitute their self-understanding (Gómez & Guerrero, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018).

Hence, inquiring pre-service teachers' narratives opens the doors to understanding their inner mental worlds (Barkhuizen et al., 2014).

Student-teachers' mental worlds dwell in times of contemporary policy change (Day, 2002). In such times, language policies have become a key strategy to meet international standards of competitiveness and have stood in the center of discussions in language education (Correa & Usma, 2013; Miranda & Giraldo, 2019; Roldan & Peláez, 2017). Within this policy landscape, reading pre-service teachers' narratives with critical-sociocultural lenses in order to understand their takes on language policy demands the examination of their policy participation. The examination should inform about their awareness of the possibilities to participate in policymaking, their creativity to interpret the policy in local practice, their comprehension of the authorized and unauthorized forms of policy, and their willingness to participate in the policymaking (Levinson et al., 2009). Examining their participation could explain how teachers negotiate language school policies in their everyday work (Menken & García, 2010), a process Levinson et al. (2009) call policy appropriation.

The willingness to make policy refers to policy agency (Levinson et al., 2009; Ricento, 2006). On the one hand, agency permits investigating how pre-service teachers reinterpret the policy to make new policies (Levinson et al., 2009). On the other hand, policy agency allows seeing the roles they play in the policy process (Ricento, 2006). Teachers hold agency to make choices independently from the official discourse despite institutional constraints (Alsup, 2018). Decision making comprehends the micropolitical activity teachers embrace to create or protect the conditions they consider necessary to meet their teaching motives by exercising power over the available resources (Canrinus, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2018).

At the micropolitical level, teachers' exercise of power and capacity to act define their identity (Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; Canrinus, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2018). At the micro-level, social interactions they engage to participate in policymaking define their identities as the ever constructing site for discourses and ideologies struggle (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Darvin & Norton, 2015). Within the ideological struggle, teachers self-understand and build their beliefs and principles on education and teaching practices (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Guerrero & Meadows, 2015). Enactment of their beliefs and principles constitutes their agency to take action for the sake of their ideals when they are challenged by the structures (Kelchtermans, 2018).

Although pre-service teachers' agency allows them to navigate and challenge structures, the power they wield in policymaking depends on their position in the structure (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). Structures limit their agency and, thus, their identity because their agency mediates between their self-understanding and the surrounding environmental conditions (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). Given the relation structure-agency and policy-identity, the pre-service teachers' reflections on policy and the resulting teaching acts were examined.

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Methodology

This study started as a research exercise in the student research group on Language Policies in an English language teaching program of a private Catholic university in Medellín, Colombia. The exercise consisted of making sense of concepts in Language Policy within the practicum experience. The practicum is divided into four four-month courses and 128-hour school interventions. The first semester emphasizes participant observation to help student-teachers to understand school contexts. The second one constitutes the first formal opportunity they have to plan, teach, and assess their classes. The third one explicitly connects practicum experiences to language teaching theory. Finally, the fourth semester proposes a social project to fulfill the social responsibility pre-service teachers have and explore other roles within education communities. The whole practicum aims to support pre-service teachers in becoming competent professionals and in constructing their teacher identity. Additionally, the university intends for its practicum students to bring social transformation to their communities of practice.

Research Method

This research study resembles a narrative inquiry of the type of narrative interview (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Drawing on narrative inquiry as a paradigm in education qualitative research in which data come from stories (Barkhuizen et al., 2014), this study asked pre-service teachers to tell their stories of the practicum concerning the management and crafting of language policies. For participants to share their stories, a narrative interview design was adopted to consider the oral recount of their life stories and access participants' perspectives (Barkhuizen et al., 2014).

Data Collection

The data collection techniques included in-person interviews (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) of five pre-service teachers. The interviews were semi-structured. A set of pre-set questions was prepared to focus stories on language policies (Appendix A). Nonetheless, the interviewers loosely follow the questions for the interviewees to comfortably tell their stories from their perspectives (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Pre-service teachers' journals were also collected, but written at the time of the practicum, not during the study. The material and syllabus designed by one of them were also collected. Access to data was granted by participants after reading and signing the informed consent form used for the study.

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Participants

Participants were chosen and invited under the condition of being enrolled or having finished their practicum and knowing Language Policy theory. Two of them were members

of the student research group. One was in the last practicum and has already attended the language policy course. The other was having his first experience teaching and learning Language Policy in the research group. The other three participants were classmates of the research group members. One of them was in the last practicum. The other two had finished their practicums. Finally, all three had attended the Language Policy course.

Table 1. *Participants*

Code Name	Semester Enrollment	Language Policy Course completion	Number of practicum courses	Language Policy research group membership
ST1	Fifth	No	One out of four	Member
ST2	Tenth	Yes	Four out of four	No member
ST3	Tenth	Yes	Four out of four	No member
ST4	Ninth	Yes	Three out of four	No member
ST5	Eighth	Yes	Three out of four	Member

Most participants were advanced students and, therefore, shared common instructional experience. Only one participant was enrolled in the early semesters of the teaching program. Although he had experience in teaching, he had not completed instruction in teaching methods or didactics. This case is not uncommon as the university offers a flexible coursework program for students to register the courses that better suit their schedules. Nevertheless, he had experience in language teaching and education research because of his association with the student research group (ST1). Two of them were advanced students about to graduate (ST2 and ST3). The other two were expected to graduate the year after (ST4 and ST5). At this point in their undergraduate programs, these four students have completed all the teaching method courses. They also have experience in educational research as all of them have carried out classroom research and completed the research reports required for graduation.

58　　*Data Analysis*

Data analysis in narrative inquiry draws on qualitative analysis methods (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Methods respond to an emergent and interpretative research design in which iteration with data occurred in various rounds of analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Data analysis resembles an Analysis of Narratives because it produced findings in categories (p. 74). Categories emerged by following grounded theory and content analysis as suggested in narrative inquiry (p. 74). Concerning grounded theory, all five interviews were recorded

and transcribed to be coded (Charmaz, 2006). An initial line-by-line coding was carried out, interview by interview. Then, the total resulting codes were grouped, organized, and summarized throughout all the interviews. Meanwhile, their journals and one set of lesson plans were read and compared to find intertextual connections with their narratives.

Along with the coding and intertextual comparison, and as part of member checking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017), memos were written when patterns started to emerge in the analysis. The last categories were obtained by focus coding through content data analysis (Schreier, 2012). Findings were organized in two categories depicting the appropriation process pre-service teachers took. The group followed Charmanz's (2006) advice of not forcing coding into prescribed categories. The concept of identity and teaching methods appeared in some findings because participants used this very jargon.

It is important to notice that the study and data analysis took place within a student research group which demands a pedagogical approach to research. Although two teacher educators with experience in previous research studies lead this study, the research students play a protagonistic role. First, the objective of this and other student research groups in the Language Teaching Program aims to provide pre-service teachers with research training. Accordingly, each of the research states constituted a pedagogical and didactic task to help research students engage in research.

Second, every group member had a stake in this study. Both leading researchers have experience as practicum advisors and, consequently, have observed recurrent phenomena in the practicum courses and students. Nonetheless, research students knew the participants and were familiar with the dynamics of the practicum even if they themselves have not registered it yet. This made research students eager to voice participants' experiences louder during their practicum. Therefore, the data analysis was very carefully revised as it was part of the research students' training as well as frequently discussed to hear all the group members' insights the data obtained.

Besides the internal discussion shared during the data analysis, it is worth mentioning that preliminary and final findings were presented at the regional research incubators encounter (RedCOLSI) in May 2019, ASOCOPI 54th National Congress, in October 2019, and II National Research Incubators Encounter at the Catholic University Luis Amigó in November 2019. In each of these events, researchers took notes of the audience's comments before the writing of this report. The findings are presented in the following session.

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Findings

Two findings emerged by answering what pedagogical practices stem from pre-service teachers' reflections on language policy. The first finding unveiled the factors and topics

motivating their reflections. The second finding depicts teaching practices driven by their reflections but limited by the policy structures. These findings reveal the intricate relationship between their identity and policy structures encountered in schools. Consequently, the nature of their reflections is presented first, and their teaching practices follow.

Pre-service Teachers' Reflections

Three issues lead pre-service teachers' reflections. They focus on their feelings during their practicum, their students' and school characteristics, and their identity. They reflect upon their feelings towards the practicum challenges. Among those challenges, they pay particular attention to the cognitive capacities and socioeconomic background of their students as well as the school context limiting their methodological choices. The methodology they choose depends on their identity in terms of the teacher they are or the teacher they want to be. All in all, feelings, school and students, and themselves lead their reflections.

Pre-Service Teachers' Feeling about Their Practicum Experience

In their reflections, participants express disappointment but also satisfaction. They expose their disappointment at the decontextualization of official policies and their concerns implementing them. Their disappointment focuses on the inadequacy of the Basic Learning Rights and Suggested English Language Curriculum Structure booklets regarding the sociocultural reality surrounding schools and students' cognitive and language capacities. In their perspective, several issues are overlooked. In some cases, the booklets are never used. The booklets do not even match the school English language syllabus. In other cases, when they try to use them, the language objectives and contents are simply too advanced for students. One pre-service teacher expresses the irrelevance of these booklets:

> I can't keep up with the DBA [Basic Learning Rights], because for me the DBA is very advanced for the students I have, so I have undisciplined students. They lazy with English, so I must play to get them to like English. (ST1)

The policy decontextualization they criticize also relates to their possibility to intervene. In various cases, they have felt they do not have enough freedom to design materials and plan classes. They need to comply with the classroom teacher or coordinator instead. One student-teacher explains this:

> Because the objectives of the school are these, and I work here, and I need to respond to the objectives of the school, I also have to do it and get into the dynamics and techniques of the school. (ST4)

Despite their disappointment, student-teachers also share satisfaction toward their students' success and appreciation. They feel joyful, content, and tender when learning that

students use some new vocabulary, mix words in Spanish and English to participate in class or report frequent use of English at home. They also reflect on the gratification they feel when parents or students acknowledge their efforts:

> One as a teacher feels good because you feel that the work you are doing with them is really worth it. What I want with them is really being achieved. It is what we want. [interviewer: is motivation being achieved?]. Yes, and familiarization and contextualization are being achieved. (ST5)

This pre-service teacher asserts that her school objectives regarding English instruction aim indeed at motivating students to learn English. So, her personal objective aligns with the school's explicit objective of teaching English. Consequently, feelings of disappointment or satisfaction tightly connect to how relevant or possible pre-service teachers appreciate the policy and how much they can do in this regard.

Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections upon Schools and Students' Characteristics

They reflect upon the sociocultural context of their students and schools. Schools' sociocultural conditions can be as strict as dictating the step by step of the class or so loose as lacking any written document describing the English syllabus. The more structured the school is the more support and guidelines pre-service teachers receive and the more pressure to comply, they feel. In these schools, pre-service teachers identify the adaptation of language standards, the implementation of standardized tests, and even the adoption of the foreign language teaching approaches in vogue like the Singapore math method. One of the participants recounts:

> Well, they do take into account the guidelines of the Ministry of National Education, the DBA as each one from their strong area, and obviously the policies here of the school, which are still outside what the MEN requests but can change. (ST4)

Although they report having fewer opportunities to propose, they recognize the advantages these schools offer. Schools are more organized, have a vision of language education, classify students by ages better, and offer student-teachers teaching material and training. One participant praises the insertion of language policies in schools as being a productive strategy:

> What is clear is that language policies have tried to make teaching and learning English more fruitful. (ST2)

Student-teachers are pleased as well to be provided with class material, as this pre-service teacher spontaneously expresses:

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> In reality, the materials, the coordinator gives us everything. She classifies and prints them. Well, thank God she does it! (ST5).

Which does not mean they agree with the school policies. On the contrary, pre-service teachers rather act out of fear to avoid potential conflicts or verbal admonitions. The very same student-teacher narrates how removing a prescribed activity from instruction results in upsetting her coordinator:

> The activities are stated in the syllabus, but we cannot remove any of the parts. For example, the Daily Routine. Each of the things in the Daily Routine must be covered because, if I do not do one like it is [stated] on the list, she gets angry. (ST5)

Other schools do not even offer student-teachers a list of topics for the English class. This decision exclusively depends on the pre-service teacher. In these cases, the class program depends on their discretion to use one of the policy booklets, and the classroom teacher or school coordinator agrees with them. This student-teacher shares his experience:

> What happens there is in that school, they do not have, so to speak, curricular guidelines. There they do not exist. [...] A teacher replaced another, but they never created a curricular structure that would serve another teacher, and will settle in the school, so at the moment there is no such thing. (ST1)

Student-teachers reflect upon how appropriately the booklet and their methodological choice meet their students' characteristics. Some characteristics include mixed-age groups, cognitive challenges, demotivation, learning preferences, study habits, and academic expectations. This pre-service teacher shares his observations on students' behavioral issues:

> I analyze that many times the students' problem is not the school environment nor the teacher, because one tries to help them, to tell them, to advise them. I feel that the problem comes from the family. They are loaded with their family problems. some parents do not care about them. (ST1)

In a nutshell, how pre-service teachers understand and face the sociocultural realities of students and schools depends on the school structure, which can be close and tight or open and loose. Nevertheless, their narratives show that they reflect upon ideals to face day to day challenges language policies entail.

Pre-Service Teachers' Understanding of Their Teacher Identities

The concept of identity can be explicitly addressed or indirectly approached as pre-service teachers discuss their reasons to act. Pre-service teachers directly justify their actions by referring to the construction of the concept of identity to keep challenges under control. They define identity on their terms:

Well, overall, more than a comment, it is a reflection process, because at this time I do believe that I am still in the process of [developing] my teaching identity. (ST5)

Pre-service teachers use the concept to self-understand themselves as they face the challenges the practicum poses. Attempting new methodologies or strategies, instructing new populations of students, and disappointing classroom teachers and coordinators can be managed if they are understood as part of building one's teacher identity. For instance, another pre-service teacher uses the concept of identity crisis to explain his frustrations receiving feedback:

For example, there is something called the teacher identity crisis, which sometimes happens when the teacher creates certain material or proposes a certain activity, and then another person tells him that it must be changed. (ST3)

Conceptualizing their identity shields them and helps them to make sense of themselves in their practicum. They understand that as language educators[4], they have built their understanding of language and hold their own pedagogical principles, which may oppose practices observed in schools. They attempt to protect their identity avoiding adopting practices they criticize. This student-teacher's self-understanding projects into his ideal educator.

I try to teach not in the way they taught me but in the way I would like to be taught, so I try to apply as I would have liked to have been taught. (ST3)

Nonetheless, not all participants conceptualize identity in their narratives. They rather approach self-understanding by exposing their beliefs. In this case, pre-service teachers label themselves and judge their take on language policies accordingly. They can consider themselves novice teachers, content teachers, mere practicum students, or behaviorists. As novice teachers, they see themselves as mere policy implementers lacking the experience to be critical. As content teachers[5], they recognize that they are outdated in terms of language policy and rather focus on the immediate issues of their subject area. As practicum students, they can be harsh critics but see themselves tied to others' decisions. As behaviorists, they defend their own philosophy which emerges from their teaching routines, not from the university, as this pre-service teacher shares:

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Then I say: "Yes, that is very useful, but it is another thing during the practicum where you have to start formulating your own belief, which might align with one that, by chance with some philoso-

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4   I use the term language educator to emphasize their positioning as educators rather than instructors. In this part, they show reflections on identity which is not directly concerned with teaching methods, but with their being.

5   I use the term content teachers because some of them taught content: maths, science, ICT and not language. They talk about their subjects (maths, science, ICT, etc.) not about language teaching or language policy.

phy some university professor discussed. Yes! But the teacher has to start creating his own belief or opinion to establish or reaffirm his beliefs about his practice. (ST4)

Nevertheless, university instruction receives high praise as pre-service teachers recognize its role in who they are. In their narratives, they retell episodes of how a university professor provided them with materials for classes; or how another presented the Suggested Curricular Structure for planning lessons; or how the language policy course familiarized them with language policies; or how the practicum advisor helped them to make sense of the Basic Learning Rights. Although they highlight their training as relevant, they reveal that it is with fellow student-teachers outside university courses that they actually discuss the practicum issues. In brief, pre-service teachers regard university knowledge as foreign to school life and their identity as not necessarily dependent on university lessons. In any case, identity and self-understanding also lead their reflections regarding language policies.

To close the first part of the findings, pre-service teachers' reflections on language policy focus on their feelings towards the practicum, their analysis of the school and their students, and their understanding of their own identity. As presented here, the discussion on language policy first has to pass through these three filters. The second finding will reveal teaching practices pre-service teachers undertake based on their reflections.

Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Practices

Their reflections lead to the policy appropriation at two levels by adapting objectives and topics. The first level of language policies constitutes the two national language policy booklets: Basic Learning Rights and Suggested English Language Curriculum Structure. The second level comprehends institutional textbooks, suggested activities, practice tests, and class material. The appropriation of the two booklets takes place in schools in which policy structure is open and loose, where pre-service teachers can propose curriculum, lesson planning, and materials. Student-teachers choose these two booklets because they are discussed at the University in courses such as materials design, teaching methods, language policy, and the practicum. They select the one they know better and consider their feelings towards the practicum, their assessment of students' capacities or weaknesses, and their beliefs about teaching English. Then, they come out with a series of teaching practices confident of doing the best. One of them briefly describes her appropriation process:

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> Then I took the DBA and the suggested curriculum and checked: "Children have to reach this goal, then according to this...." I took what I thought was the most important to them for their context. Trying to keep with what they might like. In that way, I planned the classes. (ST5)

This process coincides with most of the other student-teachers' appropriation. They assert they only used the booklet as a referent for lesson planning or curriculum design while overlooking the methodological proposal. Methodological choices depend only on

their identity i.e. whether they decide to focus on grammar structures, develop a project, read aloud, or use ICT. For these pre-service teachers, the teaching method chosen reflects their views on language and language teaching, their perceptions about their students' needs and context resources, and their their enjoyment and comfort while teaching. This student-teacher relates her planning to her feelings and her ideal class.

> Among what I did in the previous practicum was to take the suggested curriculum to have a plan where the children had greater participation; where the class was not based so much on translating texts, on filling, because the truth is that it seems super boring to me; because the children were not learning much for the most part because they copied everything. So, I tried to get them to build and play a more active role in the classroom. (ST5)

This pre-service teacher exposes her ideal of students' participation in class, ignoring that the National Policy advocates for the same principle. Students' participation in class planning, development, and evaluation appears as characteristics of Project-Based and Problem-Solving approaches proposed in the Suggested English Language Curriculum Structure. The fact that the policy booklets advocate for language education principles championed by pre-service teachers does not guarantee that these principles will be carried out. They believe that following the official policy booklets may easily result in meaningless lessons for students. They need to adapt the materials to guarantee efficient instruction and successful learning. One of them describes his role in making the official material meaningful to students:

> We already have some knowledge in the language; we know that this must be articulated; that each class must be connected with the other. So, it's about getting the topics consistent with one another, so that students can see progress in the language. (ST3)

In contrast, student-teachers report different experiences appropriating policies within close and tight school structures. They make the small adaptations to materials and class routines that they can afford in order to meet their students' needs. Having fun learning, repetition and reinforcement, interaction with technology, and having a feeling of progress constitute some of the needs they try to address. For instance, a pre-service teacher who must follow the Singapore method plans alternative activities to cope with students' fast learning rhythms that the method cannot match. He also takes into account the school standardized tests applied by a foreign editorial company. When the examination periods are close, he aligns his classroom assessment with standardized tests to better train students. As the school demands him to work on innovation, he brings games to the classroom for students to play with using ICT gadgets:

> Let's see. I always try to use games. The games are good for opening a class. Always a few games… eh … how can I say this, so that it doesn't sound weird? Some kind of games, but they have to do with an electronic device, right? They can either use a computer, cell phone, or any device, right? Because this school year is about giving much importance to innovation. (ST4)

In a similar fashion, a student-teacher who must follow, step by step, the daily class routine designed by the coordinator manages to allocate time for topics she considers relevant. Because following the list of topics to be covered in every class is a routine, students memorize it. She quickly reviews the routine and explores new topics she considers important. Finding extra time means a lot to her because she feels the class is always in a rush as she explains:

> In 45 minutes, we have to take half of the time or a little more for the Daily Routine, and the other class time for the activity as such. And if we have time, we do a little evaluation of the children. (ST5)

As this piece of evidence shows, the school policy structure constrains this pre-service teacher so tightly that her appropriation of the school language policy consists of squeezing topics in within the class time she has. Appropriating policies at the school level in a way that looks more like illegal smuggling frustrates this student-teacher, to wit:

> I really feel a little frustrated. A little, how do I say it? I am frustrated and disappointed because I, for example, in my previous practicum with the boys, I with the boys followed the suggested curriculum. (ST5)

This narrative fragment exemplifies the power that policy structures wield over pre-service teachers' pedagogical practices. Their experiences appropriating language policies shed insights into language teacher education worth being discussed in the next section.

Conclusion and Discussion

These five pre-service teachers' narratives on policy appropriation during their practicum pose challenges for teaching programs in strengthening their micropolitical agency. Agency constitutes a mediation means for teachers to navigate and negotiate social interactions within the microstructures in which they may influence policymaking (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005). At this level, pre-service teachers may most effectively fulfill teaching programs' social responsibility of transforming education (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Guerrero & Meadows, 2015) by meaningfully and positively impacting the community (Guerrero & Meadows, 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). Nonetheless, they need to employ micropolitical strategies to negotiate and defend their principles to meet their moral purpose (Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005). Undoubtedly, these five narratives evidence social and critical awareness in the struggle for adequate learning environments. Social and critical consciousness responds to the values their teaching program fosters. However, a need for a more solid micropolitical agency supported on education theory to bring transformation (despite the tensions in policy structures and the power other policy arbiters wield) emerges from their stories.

Their stories pose the need to find ways to help pre-service teachers incorporate solid theoretical constructs into their identity to support their pedagogical practices. These passed through the filter of their reflections demonstrating their practical wisdom in action (Ricento, 2006). From a sociocultural approach, teachers' practical wisdom constitutes a valued and moral way of constructing teachers' knowledge (Ricento, 2006). However, student-teachers' practical wisdom left them exposed to frustration and disappointment regarding the practicality of their knowledge and their possibilities to participate in policymaking.

Policy appropriation as they narrated occurred at two policy levels but did not account for reflections and actions beyond the methodology. Their pedagogical practices focused on pleasing their cooperating teacher, following institutional guidelines, responding to the institutional test culture, or adapting national standards. Such actions resonate with a current teacher education emphasis on learning through practice instead of theorizing sensitive topics in teacher education (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018).

These five student-teachers have the means to reflect upon more purposeful plans. As only one example, the Language Policy course presents them with language ideology, neoliberalism, social inequity, marketization of languages, English for peace, and policy appropriation. Their having actually incorporated the complexity of these discussions in their identity, their narratives would have told stories that reassure their agency and participation in policymaking beyond classroom activities (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). In contrast, reflections on curriculum design and development for social equity and critical awareness merely scratch their narratives. The shallowness demonstrated when addressing non-methodological aspects shows the lack of micropolitical agency to navigate the resources practice communities offer (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018).

Lacking micropolitics becomes obvious in their narratives as negotiation depends on the openness or tightness of school structures. The structures they encounter impact their agency as the literature consistently reports (Alsup, 2018; Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). No matter whether they self-understand themselves as novice teachers, content teachers, or mere practicum students, they all first ask if they are allowed to act. Asking makes total sense as policy arbiters who wield more power would sanction any policy enactment (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). However, for the very same reason, a strong micropolitical agency would have led them to take the risk and time and make the effort to negotiate.

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To overvalue standard, theoretical, technical, and analytical knowledge to neglect pre-service teachers' intuition and feelings is a mistake (Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005). Ignoring teachers' emotions in current education reforms and contemporary education policies means to neglect the human and ethical component of teaching (Gómez & Guerrero,

2018; Kelchtermans, 2018; Lasky, 2005; Quintero & Guerrero, 2013; Usma, 2015). Teaching causes a lot of emotions in these pre-service teachers as they demonstrate the humanistic perspective they adopt. Their dependence on feelings shows the high moral responsibility teaching represents to them.

Nevertheless, allowing pre-service teachers to believe only emotions are needed to overcome the obstacles of the profession incurs two mistakes as well. One, teacher identity also comprehends knowledge and micropolitics (Canrinus, 2011). Lack of strengthening these components jeopardizes their capacity to take risks and propose their terms to the other policy arbiters. Besides, depending only on emotions can lead to pre-service and in-service teachers quitting their jobs in the face of burnout (Canrinus, 2011). Two, policies change rapidly, and student-teachers need to incorporate micropolitical strategies to use all the available resources to navigate new regulations. Otherwise, trusting only intuition and feelings will keep them reacting to changes. In consequence, helping student-teachers to build their identities on solid theoretical constructs capable of nurturing micropolitical agency becomes a critical endeavor to pursue.

Strategies for teaching programs to cope with the challenges of teacher identity construction lies outside the scope of this study. One, this narrative inquiries five pre-service teachers's narratives. Two, their narratives were collected in less than a semester. Nonetheless, this study can shed light on further research. First, teaching programs would need to examine the teacher identity construction of their recently graduated alumni as they now enter to play new roles in the policy structure of schools. Studies of the like should allocate more time and techniques for eliciting their experiences. Second, given that pre-service teachers increasingly experience more emphasis on practice, a longitudinal study on the development of their narratives, identity, and agency could reveal the actual process future language teachers undergo in identity construction and micropolitical agency development. Finally, further research should include the voices of language teacher educators. Their experience plays a key role in understanding the integration of student-teacher emotions and disciplinary knowledge and micropolitical strategies.

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Appendix

Topic	Interview	Journal check list
Knowledge of policies	What national regulations, legislation or programs do you know about as regards teaching English? What do you know about the didactic materials that the (National Ministry of Education) MEN offers for teaching English? What regulations or standards has the school's English department followed during the time you have been there? What criteria does the English syllabus follow? What exams should students take? Who designs the exams? What is the criteria that exam designers follow? How have you prepared the students for exams? What is the school doing to prepare students for the Pruebas Saber tests?	
Beliefs and positions about the policy	What are your reflections about the regulations and standards that the school's English department follows? What challenges have you identified that must be overcome in order to follow the regulations or objectives of the English program? What have you done to address these challenges?	
Teacher actions and policy enactment	How have you managed your students' needs and language policies? How are you using the support materials offered by the educational institution? How did you use government guidelines or materials such as basic English standards, learning rights, the suggested curriculum, or any of the textbooks proposed by the government in a class activity? What did you rely on to design this activity? What objectives did you intend to accomplish with it? What material did you use for its development? How did you use the didactic material? How does one of your activities reflect your objectives for teaching English? Why did you implement this specific activity? How do students respond to English classes, any other language class, and/or national or institutional language policies?	1) An activity done in class 2) Objectives 3) Source of the objectives 4) Grade or group 5) Source of this activity 6) Language policy followed 7) Observations of students' reactions 9) Observation on results

HOW

Motivation and Attitude as the Fuel to Develop English Language Classroom Activities: A Self-Determination Study

Motivación y actitud como el combustible para desarrollar las actividades de clase de inglés: Un estudio de auto-determinación

Yendli Soranny Molina Leal[1]
Paola Lizeth Peña Cerón[2]

Abstract

This research study assesses the levels of attitude and motivation that tenth-grade students manifest during English Language classroom activities. The study follows the Self Determination Theory to analyze these students' levels of attitude and motivation in the classroom activities proposed by an English Language teacher at a public school in Bogotá. Findings demonstrate that there are four different types of activities presented and developed by the participating teacher. The students express their levels of motivation with a high percentage in perceived competence, and their levels of negative attitude with a low percentage in pressure and tension. An emergent result displays teachers' imposition, students' attention, and obtaining rewards or punishments during the classroom activities process.

Keywords: **s**elf-determination theory, motivation, attitude, classroom activities, English language teaching

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[1]   Yendli Soranny Molina Leal holds a BA in Modern Languages from La Salle University, Bogotá, Colombia. She currently studies an MA in Didactic of Languages at the same university. She has worked as an English language teacher at preschool, elementary, and secondary level.
soranny.molina97@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0218-7537

[2]   Paola Lizeth Peña Cerón holds a BA in Modern Languages from La Salle University, Bogotá, Colombia. Currently, she works at an English and French language academy with students from 11 to 60 years old.
paolaceron98@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8917-4351

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Yendli Soranny Molina Leal,
Paola Lizeth Peña Cerón

Resumen

Este estudio evalúa los niveles de actitud y motivación que manifiestan los estudiantes de grado décimo durante las actividades de clase en inglés. El estudio sigue la teoría de Auto-determinación para analizar estos niveles de actitud y motivación de los estudiantes en las actividades de clase propuestas por un profesor de inglés en un colegio público ubicado en Bogotá. Los hallazgos demuestran que hay cuatro tipos diferentes de actividades de clase presentadas y desarrolladas por el profesor participante. Los estudiantes expresan sus niveles de motivación con un porcentaje alto en competencia percibida y los niveles de una actitud negativa con un bajo porcentaje en presión y tensión. Un resultado que surgió muestra la imposición del profesor, la atención de los estudiantes y la obtención de premios o castigos durante el proceso de las actividades de clase.

Palabras clave: teoría de auto-determinación**,** motivación, actitud, actividades de clase, enseñanza de la lengua inglesa

Introduction

Two affective variables take part in classroom activities that English language teachers plan. Those are motivation and attitude. Motivation particularly refers to all those behaviors that a student has, either positive or negative, depending on the exposure to the English language. Attitude mostly refers to the set of portraying behaviors that a student possesses to achieve a goal[3].

According to Arnold (2000, as cited in Mena, 2013), the concept of *affective* involves "the aspects of the emotion, the feeling, the mood or the attitude that determine the behavior [...] a high spectrum of factors [...] which influence in the language learning" (p. 5). In other words, each variable complements the other and together they represent the individual part of students' behavior. In this way, each variable plays an important role in the English Language class by causing a response in learners' learning process.

One of our most difficult tasks, as English Language teachers and the researchers of the present study, in our closest settings (secondary schools during our pedagogical practicum in Bogotá, Colombia), is to raise students' interest and help them understand knowledge that they can acquire with this language outside the classroom. In order to give an account of this situation, we focus our interest on learners' affective variables (attitude and motivation); specifically, on tenth graders and their English language school teachers' planned classroom activities. The reason for this is that these affective variables may significantly influence students' English language learning process, as stated by Gardner and Lambert since 1959. English language teachers who teach in schools may

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[3]   Gardner and MacIntyre (as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004) understand motivation as "the desire to achieve a goal, the effort realized to achieve the mentioned goal, and the satisfaction obtained for achieving the goal" (p. 83).

account for these variables to benefit and facilitate their students' L2 learning process to some extent.

Additionally, while analyzing our classes, we noticed that each English language teacher can have their own didactics, which "includes propositions about a 'being' and 'must be' in the praxis of teaching" (Behares, 2004). Referring to the school we observed, we can say that the school has an emphasis on English, science and technology. The school promotes activities from different entities[4] for encouraging these areas in the students. The learning of these areas goes around the intention of effective communication, group work, and having autonomous learning. The school teachers are sometimes observed and have to make reports about their course advancements to the principal. According to the social context, the students need to be flexible, creative and adaptable depending on a constant change since they can take one of the mentioned activities each year. Besides that, there are relevant aspects that produce these learners' affective variables in their language learning, such as success, emotional state, and debilitated learning. The connection of the teaching process with the affective variables could develop teachers' didactics variability of classroom activities and a mismatch between teachers' and students' objectives.

Research Question and Objectives

We synthesized our research interest in the following question: What affective responses do 10th graders manifest within an English language teacher's classroom activities at a public school in Bogotá?

To give an answer to this question, we first need to characterize the activities planned by the school English's language teacher(s) and the way those activities are presented and developed for the participating students. Then, we have to determine the students' responses as regards motivation and attitude within those classroom activities. Finally, we can assess the levels of motivation and attitude in line with these teachers' classroom activities.

Conceptual Framework

There are three key concepts in our study: affective variables (motivation and attitude), EFL classroom activities, and English language teachers (teaching at the school level).

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[4]   These entities are, for example, technical courses from SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje), classical music classes from Bogota's Philharmonic Orchestra, and physical training from IDRD (Instituto Distrital de Recreación y Deporte, to mention only three).

Affective Variables

There are plenty of authors who mention affective variables in their published papers (Brown, 2000; Guy, Cornik, & Beckford, 2015; Kiray, Gok, & Bozkir, 2015), but not delving much into how these variables partake of L2 learning in context. Most of the authors who have done research studies on this topic are psychologists (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). They propose theories about how English language teachers may live knowledge about the affective dimension in L2 learning and teaching.

Zhu and Zhou (2012) state that *affect* "is the expression of one's inner world and attitude toward a certain thing, situation, or experience" (p. 33). The first affective variable, *attitude,* is positive "if a student is eager to learn a foreign language," and negative if the target language "is difficult and learning it is a waste of time; this negative attitude will inevitably restrain English learning" (p. 34). The second variable, *motivation,* is "a key element affecting students' learning process and it is this internal drive that will encourage students to reach their aims" (p. 34). For Zhu and Zhou, the affective variables emerge as important aspects in English language learning.

Complementarily, García (2013) uses the word 'variables' to refer to the aspects that affect learning a foreign language. She states that motivation is associated with interest, it is "the willingness that fosters the effort with the purpose of reaching certain goals" (p. 11). By considering this, García (2013) raises four types of motivation: intrinsic (personal interest), extrinsic (external incentives), integrative (interaction with the target community), and instrumental (usefulness of the learning). The author advises that English language teachers must consider them when teaching this language. Likewise, she says that with "favorable attitudes towards the language, the motivation will be better" (p. 12).

Henter (2013) states that any learning process depends on affective factors[5], which still contribute to the students' English language performance. Henter (2013) just states that *motivation* "appears as a predictor of the performance in a foreign language" (p. 374); she integrates a study based on Gardner in which she concludes that motivation "has a decisive influence on the result in tests of language" (p. 374). Subsequently, she affirms that attitude depends on the stimulus: The "negative attitude can become an obstacle to language learning" [...] and the "positive attitude can increase students' efficiency in foreign language classes" (p. 374). In general, for Henter (2013), motivation and attitude have an influence on the learner's English proficiency.

García (2013) defines motivation as being distributed among four types: intrinsic and extrinsic, and integrative and instrumental motivation. For this author, attitude is an aspect

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5   Henter (2013) does not specify what the difference between variable and factor can be, although she maintains the principles of changeability and influence of the concept 'variable' when she talks about factors.

that influences students' interest and helps with motivation. Complementarily, Henter (2013) states that motivation predicts students' performance; the attitude can be positive or negative, positive increases English learning, negative can be an obstacle for this. Zhu and Zhou (2012) do not classify motivation; they simply say that it helps to achieve the student's objective, thus it is internal. Attitude can also be negative or positive, negative if the student thinks that English is a waste of time.

Regardless of the variables, according to Fandiño (2008), and Núñez Pardo and Téllez Téllez (2009), the students are likely unaware of the role affective variables play in the process of learning a second language; it means they do not exactly know the relevance of their preferences, styles, motivation, attitude, and anxiety at the moment of learning. To give more support to this idea, Zhu and Zhou (2012) and García (2013) open a possibility to account for affective variables in language learning. They affirm that learning a second language can be developed by emotional involvement; for example, students can create an interest in the language by finding the motive connected to learn it.

EFL Classroom Activities

We define this second construct by what classroom activities can produce in the students. Taking into account that the activities are a fundamental part of class development, we delve into the construct from the look of external factors that make the internal factors (motivation and attitude) emerge.

Samperio (2017) affirms that classroom activities could have positive or negative consequences, which can be mediators to increase students' motivation. The author reflects upon the influence of classroom activities in the learning process and concludes the following:

> Activities used in the classroom are important to learning in many ways. In compulsory classes, these factors might influence the decision of willingly attending class. The importance of knowing the activities that students like to have or do in the classroom will bring about students' enjoyment within the classroom environment, thus leading to attentive participation. (Samperio, 2017, p. 53)

In this sense, Samperio (2017) emphasizes that activities should go according to students' likes; these create the possibility of teacher-student interaction in the classroom (Herazo-Rivera, 2010; Lucero, 2015). González-Humanez & Arias (2009) affirm that activities created based not only on students' linguistic needs, but on their likes and preferences, allow them to have meaningful improvements and positive attitudes in classroom interaction.

Through the study of instructional tasks, Doyle (as cited in Guvenc, 2017) mentions that "Learning activities are expected to enable students to develop their own learning strategies, and also aim at students' acquisition of the new knowledge through these activities" (p. 106).

Classroom activities need to be designed and applied appropriately as they must activate students' prior knowledge.

Guvenc (2017) found that a classroom activity is the essence of instructional teaching. In addition, she states that a classroom activity can be examined by two features (instructional task and formal structure) in which the success of the activity is closely related to the context of the class in which it is applied. It "affects the implementation of the event [that] is formed by the interaction of many factors, such as content, material, resources, student characteristics (i.e., motivation, learning styles, preferences, and readiness) and teacher's classroom management" (p. 107). It means that the students' context can influence those factors that are involved in the classroom activity. Thus, if teachers take into account those factors, they can "determine the educational needs of activity design and implementation."

Guvenc (2017) and Samperio (2017) then talk about classroom activities, but for Samperio, the teacher-student classroom interaction emerges from the activities planned according to students' likes. The class activities could also increase motivation. A point to discuss is that Samperio (2017) affirms that classroom activities not only increase students' motivation but also help maintain it. This premise indicates that motivation should always be present in the student. On the other hand, Guvenc (2017) concentrates on the function of classroom activities since they activate previous knowledge and provide new information.

English Language Schoolteachers / Teaching English at the School Level.

We introduce general knowledge of this last construct; firstly, by talking about a definition of teachers and their role inside the classroom. Secondly, the understanding of planning classroom activities is on display.

Cadavid Múnera, McNulty, and Quinchía Ortiz (2004) mention that "the teacher is mainly the model, class organizer and class controller" (p. 43). That means, teachers can establish the sequence of contents, design the activities, or even choose the interaction moments. Nevertheless, "teachers with either limited or unrelated educational preparation, and insufficient training and target language preparation are working against all odds" (p. 44). Although teachers may study the language and how to teach it, they lack preparation on teaching children.

78   Complementarily, Collazos, Guerrero, and Vergara (2001) explain that teachers "should not influence student learning by telling him/her what to do or how to think, but on the contrary, it must be done in such a way that it takes them to the main axis of thought"[6] (p. 6). This means that the style, the methods, and the techniques that language teachers use is for helping students in their learning process without impeding them to do it by themselves.

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[6]   El profesor "no debe influir sobre el aprendizaje del estudiante diciéndole qué hacer o cómo pensar, sino que por el contrario, debe ser hecho de tal forma que lo lleve al eje principal del pensamiento."

Furthermore, teachers are in charge of "create[ing] interesting learning environments and activities to link new information with previous knowledge"[7] (p. 5). Language teachers and teaching methodologies must address the encouragement of students to learn through the activities concurrently taking into account the process of the activities to have a clear picture of the relation between them.

Bastidas (2017) focuses on planning. He affirms, "teaching planning is an essential component in education because it serves to help educators make decisions in order to get the objectives and aims of a program in an economic, secure, and efficient way" (p. 12). Language teachers need to design their own course, unit, and lesson plans. In this case, the Colombian National Curriculum of English Learning from 6th grade to 11th grade suggests that there are "many ways to put this proposal into practice," in which "each institution has the autonomy to choose the methodology and the most convenient progression for their context" (National Curriculum - MEN, 2006, p. 20). Thus, covering the objectives, the contents of the units, the materials, the evaluation criteria and having clear the approaches, methods, and procedures that are going to be used are paramount in the implementation of this curriculum.

Furthermore, lesson planning, as a scheme for teaching English, requires a continuous improvement which needs a consistent design. That means, in the planning of learning activities, "the number of proposed hours in each module, the materials that will be used both for teaching and for the evaluation and design of class plans [are necessary]. In the same way, teachers [need] to identify their strengths and the improvement areas that serve as input to a teacher development plan" (National Curriculum - MEN, 2006, p. 28). Therefore, teaching planning points to the fact that teachers create their lessons based on the important elements that lead students to follow an improvement process.

Bastidas (2017) and the National Curriculum agree on the fact that teaching planning is important, which means that teachers have to take into account each aspect that is included in the curriculum design and be able to identify strengths and weaknesses to maintain an improvement process. Due to the implementation guidelines that teachers follow to the letter; they do not have the possibility of knowing their students and planning their classes from these insights.

Research Design

Our study is based on the Self Determination Theory proposed by the psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (2008). This theory is a quantitative and descriptive-analytical type of study, which represents a broad framework for the study of human

7   "Crear ambientes interesantes de aprendizaje y actividades para encadenar la nueva información con el conocimiento previo."

motivation and personality. This theory of researching on motivation also addresses the interplay between the extrinsic forces acting on persons and the intrinsic motives and needs inherent to human nature. This theory is divided into six mini-theories[8]; however, we focus on the fifth mini-theory, Goal Contents Theory (GCT), because it focuses on the impact that extrinsic and intrinsic goals have on motivation and wellness, including the difference between them.

Data Collection

This study observes classroom activities of an English language class in order to determine the students' responses as concerns motivation and attitude. In that sense, observations are useful because, according to Schmuck (as cited in Kawulich, 2005, p. 4), they "provide [us] with ways to check for nonverbal expressions of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check how much time is spent on various activities" (p. 4). We used observation logs to capture the student's responses and behaviors according to the classroom activity.

We also implemented the questionnaire *Intrinsic Motivation Inventory* (Deci & Ryan, n.d.) since it is a measurement tool used to assess the students' experience related to the objective of the activity. The questionnaire contained twenty-nine close-ended and open-ended questions. Those questions are divided into sub-scales[9]. This questionnaire followed three steps: Firstly, applying the questionnaire to determine the levels of motivation and attitude before the session; then, describing the classroom activities and students' behavior to see the students' responses to them. Finally, applying the same questionnaire at the end of the session with the aim of assessing the levels of motivation and attitude after the classroom activities.

Both the observations and the questionnaires were implemented in five sessions. *We assessed the students' levels of motivation and attitude in line with the classroom activities presented by the school's English language teachers.* The interpretation of the answers in the Intrinsic-Motivation-Inventory questionnaire was based on the scores given to each of the scales. The results were compared with the information documented in the observation logs.

Data Analysis

The principles of the Self Determination theory were also followed for the data analysis. According to Deci and Ryan (n.d.), a high score of an established aspect in the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory questionnaire indicates high levels of motivation or attitude in that

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[8]   (1) Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), (2) Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), (3) Causality Orientations Theory (COT), (4) Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), (5) Goal Contents Theory (GCT), and (6) Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT).

[9]   Interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, effort/importance, pressure/tension, perceived choice, relatedness, incentives/punishments, and living experiences.

aspect. For example, a high score on the aspect of *pressure/tension* indicates that the person taking the test felt more pressured and tense during an event; a higher score on *perceived competence* means that the person felt more competent, and so on with the established aspects.

By following these principles, the first step was to collect the questionnaires (before-after) from each student, to count the answers, and to calculate a general average with the purpose of tabulating the information from each item in an Excel spreadsheet (One tab by session). The second step was to identify the three highest results (general and individual) and the two lowest ones (general). The third step was to analyze the general results and make a comparison between general and individual results to gather the differences and similarities among them. Finally, we checked the answers of the open questions to see the variability of each one. With these procedures, we assessed students' levels of motivation and attitude that were a consequence of the classroom activities planned by the school's English language teachers.

To complement the insights from the questionnaires, we organized the information collected with the observation logs. First, the classroom activities observed were listed according to the order in which they were presented by the teacher. The students' reactions were listed and classified according to the moment of the classroom activities in which those were expressed. Only the aspects that presented observed reactions were listed. In a table, we organized the aspects with the corresponding activities found. Finally, we analyzed which reactions were coherent or incoherent with each aspect. All this information was organized to determine students' responses connected to motivation and attitude within those classroom activities, and to further compare this listed information with the graphic analysis.

Results

We present the results according to the information collected in the five sessions observed. The first part corresponds to the type of classroom activities designed, presented, and developed by the EFL teacher. In this part there are four kinds of activities (Talking about globalization, practicing skills, group work, and extra topics). The second part has two divisions: Students' motivation and students' attitude, and their relation with the classroom activities. The third part presents the aspects that we can see as emerging during the classroom activities (Teacher's parameters, students' attention, and obtaining rewards). Finally, through the five graphics, the students' levels of motivation and attitude are presented with evidence of the highest item (Perceived Competence) and the lowest item (Pressure/Tension).

Classroom Activities

It gives an account of the types of activities presented and developed by the teacher in the English Language sessions observed. They are presented in different ways, but usually developed in six different manners, to wit: (1) giving instructions during the class (teacher

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repeated it many times), (2) indicating who participates, (3) interrupting the class to scold students, (4) giving points (see below - obtaining rewards), (5) using a loudspeaker or a whistle, and (6) speaking English and Spanish at the same time (teacher and students). All these activities take place either in the teacher's classroom, outside the classroom, or in the dance classroom.

There are four types of activities that the teacher designed and implemented in the English class, as well as the way these activities are presented and developed.

Talking about Globalization

It involves all the activities about globalization and the environment. This type of classroom activity is presented by writing the lesson objectives, eliciting students' background, and asking questions. The following notes give an example of this:

"The teacher mentions the topic of the class (Globalization) and explains the order of the activities that students are going to do" [Log Activities-Session 1. Instructions-Data collection available in folder]

Thus, the EFL teacher mentions the topic, explains what the students have to do, and gives feedback at the end of the activity.

Practicing Language Skills

The teacher implements different resources at different moments of the sessions in which the students can practice their language skills. The participating EFL teacher focused on listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary. The teacher presents the activities by using different resources or strategies. In this way, she uses a video to practice listening, a debate to practice speaking, having the students write about the class topic to practice writing, and using a word search to practice vocabulary. The following notes give an example of this:

"When she gives a general idea, she asks the students to know what they think that can be related with those concepts". (The participation is mandatory). [Log Activities-Session 4, activity 1-Feedback, item 3- Data collection available in folder]

82 This example shows how the students can practice speaking (sharing ideas) and listening (watching a video) skills.

Group Work

It refers to all the activities that students can develop in groups. The participating EFL teacher usually presents the group work activity either on a project or with competitions. The following notes from the observations give an example of this:

"Students start working on the project by groups (Knowing what to say and the decoration)" [Log Activities-Session 1, activity 2-About the project, item 2-Data collection available in folder]

This example shows the integration of students when they are working in groups.

Extra Topics

It gives an account of the activities and topics that emerged in the classroom but that do not make up part of the main topic. There is an unspecified way to present the extra topics. The following notes from the observations give an example of this:

"The teacher shares the class with the dance teacher because students need to practice a dance. However, the condition is that some steps must be explained in English." [Log Activities-Session 5, clarification-Data collection available in folder]

This example shows that some topics come from activities belonging to another subject but that require more time to be finished.

All four types of these activities designed and implemented by the teacher in the English language class are developed in a similar way by nominating, repeating the instruction, interrupting the class, giving rewards, using a loudspeaker or a whistle, and speaking in both English and Spanish.

Relationship between the Types of Activities and the Students' Affective Factors (Motivation and Attitude)

We give an account of students' responses during the English class according to the activities mentioned before, as well as the connection with motivation and attitude.

The activity called *talking about globalization* has two distracting elements: Cell phones and students, and they show interest by sharing ideas; in the case of attitude, students used to show worry, pressure or tension. In the activity of *practicing skills,* students try to do the activity although they feel lazy or do not understand it; about attitude, there is a lack of confidence when they have to talk in front of the others.

In the activity of *Group work*, there are three responses in terms of motivation: Students show preference for working in groups and they help each other to do it well or gain points, but when it is individual, they do not help the others. In terms of attitude, they feel frustrated when they do not do the activity well and the students rush the others in order not to get distracted. In the last activity, *Extra topics,* regarding motivation, when the teacher is not in the classroom, the students feel confused about the activity, while someone else takes control. In attitude, as the teacher is not in the classroom, the

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students do not feel pressure; however, they sometimes do not feel identified with the activity and when they do the activity, they concentrate on it.

Students' Motivation

It gives evidence of students' levels of motivation during the development of the classroom activities presented in the English language classes observed. Those levels emerge and are influenced by classroom environment interests and factors such as students' focus, classroom work, and control figure.

Interest: Shocking Elements

In terms of motivation, we found that the students, in the classroom activities related to talking about Globalization or Environment, feel interest in the topic when they have the possibility of sharing their ideas about it. However, we can notice that the students can be distracted by two elements, by their cellphones to listen to music or watch videos and by themselves using their bodies (making faces) to call their classmates' attention.

Students Focus or Are Absent-Minded

There are two types of students during the classroom activity, the students that pay attention and the ones who are distracted. Although there are some students who show signs of laziness or do not know something about the classroom activity, they try to do it by themselves or by using other resources such as their cellphones or asking the teacher; and even when they are doing the activity, they are concentrating on it and are more participative. Therefore, those students who do the classroom activity (paying attention or sharing ideas), in spite of their laziness, are focused; however, those who have sleepy faces or remain confused (absent-minded) are doing other things which are not related to the current classroom activity.

Classroom Work/Individually or in Groups

The students feel more attraction for group activities. When they have to work in groups, they help each other and try to do their best with the objective of doing the work well and earning points. Likewise, when the activity is in terms of competition, they feel excited and take it seriously, but they take into account that it is just a healthy competition and do not take it personally when they lose. However, when the activity is individual, they do not try to help others, they just focus on their own work.

Control Figure

In terms of motivation and a relation to different topics (see above Classroom activities-extra topics), students get confused when there is not a figure who instructs them (A figure

who says to them what to do and how to develop the activity). Likewise, there is an emotional change in students when someone else takes the role of being the teacher reviewing their classmates' work.

Taking into account the open questions from the questionnaires[10], there are three main important results: First, the students see the classroom activity as a way of advancing in their classroom projects and learning more English language in terms of vocabulary or grammar; although they do not think beyond it, they focus on getting a score or passing the subject. Second, the few students who answer differently see the topics of the classroom activity as an opportunity to know more or learn about the new topic that will possibly be important in their future; hence, they will appreciate things more and develop their skills. Third, the classroom activity for the students could help them break the routine: interacting with their classmates or having a good time with them. Therefore, students' motivation can also depend on the way the students see the classroom activity, according to their needs, knowledge, experiences, or future expectations[11].

Students' Attitude

Students' attitude is manifested during the development of the classroom activities presented in the English language classes observed. It is noticed in students' behavior such as uneasiness, self-confidence, thwarting, and doing the classroom activities just because they have to (see below).

Students' Uneasiness

There are moments in the classroom activity in which the students' attitude turned negative. When the students have to participate as an obligation, they worry about doing it because it implies sharing their opinions or replying to the others' opinions. Additionally, when the classroom activities require a lot of effort such as moving from one place to another or repeating the activity up to the best result, the students feel tension or exhaustion while doing the activity.

Self-confidence

Activities of practicing skills, such as listening to a video, having debates or writing a short text, require the students to be exposed to talking in front of their classmates; for that

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10 The two open statements are:
- I think this activity is important to do because it can...
- I think this activity could help me to…

11   We synthesized all the students' answers of the two open questions.

reason, unsure students express nervousness. On the contrary, there are students who feel proud when they participate and show self-confidence no matter the type of activity.

Thwarting

In activities of group work, such as projects or competitions, in which students cannot do as well as they expect, their attitude turns low, showing frustration. Likewise, when the group does not concentrate on the classroom activity and gets distracted, some students try to rush the rest for doing the activity in order to finish it on time.

Doing the Classroom Activities Just Because They Have to (Session 5)

Students used to do all the activities that the teacher planned for them, for instance writing a paragraph about an activity done at school (which is not necessarily related to the topic of the class), or practicing some dance steps for a presentation; it did not matter if the teacher was or was not in the classroom with them. However, students feel more relaxed when they are doing the classroom activity. In addition, although students do the activities, they do not feel completely identified with them because the way in which they do or express themselves about the activity does not show an affinity with it, so they do it just because they have to. Likewise, when the students concentrate on the activities they are doing, they show a serious face; however, it does not mean that they are angry or feel pressured.

Taking into account the open statements from the questionnaire[12], the students have different ways of showing their feelings. The common answers are "Good" and "Happiness"; this is the way they express how they feel before and after the classroom activity. However, different answers such as: feeling bored, worried, normal, anxious or tired indicate that students' attitude turns into bad feelings, [13] depending on the moments of the classroom.

Emergent Aspects in the Classroom Activities

Teachers' imposition, students' attention, and what the students receive during the English language classroom activities are the emergent aspects observed during the five sessions. The teacher has parameters that students have to follow to receive a reward or even a punishment in the development of the classroom activities.

Teacher's Parameters

The classroom activities can be involved in a process in which a series of parameters are presented. The teacher already has some rules in the classroom including during the

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[12]   The open question is: "I feel before/after _____ doing the classroom activity."

[13]   We synthesized all the students' answers to the open statements.

development of the classroom activities. In this way, when the teacher is not in the classroom, the students are conditioned to behave according to the teacher's parameters, so they know that they have to be quiet and not to go out of the classroom. Likewise, when a student does not follow these parameters and his/her behavior turns in a way with which the teacher disagrees, the teacher confronts the student until the teacher gets the student to do what the teacher wants without contradiction.

Students' Attention

Usually, when the teacher gives the instructions of the activity, the students pay attention. However, they do not always understand well what they have to do. In those cases, they feel lost doing the classroom activity or they start to do what they want. It means, they do not do the classroom activity as the teacher said but in the way they want or they do other things which are not related to the topic, such as speaking with the others taking the expected time that was directed to do the activity.

Obtaining Rewards

When the teacher gives the instructions of the activity, and the students understand well what they have to do, and do it as they expect, they feel proud. They show happiness and make expressions with their body demonstrating pride. Furthermore, the teacher gave points to students when they participated, completed or won classroom activities of competition. However, the monitor helps the teacher to register the points of the classroom activity. In this way, when the students know that they deserve the point and the teacher does not give it to them, they start clamoring for it because they know that the teacher gives points for doing a specific action during the classroom activity.

Students' Levels of Motivation and Attitude during the Activities

It represents the students' position during the classroom activities in terms of their levels of motivation and attitude. For this, we used the five graphics that include the five sessions and the items of the questionnaires. The results of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory Test show that the highest item in all the sessions (before and after) was *Perceived Competence* which indicated the students' perspective of their performance during and after the classroom activity. Likewise, most of the students thought that they were very good, but a few of them thought they were very skilled before and after doing the activity. On the other hand, when the students compared themselves to their classmates, they did not feel competent, though they felt satisfied with their performance.

On the contrary, by using the same graphics the lowest item was *Pressure and Tension* which indicates how forced, strained or uneasy the students feel/felt before and after the

activity. Thus, most of the students do/did not feel tense, anxious, and pressured before and after doing the activity.

Conclusions

The 10th graders manifest two affective responses: high and low levels of motivation, but low levels of negative attitude within the English Language Teacher's classroom activities of talking about globalization, practicing skills, group work, and extra topics. The way in which the English language teacher presents these classroom activities is by showing the lesson objectives, eliciting students' background, and asking them questions. The teacher develops these classroom activities in six different manners: nominating, repeating the instruction, interrupting the class, giving rewards, using a loudspeaker or a whistle, and speaking in both English and Spanish.

The students' responses in terms of motivation emerge and are influenced by classroom environment interests and factors such as students' focus, classroom work, and control figure. Additionally, the students' attitude involves factors such as uneasiness, self-confidence, thwarting, and doing the classroom activities "just because".

Through the assessment of the students' levels of motivation and attitude made with the questionnaires, the highest item in the sessions was perceived competence (how well the students consider they are during and after the classroom activity). The lowest item was pressure and tension (how forced, strained or uneasy the students feel/felt before and after the activity).

There is a result that arises during the research study in which the specific aspects emerge during the classroom activity: teachers' imposition, students' attention, and obtaining rewards or punishments. This result demonstrates the parameters that appear during the development of the English Language teacher's classroom activities.

Finally, having knowledge about these aspects is beneficial for English language schoolteachers because they can advance their teaching practices by taking into account the way the variables of motivation and attitude help students feel comfortable within the classroom activities. Subsequently, our study benefits the school where the study takes place because the findings can improve its processes of elaboration of the syllabi of English language courses; the teachers give more relevance to the affective responses and this allows them to plan classes according to their students' preferences.

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Appendix. Questionnaire to assess the levels of motivation and attitude Intrinsic Motivation Inventory

Before / After

Name: _____

Date: _____

Glossary
• Performance: Rendimiento
• Skilled: Hábil
• Anxious: Ansioso
• Pressured: Presionado
• Tense: Tenso
• Distant: Distante
• Trust: Confianza
• Reward: Recompensa o premio
• Punishment: Castigo
• Resources: Recursos
• Behavior: Comportamiento

For each of the following statements, please indicate how true it is for you, using the following scale:

1 2	3 4	5 6
not at all true	somewhat true	very true

1. I am going to enjoy doing this activity very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I think I am going to be very good at this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I am going to put a lot of effort into this class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I feel very tense before doing this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I do not really have a choice about doing this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I feel really distant from this teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I will do this activity because I will get a reward	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I will feel strongly identified with the classroom activity that I am going to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The activity will not have my attention at all.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I think I am going to do well at this activity, compared to other students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I am going to try very hard on this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I feel anxious before working on this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I feel like I have to do this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I feel like I can really trust my classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I will try to control my behavior while doing the classroom activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. The activity will be very interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I will feel satisfied with my performance on this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. It is important for me to do well on this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I feel pressured before doing this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I am going to do the activity because I want to.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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21. I would like a chance to interact with my classmates more often in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I will do this activity to avoid a punishment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I will be very skilled at this activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I am going to do the activity because I have to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. The result of the classroom activity will be important for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I want to see different resources for the activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I think this activity is important to do because it can:						
28. I feel _____ before doing the class activity.						
29. I think doing this activity could help me to:						

HOW

The Impact of Raising Awareness of the Speech Act on Speaking Ability across Gender and Proficiency Level

El impacto de aumentar la conciencia del acto de habla en la habilidad de *speaking* a través del género y el nivel de suficiencia

Kobra Ghayebi[1]
Parisa Farrokh[2]

Abstract

The present study intended to investigate the possible effects of speech acts strategies on Iranian beginner and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability. The first step in conducting this research was the administration of QPT as the homogenizing tool. It was administered to 180 beginners and intermediate EFL learners. After analyzing the results, 80 males and females as starters and 80 males and females as intermediate subjects were chosen. Then, the beginner and intermediate EFL learners were randomly divided into control and experimental groups (including 40 beginner male and 40 female EFL learners in each class). Next, a pretest of speaking was administered to all the participants and the experimental groups received speech act role play as treatment. However, the researcher did not use any treatment of speech acts in control groups. After ten sessions, the posttest was administered to all participants. The findings suggested that awareness raising on speech acts resulted in a better speaking

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[1]   Kobra Ghayebi is an MA student in TEFL. She studies at the Department of English Language, Lahijan
Branch, Islamic Azad University, Lahijan, Iran. She has received her BA from Islamic Azad University, Rasht
Branch. She teaches English in different institutes. She is interested in pragmatics, discourse and psycholin-
guistics.
kobra.ghayebi@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5902-7257

[2]   Parisa Farrokh is currently an assistant professor at the Department of English Language, Lahijan Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Lahijan, Iran. She has published and presented some articles in different national
and international journals and conferences. Her areas of interest include pragmatics, discourse and psycho-
linguistics.
farrokh_p@yahoo.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6454-9305

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Kobra Ghayebi
Parisa Farrokh

ability as compared to the simply traditional teaching of speaking for Iranian intermediate and beginner EFL learners. Additionally, intermediate EFL learners' achievement in speaking was not in line with the beginner EFL learners' achievement in the corresponding group. Finally, it was found that gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the beginner and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability.

Keywords: English language learners, pragmatics, speaking skill, proficiency level, speech act

Resumen

Este estudio busca investigar los posibles efectos de las estrategias de acto de habla en la habilidad de *speaking* en estudiantes iraníes de nivel principiante e intermedio. El primer paso en el estudio fue la toma de un examen QPT como herramienta de homologación a 180 estudiantes de inglés de nivel principiante e intermedio. Con el análisis de estos puntajes, 80 estudiantes hombres y mujeres se escogieron para cada nivel. Estos estudiantes luego se dividieron en dos grupos, uno de control y otro experimental (40 estudiantes de cada nivel en cada grupo). Luego, un pre-test de *speaking* se administró a todos los participantes; solo los grupos experimentales recibieron un tratamiento de actos de habla de juego de roles. Luego de diez sesiones, un pos-test se administró a todos los participantes. Los hallazgos sugieren que el aumento de consciencia del acto de habla es el resultado de una mejor habilidad de *speaking* comparada simplemente con una enseñanza tradicional de esta habilidad a los estudiantes de ambos niveles. Adicionalmente, los estudiantes de nivel intermedio no están en línea con los del nivel principiante. Finalmente, no se encontró que la categoría género interactúe con el aumento de consciencia del acto de habla a tal punto que produzca un efecto significativo estadístico en los estudiantes de ambos niveles.

Palabras clave: aprendices de inglés, pragmática, habilidad de habla, nivel de suficiencia, acto de habla

Introduction

One of the salient objectives in language classrooms is to enable learners to communicate in the target language. This aim is not fully achieved unless the sociocultural context of the second language is also taken into consideration, because learning isolated words and phrases will never serve the communicative purpose (Cohen, 1996).

More recently, in EFL contexts, learners are required to utilize the English language for their communicative needs to do business, read scientific articles, and use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) worldwide and so on. They also learn English and make use of it to interact with speakers of English from different cultures. As such, the English language plays a highly important role in intercultural interactions as a communication tool and calls into attention the issue of proper and appropriate intercultural understanding of speech or more importantly, meaning in interaction between speakers (Al-Zubeiry, 2013; Rashidi & Ramezani, 2013).

However, cross-cultural misunderstanding occurs in the communication between individuals from different socio-cultural backgrounds and it is one of the difficulties that EFL speakers face in the act of communication (Rashidi & Ramezani, 2013). It is claimed that the most important cause of intercultural misunderstanding is related to pragmatic failure in using the appropriate speech (Farahian, Rezaee, & Gholami, 2012).

Therefore, in order to avoid intercultural misunderstandings and the resultant pragmatic failure, EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge as the core construct of communicative competence should be developed. This can result in more effective and successful intercultural communication (Nguyen, 2011). In this regard, the aim of this study is to investigate the effect of speech act instruction on the speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners across gender and proficiency levels. Therefore, the following research questions were put forth**:**

RQ1. Is there any statistically significant difference between the beginner EFL learners who receive awareness raising on speech acts and those who receive traditional instruction in terms of their L2 speaking ability?

RQ2. Is there any statistically significant difference between the intermediate EFL learners who receive awareness raising on speech acts and those who receive traditional instruction in terms of their L2 speaking ability?

RQ3. Does gender interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the beginner EFL learners' speaking ability?

RQ4. Does gender interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability? To fulfill the aim of the study in a practical manner through the above mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses have been considered:

H01. There is not a statistically significant difference between the beginner EFL learners who receive awareness raising on speech acts and those who receive traditional instruction in terms of their L2 speaking ability.

H02. There is not a statistically significant difference between the intermediate EFL learners who receive awareness raising on speech acts and those who receive traditional instruction in terms of their L2 speaking ability.

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H03. Gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the beginner EFL learners' speaking ability.

H04. Gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability.

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Literature Review

EFL or ESL learners can develop their pragmatics in two ways: exposure to input and production of output through classroom use of the target language, or from a planned pedagogical intervention directed toward the acquisition of pragmatics (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Classroom languages have been considered poor environments compared to outside environments. Because of this limitation vast demands are imposed on instruction that most likely cannot be attained through the traditional classroom format. Foreign-language learners have limited exposure to the target language compared to second-language learners.

In an EFL setting, the language of classroom activities is decontextualized which does not expose learners to the types of sociolinguistic input that facilitates pragmatic competence acquisition. In addition, research has shown that many aspects of pragmatic competence cannot be acquired without a focus on pragmatics instruction (Kasper, 2008).

Genç and Tekyıldız (2009) investigated the relationship between learners' use of speech acts and the region of their residence (urban or rural), focusing on the use of refusal strategies by Turkish EFL students. A discourse completion questionnaire (DCQ) was used to detect possible differences between the preferred refusal strategies of Turkish EFL students and those of native English speakers (NESs) in relation to rural or urban areas of residence of the participants. Both groups, the 101 Turkish EFL students and 50 NESs were divided into two groups according to their geographical origins: rural or urban. The results showed that the four groups produced similar refusal strategies in general. Furthermore, the interlocutor's status was found to have an important effect on the strategy preferences of the speakers. Similarly, most of the participants generally used indirect strategies so as to be politer. However, Turkish EFL students frequently chose direct strategies while using the speech acts of refusal, unlike NESs who were mostly indirect while refusing.

Bardovi-Harlig (2001) proposed the necessity of instruction in pragmatics by documenting that foreign language learners who do not receive instruction in pragmatics differ significantly from native speakers in their pragmatic production and comprehension in the target language. Improving pragmatics in the classroom develops the learners' competence in a foreign language setting. Additionally, continued practice leads to faster and more efficient acquisition of socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge in the learners' interlanguage system.

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Ishihara (2007) studied a one-month online course on speech acts that was designed to instill a sense of appropriate language use in the university students of the Japanese language who volunteered to participate. The data consisted of journal entries produced by the students as they completed each of the five speech act units. The comments from students confirmed that the explicit teaching of pragmatic features and the cultural ideologies that underlie them did result in a heightened awareness. In addition, practicing the language

forms in varying contexts generated greater competence. Of particular note to the present essay is the finding that the students taking the online course felt that the teaching of speech acts should be integrated into the curriculum.

In a study conducted by Félix Brasdefer (2008), it was cleared that speech acts are highly complex and also highly sensitive to a number of social variables including gender, age, power or social distance. In request situations, refusals, especially for non-native speakers for a given language, are extremely complex in that they "require not only long sequences of negotiation and cooperative achievements" (p. 196), but will also need to incorporate face-saving strategies that will rebalance the noncompliant component of the speech act.

In another related study, Morkus (2014) investigated differences between Egyptian speakers and American speakers in the production of refusals. In order to determine certain discourse-level patterns indigenous patterns peculiar to refusal acts, the researcher obtained the data of the study through role-plays. The participants in the study were 10 American and 10 Egyptian native speakers. The findings of the research demonstrated that Egyptian speakers used more words than American speakers did in their realization of refusals. Another distinctive difference was that American speakers were more direct than Egyptian speakers when performing speech acts of refusal.

Aforementioned issues have shown the main goal of the current study, i.e., the effect of speech act on EFL learners' speaking ability. As a matter of fact, many learners may not be aware of socially and culturally appropriate forms which may lead to communication breakdown or communication conflict. Therefore, it seems necessary to appreciate a theory which accounts for language use among which speech act theory plays a crucial role. This is because speech act theory includes all the acts we do while speaking; also, its main contribution is developing communicative competence.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a true experimental design which required randomization, administration of a QPT (Quick Placement Test) and an interview of 180 Iranian EFL learners. Figure 1 illustrates the steps taken in this study.

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Participants and Sampling

A community sample of 180 EFL learners participated in this study, comprising 80 males and 80 females aged from 15 to 19. They were all EFL learners studying in a private

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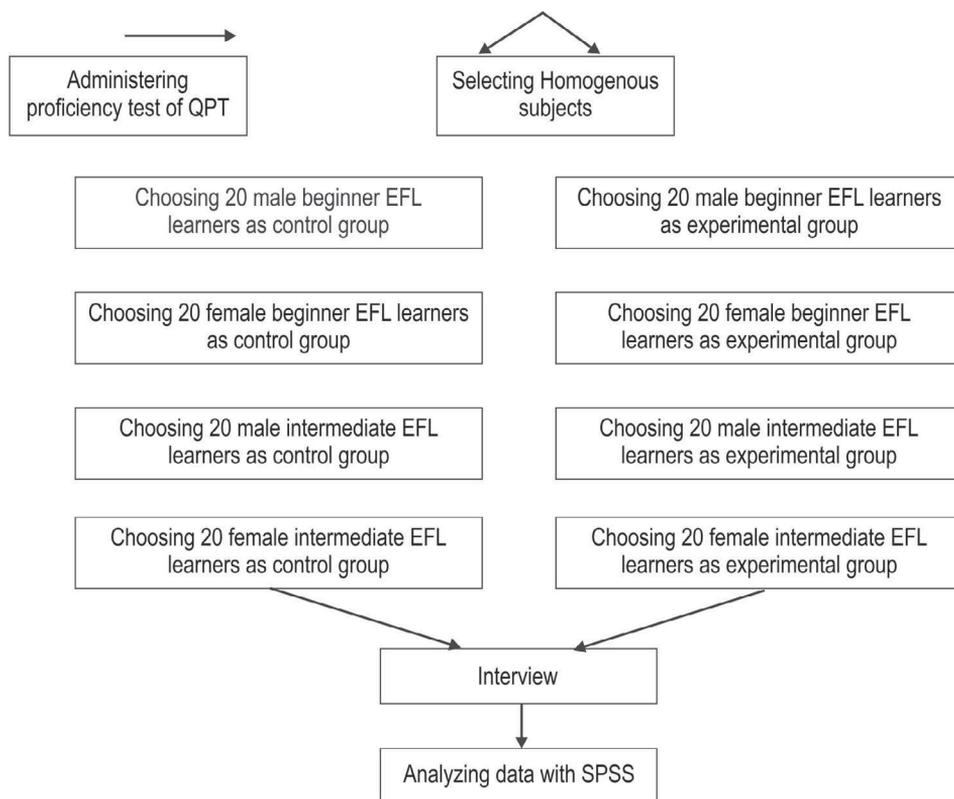
Figure 1. *The Design of the Study*

language institute in Rasht, Iran. Out of this population, 160 learners were selected based on a Quick Placement Test (QPT). In this study, gender and proficiency level were considered as effective factors. The sample comprised of two different levels- starter and intermediate, and participants were divided into control and experimental groups.

Instruments

As it was mentioned before, the first step in conducting this research was the administration of QPT as the homogenizing tool. It was administered to 120 beginners and intermediate EFL learners. After analyzing the results, 40 male and female starter and 40 male and female intermediate subjects were chosen. Then, the pretest was administered. It

was an interview which consisted of descriptive questions based on different topics such as: personal information and family, man and society, our environment, school, work, life-style, free-time and entertainment, travelling, science and technology. The reliability of the QPT and interview were also checked through the pilot study on 15 subjects. Cronbach's alpha statistics were computed. Cronbach's alpha for QPT was (α QPT = .77) and for the interview was (α interview =.81), which are both considerably higher than the minimum required value of (α= .70). After ten sessions of speech act instruction to experimental groups, the posttest was administered to measure the learners' progress in all groups. The pretest and posttest questions were the same.

Procedure

The Quick Placement Test (QPT) was administered to 180 EFL learners in order to select a homogeneous sample. This test was conducted to homogenize the participants based on their level of proficiency. Then, 80 male and female learners whose scores were in the range of 18- 27 were chosen as beginner and 80 male and female learners whose scores were in the range of 37- 47 were chosen as intermediate. An interview was used to measure the learners' speaking ability. Later, two raters assessed the answers. To make sure of the consistency of the scores, inter-rater reliability was calculated. The score of each participant then was the average of the scores given by the two raters. Next, experimental groups received speech act role play as treatment. For each session before speaking, the teacher taught them how to response in different situations. However, the researcher did not use any treatment of speech acts in control groups.

After ten sessions, the posttest of speech acts was administered to all participants. To measure the learners' improvement, an interview like the pretest was conducted. The responses were rated by the same raters of the pretest phase. Inter-rater reliability was calculated again, and the average of the scores given by the two raters was considered as the final score of each participant.

Through the Univariate procedure, a two-way analysis of variance was run on the results of the pretests of speaking to examine their prior knowledge regarding speaking ability. To answer the research questions (1 to 4), the Univariate analysis of variance was run on the results of the posttests of speaking. It provided analysis of variance for the single dependent variable (speaking ability) by three factors (types of treatment with two levels, gender, and level of foreign language proficiency).

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Before running the Univariate procedure, the main assumptions of the parametric tests were examined and it was established that the data comprised a random sample from a normal population; in the population, all cell variances were the same and the data were symmetric. The homogeneity of variances tests was also checked.

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Findings

At the beginning of the study, all the participants took part in pretests. The purpose was to set up a baseline from which gains on the posttest could be compared. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations, 95% confidence interval for the mean, and the trimmed means were computed for the results of the pretest and posttest scores of speaking for the groups. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for the Pre and Post-Test Scores off Speaking*

Level of proficiency	Study groups	Gender		Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		5% Trimmed Mean	SD
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
intermediate	Control	female	Pretest	13.97	12.93	15.01	13.97	2.21
			Posttest	14.17	13.04	15.30	14.13	2.40
		male	Pretest	14.70	13.59	15.80	14.72	2.35
			Posttest	14.72	13.72	15.72	14.72	2.13
	Experimental	female	Pretest	14.35	13.37	15.32	14.38	2.09
			Posttest	17.02	16.42	17.62	17.00	1.28
		male	Pretest	13.65	12.74	14.55	13.66	1.93
			Posttest	16.60	16.01	17.18	16.66	1.24
Beginner	Control	female	Pretest	15.07	14.28	15.86	15.05	1.69
			Posttest	15.10	14.29	15.90	15.08	1.72
		male	Pretest	14.27	13.41	15.13	14.27	1.83
			Posttest	14.42	13.48	15.36	14.41	2.00
	Experimental	female	Pretest	14.67	13.58	15.76	14.72	2.32
			Posttest	16.42	15.55	17.29	16.52	1.85
		male	Pretest	13.90	12.94	14.85	13.80	2.03
			Posttest	16.50	15.85	17.14	16.52	1.37

For the students who were at intermediate level, for the speaking test that was administered at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the control and the experimental groups were ($M_{Co. Intermediate female}$ = 13.97), ($M_{Co. Intermediate male}$ = 14.70), ($M_{Ex. Intermediate female}$ = 14.35), ($M_{Ex. Intermediate male}$ = 13.65), respectively. Furthermore, for the speaking test that was administered at the end of the study, the mean scores for the control and the experimental groups were ($M_{Co. Intermediate female}$ = 14.17), ($M_{Co. Intermediate male}$ = 14.72), ($M_{Ex. Intermediate female}$ = 17.02), ($M_{Ex. Intermediate male}$ = 16.60), respectively.

For the students who were beginner language learners, for the speaking test that was administered at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the control and the experimental groups were ($M_{Co.\ Beginner\ female}$= 15.07), ($M_{Co.\ Beginner\ male}$ = 14.27), ($M_{Ex.\ Beginner\ female}$= 14.67), ($M_{Ex.\ Beginner\ male}$ = 13.90), respectively. Furthermore, for the speaking test that was administered at the end of the study, the mean scores for the control and the experimental groups were ($M_{Co.\ Beginner\ female}$= 15.10), ($M_{Co.\ Beginner\ male}$ = 14.42), ($M_{Ex.\ Beginner\ female}$= 16.42), ($M_{Ex.\ Beginner\ male}$ = 16.50), respectively.

The descriptive table showed that there were simply minor differences among the means of the groups at the beginning of the study. However, when it comes to the posttest scores, the control groups that were treated traditionally had the lowest mean scores in both intermediate and beginner groups. On the other hand, the experimental groups who had received instruction on speech acts performed better than the control groups on the posttest of speaking in both intermediate and beginner groups.

In order to examine if the mean differences among the groups were statistically significant for the speaking tests, **a Univariate analysis** of variance was run on the results of the pre and posttests. Before running the **analysis**, the homogeneity of the variances was checked out through computing Levene's test.

Table 2. *Levene's Test for Examining the Homogeneity of Variances (Pre and Posttest Scores)*

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
pretest scores	1.283	7	152	.262
posttest scores	1.083	7	152	.377

The findings of Levene's test statistics showed that for the speaking test, the group variances were similar in pre- test scores ($F_{pre-\ test\ speaking}$ 7,152= 1.283; $P_{pre-\ test\ speaking}$ (.262) ≥.05). The findings also showed that the group variances were similar in post- test scores ($F_{post-\ test\ speaking}$ 7,152= 1.083; $P_{post-\ test\ speaking}$ (.377) ≥.05). The Levene's test statistics supported the hypothesis that the group variances were the same for the pre and posttest scores and thus the first assumption of the parametric tests that was homogeneity of the variances was established.

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When it comes to the normality assumption, the results of the skewness and kurtosis analyses were used to examine the normality assumption. The results of the skewness analysis are presented in Table 3.

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Table 3. *Skewness and Kurtosis Analyses for the Pre and Post-Test Scores*

Level of proficiency	Study groups	Gender		N Valid	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intermediate	Control	Female	Pretest	20	.017	-1.348
			Posttest	20	.107	-1.491
		Male	Pretest	20	-.030	-1.417
			Posttest	20	.112	-1.433
	Experimental	Female	Pretest	20	-.212	-1.023
			Posttest	20	.230	-.870
		Male	Pretest	20	.087	-1.213
			Posttest	20	-.529	.487
Beginner	Control	Female	Pretest	20	.316	-.563
			Posttest	20	.407	-.112
		Male	Pretest	20	.068	-.850
			Posttest	20	.024	-.707
	Experimental	Female	Pretest	20	-.399	-1.039
			Posttest	20	-.483	.023
		Male	Pretest	20	.508	-.395
			Posttest	20	.168	.234

As it was shown in Table 3, the values of the skewness and kurtosis were all within the range of ±2, supporting that the distributions were all normal. In addition, 50% of the trimmed means presented in Table 4 were within the range of 95% Confidence Interval for mean for the lower and upper bounds. Therefore, the normality of the distributions was also confirmed.

After establishing the main assumptions of the parametric tests, Univariate analysis of variance (UNIANOVA) was run on the results of the pretest for the control and experimental groups at each level of language proficiency. It was run to see if there were any statistically significant differences among the groups in terms of their speaking skill before introducing the specific treatment. The findings of the UNIANOVA test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Tests of Between Subjects Effects for the Pretest Scores of Speaking*

Dependent Variable: Pretest scores							
Level of proficiency	**Source**	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Intermediate	Study groups	2.278	1	2.278	.491	.486	.006
	Gender	.003	1	.003	.001	.979	.000
	Study groups * gender	10.153	1	10.153	2.189	.143	.028
Beginner	Study groups	3.003	1	3.003	.759	.386	.010
	Gender	12.403	1	12.403	3.134	.081	.040
	Study groups * gender	.003	1	.003	.001	.978	.000

The significance values of the F test in the UNIANOVA Table were greater than (.05) for the pretests of speaking for both intermediate and beginner groups. Thus, the average assessment scores for the pretests were equal across the control and experimental groups at the beginning of the study ($F_{speaking\ intermediate}$ = .491, p=.486> .05) and ($F_{speaking\ beginner}$ = .759, p=.386 > .05). Moreover, the average assessment scores for the pretests were equal across the female and male participants in both the control and experimental groups at the beginning of the study ($F_{speaking\ intermediate\ (gender\ effect)}$ = .001, p=.979> .05) and ($F_{speaking\ beginner\ (gender\ effect)}$ = 3.134, p=.081>.05).

Besides, the interaction effect of study groups and gender also were not statistically significant, ($F_{speaking\ intermediate\ (Study\ groups\ *\ gender)}$ = 2.189, p=.143> .05) and ($F_{speaking\ beginner\ (Study\ groups\ *\ gender)}$ = .001, p=.978>.05) suggesting that there were not any statistically significant differences among the groups at the beginning of the study in terms of their speaking ability. The following figures depict the groups' performance on pre-test of speaking.

As it was depicted in Figure 2, the control and experimental groups' performances in pretest of speaking were approximately the same at the beginning of the study for the female and male intermediate EFL learners. The following figure makes a comparison among female and male beginner EFL learners who were in the control and experimental groups in terms of their pretest scores.

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Figure 3 revealed that the groups did not differ with regard to their performance on pretest of speaking. The Univariate procedure was run on the results of the posttests to model the values of speaking tests based on their relationships to categorical predictors (i.e., gender and types of treatment). First, comparisons were made among beginner male

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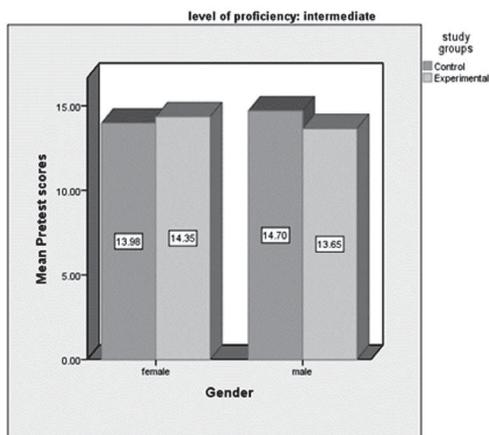
Figure 2. *Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Pretest of Speaking (Intermediate EFL Learners)*
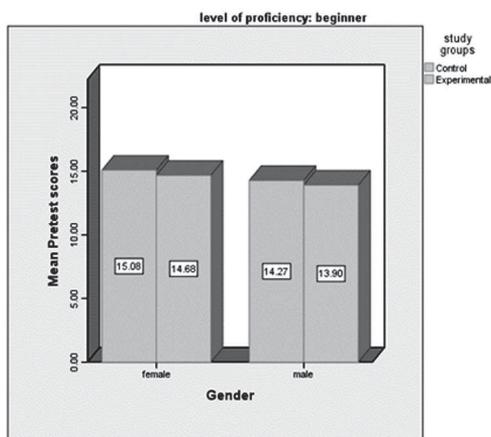

Figure 3. *Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Pretest of Speaking (Beginner EFL Learners)*

and female EFL learners in the control group who received placebos and the experimental groups who received explicit instruction on speech acts. The results are given in Table 5.

Given that the main effects of types of instruction (with and without awareness raising on speech acts) were significant for the beginner groups, the main effects were also examined in pairwise comparisons (See Table 5). In other words, significant differences were found

Table 5. *Univariate Test Results for the Speaking Test (Beginner)*

		Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
		Dependent Variable: Post test scores					
Level of proficiency	Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Beginner	Study groups[a]	57.800	1	57.800	18.767	.000	.198
	Gender	1.800	1	1.800	.584	.447	.008
	Study groups* gender	2.813	1	2.813	.913	.342	.012

a. R Squared = .211 (Adjusted R Squared = .179)

on the dependent variable that comprised speaking scores for the control and experimental groups for the participants who were at beginner level ($F_{\text{study groups (beginners)}}$ = 18.767; p=.000 <.05). However, there were no statistically significant differences between beginner male and female EFL learners who were treated with speech acts in terms of their speaking skill at the end of the study ($F_{\text{gender (beginners)}}$ = .584; P= .447 > .05). Moreover, the interaction effect of types of treatment and gender was not statistically significant ($F_{\text{study groups * gender (beginners)}}$ =.913, P=.342 > .05). Figure 4 depicts the beginner EFL learners' performance on posttest of speaking.
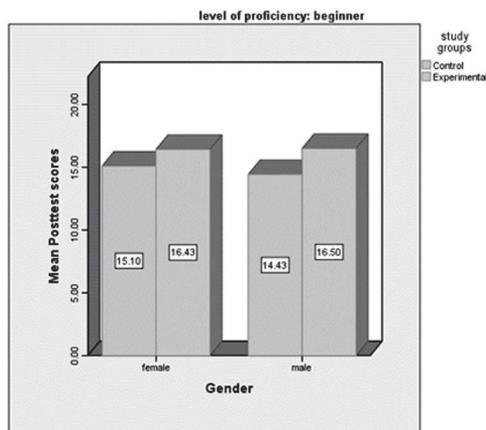

Figure 4. *Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Pretest of Speaking (Beginner EFL Learners)*

The next Univariate test was run on the results of the posttests to make comparisons among intermediate male and female EFL learners in the control groups who received placebos and the experimental groups who received awareness raising on speech acts. The results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. *Univariate Test Results for the Speaking Test (Intermediate)*

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable: Post test scores							
Level of proficiency	Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intermediate	Study groups a	111.628	1	111.628	33.022	.000	.303
	Gender	.078	1	.078	.023	.880	.000
	Study groups * gender	4.753	1	4.753	1.406	.239	.018

a. R Squared = .312 (Adjusted R Squared = .285)

As it was shown in Table 6, the main effects of types of instruction (with and without awareness raising on speech acts) were also significant for the intermediate groups and significant differences were reported regarding the speaking scores for the control and experimental groups ($F_{\text{study groups (intermediate)}}$ = 33.022; p=.000 <.05). Nevertheless, no statistically significant difference was found between intermediate male and female EFL learners who enjoyed awareness raising on speech acts in terms of their speaking skill at the end of the study ($F_{\text{gender (intermediate)}}$ = .023; P= .880 > .05). Besides, the interaction effect of types of treatment and gender was not statistically significant ($F_{\text{study groups* gender (intermediate)}}$ =1.406; P=.239 > .05). Figure 5 depicts the intermediate EFL learners' performance on posttest of speaking.

Pairwise comparisons were also made for the posttest scores of speaking for the students who were treated traditionally and those who received instruction on speech acts at both intermediate and beginner levels. The results of the comparisons for the intermediate group are presented in table 7.

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Table 7 made pairwise comparisons between the control and experimental groups for the intermediate language learners in their posttest of speaking. For the speaking test that was administered at the end of the study, the mean difference between pre and posttests that was reported for the experimental group was higher than that compared to the mean difference for the control (mean difference $_{\text{control group}}$ = .112; mean difference $_{\text{experimental group}}$ =2.812). While
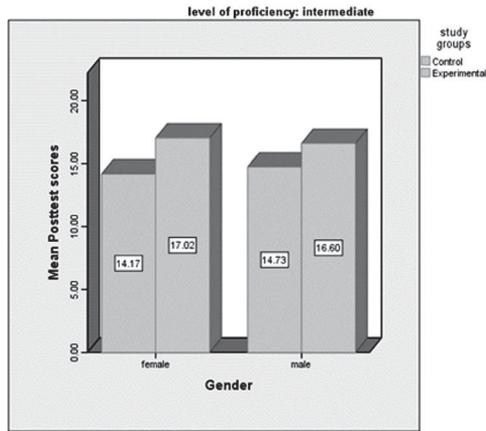
Figure 5. *Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Posttest of Speaking
(Intermediate EFL Learners)*

Table 7. *Pairwise Comparisons ^{A} for the Posttest Scores of Speaking (Intermediate Group)*

Study groups			Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	SD	Lower	Upper			
Control	Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-.112	.52	-.28	.05	-1.35	39	.183
Experimental	Pair 2	Pretest – Posttest	-2.812	1.43	-3.27	-2.35	-12.39	39	.000

a. Based on estimated marginal means
**. The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

the mean scores of the control group improved merely .112 points, the experimental group improved 2.812 points in post-test. The results of the comparisons for the beginner group are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 made pairwise comparisons between the control and experimental groups for the beginner language learners in their posttest of speaking. Similar to the intermediate groups, for the speaking test that was administered at the end of the study, the mean difference

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Table 8. *Pairwise Comparisons ^{A} for the Posttest Scores of Speaking (Beginner Group)*

Study groups			Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	SD	Lower	Upper			
Control	Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-.087	.43	-.22	.05	-1.26	39	.213
Experimental	Pair 2	Pretest –Posttest	-2.175	1.49	-2.65	-1.69	-9.19	39	.000

between pre and posttests that were reported for the experimental group, was higher than that compared to the mean difference for the control (mean difference $_{control\ group}$= .087; mean difference $_{experimental\ group}$=2.175). While the mean scores of the control group improved merely .087 points, the experimental group improved 2.175 points in post-test.

The comparison between the pre and posttests of the beginner and intermediate groups also revealed that, for the beginner participants, the distance between the means of the pre and posttest for the experimental groups was smaller than that for the difference between the means of the pre and posttest of the experimental groups at the intermediate level. In other words, the intermediate EFL learners' achievement in speaking after receiving awareness raising on speech acts was higher than the beginner group and made greater improvements within groups from pretest to posttest compared to beginners.

Thus, the results implied that the intermediate EFL learners' achievement in speaking after awareness raising on speech acts was not in line with the beginner learners' achievement in the corresponding group.

To provide an answer to the first research question, the results of the Univariate test were analyzed for the posttest of speaking for the beginner EFL learners in both the control and the experimental groups. The findings of the UNIANOVA showed that awareness raising on speech acts resulted in better speaking as compared to simply traditional teaching of speaking for Iranian beginner EFL learners. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected implying that there was statistically a significant difference between the beginner EFL learners who received awareness raising on speech acts and those who received traditional instruction in terms of their L2 speaking ability.

To provide an answer to the second research question, the results of the Univariate test were analyzed for the posttest of speaking for the intermediate EFL learners in both the control and the experimental groups. The findings of the UNIANOVA revealed that Iranian

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intermediate EFL learners who enjoyed awareness raising on speech acts, performed better than those who simply experienced the traditional teaching of speaking in their speaking tests. Consequently, the second null hypothesis was rejected implying that there was statistically significant difference between the intermediate EFL learners who receive awareness raising on speech acts and those who receive traditional instruction in speaking classes in terms of their L2 speaking ability.

To provide an answer to the third research question, the results of the interaction effects of gender and types of treatment were employed for the posttest of speaking of the beginner EFL learners in the experimental groups. The findings showed that Iranian beginner male EFL learners who enjoyed awareness raising on speech acts did not perform statistically different from beginner female EFL learners in their speaking tests. Consequently, the third null hypothesis was supported implying that gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the beginner EFL learners' speaking ability.

To provide an answer to the fourth research question, the results of the interaction effects of gender and types of treatment were employed for the posttest of speaking of the intermediate EFL learners in the experimental groups. The findings showed that Iranian intermediate male EFL learners who enjoyed awareness raising on speech acts did not perform statistically differently from intermediate female EFL learners in their speaking tests. Consequently, the fourth null hypothesis was supported implying that gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study intended to investigate empirically the possible effects of provision of salient information on speech acts on Iranian beginner and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability. As it was shown in the previous section, awareness raising on speech acts resulted in a better speaking ability as compared to simply traditional teaching of speaking for Iranian intermediate and beginner EFL learners. Besides, intermediate EFL learners' achievement in speaking was not in line with the beginner EFL learners' achievement in the corresponding group. In other words, the intermediate EFL learners' achievement in speaking after receiving awareness raising on speech acts was slightly higher than the beginner learners' achievement. Finally, it was found that gender does not interact with awareness raising on speech acts in such a way as to produce a statistically significant effect on the beginner and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability. So, the findings of this study support the research of Bardovi-Harlig (2001), who noted that pragmatics instruction results in developing the learners' competence in a foreign language setting.

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Moreover, the outcomes of the present study are in line with the work of Ishihara (2007), who proved that speech act instruction has a positive effect on learners´ competence and leads to appropriate language use. However, the results of this research are in contrast with the research conducted by Felix Brasdefer (2008), who believed that speech acts are highly complex and also highly sensitive to gender.

On the whole, the study revealed and emphasized that awareness raising on speech acts resulted in a better speaking ability as compared to the mere traditional teaching of speaking for Iranian intermediate and beginner EFL learners. Thus, one major pedagogical goal of this research is to help learners develop their competence of speech acts use by providing them with the chance of understanding and using them in a variety of contexts. Needless to say, pragmatic competence is a relevant aspect to pursue when learning another language.

The findings of this study can also be of interest to different groups such as curriculum planners, L2 specialists, EFL learners, and EFL teachers. The finding that the participants in the treatment groups in this study improved in speaking ability may encourage teachers and researchers in the ESL/EFL field to provide speech act strategies that students can benefit from. Additionally, teachers should feel confident that providing speech act strategies is effective and helps learners to improve their speaking ability.

Furthermore, the results of this study pertain to the significance of speech act strategies for teachers. In teacher education courses, the findings may be useful for training language teachers who are instructing English as a language in EFL contexts. By thinking about the findings of the current study in regard to the significance of speech acts, teachers can enhance the learners' speaking ability.

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HOW

Inquiring into the Coloniality of Knowledge, Power, and Being in EFL Textbooks

Indagar la colonialidad del saber, del ser y del poder en libros de texto de inglés

Astrid Núñez Pardo[1]

Abstract

This article inquires into the coloniality present in EFL textbooks, which continue being used as the core resource for language learning and teaching in Colombia. However, its instrumentalization, imperialism, and exploitation as an instrument of subalternation suggest that EFL textbooks produced by foreign and local publishing houses in the Colombian context are colonised in three interrelated dimensions: knowledge, power, and being. Therefore, this research proposal aims at unveiling the ontological, epistemological, and power criteria rooted in critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative, and inspired by the decolonial turn, to orient the development of other contextualised materials from the voices of Colombian teachers, authors and experts.

Keywords: coloniality of knowledge, power and being, critical interculturality, EFL textbook

Resumen

Este artículo problematiza la colonialidad presente en los textos de inglés porque continúan empleándose como recurso principal en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de este idioma. No obstante, su instrumentalización, imperialismo y explotación como instrumentos de subalternización sugiere que los textos producidos por editoriales locales y extranjeras, en el Contexto Colombiano, son coloniales en las dimensiones del saber, del poder y del ser. Esta propuesta busca develar los criterios ontológicos,

1   Astrid Núñez Pardo, a professor in the Master's Programme in Education at Universidad Externado de Colombia, holds a PhD in Education Sciences from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC), an MA in Education from Universidad Externado de Colombia, and a Diploma in Linguistic Studies from University of Essex, UK.
astrid.nunez@uexternado.edu.co
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6176-4520

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epistemológicos y del poder, cimentados en la interculturalidad crítica e inspirados en el giro decolonial, para orientar el desarrollo de materiales-otros contextualizados, desde las voces de los maestros, los autores y los expertos colombianos.

*Palabras clave***:** el libro de texto de inglés, la colonialidad del saber, el poder y el ser, interculturalidad crítica

Introduction

The interest in this theme arises from my reflection as a teacher educator of in-service English language teachers in the fields of research and materials development, and as an author of textbooks, workbooks and teachers' guides for EFL teaching. Other reasons include the need for a critical interculturality-oriented curriculum and the development of intercultural competences as central to teaching EFL and ESL. Lastly, the issue is that despite the variety of EFL teaching resources, English language textbooks remain the 'main resource of the process of teaching and learning English' (Castañeda & Rico, 2015; Davcheva & Sercu, 2005; Núñez-Pardo, 2018b; Tomlinson 1988; Valencia, 2006). Thus, it is vital to rethink and redefine EFL materials as sociocultural, pedagogical, didactic, and cognitive mediations that facilitate linguistic and cultural interactions, and that are used in Colombia for bilingual (English) education at all levels. These mediations fulfil their sociocultural, political, academic, and aesthetic functions for teaching solidary, responsible, critical, and autonomous citizens who are conscious of their own culture, respectful of those of others, and aware of differences.

Since the EFL "textbook misrepresents the plurality of the local and foreign cultures" (Núñez-Pardo, 2018b, p. 1), they do not "respond to the local needs, interests, and life experiences of the learners in their own context" (Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, p. 23), and they decide whose culture, knowledge, and history become legitimised. This proposal aims at unveiling the ontological, epistemological, and power criteria, rooted in critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative, to orient the development of other contextualised materials, created by other teachers, and for other students within their own particular context in the periphery countries. It seeks to overcome its decontextualisation and long dependence on foreign ideologies, and to offer spaces for the local, stemming from Colombian teachers', experts' and authors' voices. Critical interculturality, inspired in the decolonial turn, seeks to contribute to the negotiation of socio-cultural diversity and to the conciliation of the difference between what is local and what is foreign, or different (Walsh, 2005a). Hence, EFL textbook content (terminology, themes, written and oral texts, iconography, and learning activities) continue to legitimise, naturalise, and perpetuate predetermined knowledge, ways of being, and by exerting power to conceal, distort or misrepresent the multiplicity of sociocultural and political local realities. This proposal problematises the uncritical

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development of EFL textbooks as they are decontextualised in terms of knowledge, being, and power.

The Problem

This inquiry identifies the coloniality of EFL textbooks in three interrelated dimensions: its instrumentalisation shows that it is colonial in the dimension of knowledge; its imperialism manifests that it is colonial in the dimension of power; and its exploitation as a subalternation instrument indicates that it is colonial in the dimension of being. According to Quijano (2014), in Latin America, European colonisation led to a Eurocentric vision of knowledge and to relationships of superiority and inferiority between the dominant and the dominated ones. As Fanon (1963) explains, colonialism oppressed, distorted, disfigured, and annihilated people to promote cultural alienation and to convince them that its purpose was to preserve them from darkness, barbarism, and from their ontological disgrace. Then, from an epistemological stance, the boundaries of natural sciences are questioned to respond to the broad range of social purposes (De Sousa, 2010a; Gadamer, 2002; Habermas, 1965; Mardones, 2003; Torres, 2010; Valtierra; 2013; Vasco, 1990; Zuleta, 1990). This is so, since the sense of lifeworld (Husserl, 2008) cannot be brought down to universal hegemony assumptions, objectivity, determinism, monism, and neutrality of scientific activity, as nothing in life is neutral or completely objective. It is from daily life that ontologies, epistemologies, and critical autonomies are envisioned.

Power schemes emerged from European colonialism in the social and historic context of the discovery and conquest of America (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). They are produced and perpetuated in socio-historical environments, naturalising racial, social, and cultural hierarchies, reproducing control relationships of territories (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Quijano, 2014; Restrepo & Rojas, 2010), and maintaining the structure of centre-periphery relations on a world-wide scale in a global coloniality (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007) with epistemic structures (De Sousa, 2006, 2010a; Lander, 2000a). These power patterns affect knowledge production and guarantee the exploitation of some human beings on a global scale (Maldonado-Torres, 2008; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2014; Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). This, in turn, subalternates and obstructs the generation of local knowledge, experiences, and ways of life of the subjugated and exploited individuals, spreading itself beyond the colonial regimes. As expressed by Freire (2004), the First World has always been an exemplar model of all types of scandals, harm, and exploitation.

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This type of coloniality has been perpetuated until our times and it is perceived in the sociocultural expressions of the modern experience of individuals, to the extent that everything that originates from Western countries is more valued. This is the case of EFL textbooks produced by foreign publishing companies and their branches in the periphery[2].

Coloniality of Knowledge

English textbooks have been instrumentalised by focusing on the mechanical use of grammar structures (Kramsch, 1993; Masuhara, Hann, Yi & Tomlinson, 2008; Núñez-Pardo, 2018a, 2018b; Núñez, Téllez & Castellanos, 2013; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 2012; Prabhu, 1987; Pulverness, 2013; Rico, 2012; Tomlinson, 2013). They have also been developed under foreign methodologies that disregard the particularities of local contexts where English is learnt and taught (Allwright, 1981; Canagarajah, 2002, 2005, 2010; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & Simon, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Núñez-Pardo, 2018a, 2020; Prabhu, 1987, 1990; Waters, 2009). Thence, EFL textbooks have turned the teacher's role into a routine and repetitive one (Fernández-Reiris, 2006; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Littlejohn, 2012; Prabhu, 1987), which results in a conformist way of action (De Sousa, 2010a). In light of this, EFL textbooks have been marketed and imposed as hegemonically naturalised instruments of English language teaching par excellence, by foreign and local editing companies, as well as by education and ministerial institutions. Moreover, EFL textbooks mainly promote cultures that are alien to local ones, with an emphasis on superfluous, marketable, monolithic, and static aspects of the predominant cultures (Prodromou, 1988; Núñez-Pardo, 2018a, 2020b), or as Kramsch (1998) identifies them, by using the 4 fs: festivals, food, folklore, and statistical facts. Similarly, Gómez (2015) and Bandura and Sercu (2005) name these superfluous aspects as superficial culture whereas Waters (2009) refers to it as cultural bias, which constrains the generation of knowledge and 'comprehension of alternative counter-culture' (Quijano, 1980). Thus, EFL textbooks maintain "their cultural supremacy [and a] homogenous vision of universal culture at the expense of marginalising existing cultural diversity" (Núñez-Pardo & Téllez-Téllez, 2020, pp. 30-31). This cultural incompleteness implies that the content and iconography of EFL textbooks mostly represent North American and British cultures, which is an instrument of cultural hegemony (De Sousa, 2018) that neither aids the construction of intercultural competence (Rico, 2012; Bandura & Sercu, 2005), nor the development of critical conscience (Freire, 1971; Pennycook, 1994, 1998), or critical interculturality (Walsh, 2009). This cultural universalism portrayed in EFL textbooks advocates the idea of a unique predominant culture. It denies the cultural differences of the universe and, together with an organized predetermined knowledge system, harms the socio-political purpose of EFL materials as sociocultural mediations.

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EFL textbooks are decontextualized since they "contain characteristics, values, attitudes and stereotyped communication styles from dominant cultures, with no representative anchor or context to be validated, which has not allowed learners to make it relevant to their own cultural experiences" (Núñez-Pardo, 2018a, p. 241). Also, they have become a dependence, submission, and subordination instrument since those locally produced are considered of poor quality. This is what González (2012, 2010) identifies as 'academic colonialism' in which foreign production is perceived as being better – due to their learning methods and

strategies – than those that emerge from local experiences. Critical authors have referred to this phenomenon in a similar way. For example, 'intellectual colonialism' (Fals Borda, 1970); 'European colonialism, epistimicide, or cognitive colonialism' (De Souza, (2010a, 2018); 'colonisation of knowledge' or 'eradication or imposed civilisation' (Lander, 2000a). What this epistemic colonialism intends to do is to transform into universal something that is universal for some. Indeed, Colombian unique historical, geographical, social, cultural, economic and aesthetic wealth becomes invisible in EFL textbooks. Instead, foreign ways of being, knowing and exerting autonomy are privileged and represented, which end up being imposed and disseminated in a seamless way through contents and methodologies originating from a culture that is not Colombian. In view of that, Núñez-Pardo (2020a) suggests:

> By decen[tring] both the EFL textbook and the underlying methodologies, these resources are more likely to meet students' realities and thus, help them to make sense of learning a foreign language, to provide them the opportunity to reflect on their lived experiences within their own communities, and to propose alternative solutions to existing problems. (p. 15)

Coloniality of Power

EFL textbooks are associated with the economic, political, and commercial interests of the publishing industry (Álvarez, 2008; Apple, 1992; Canagarajah 2002; Cárdenas, González & Álvarez, 2010; Giroux, 2001; González, 2010, 2012; Gray, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Littlejohn, 2012; Núñez-Pardo, 2018a, 2020a, 2020b; Núñez-Pardo- & Téllez-Téllez, 2018, 2020; Núñez et al., 2013; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 2012; Rico, 2012; Usma, 2009). This imposes upon users the type of English that is taught, the type of content to be explored, the type of methodologies to be used, and even the type of learning activities and strategies to be proposed.

The previous condition homogenises and naturalises EFL teaching and learning processes in favour of the reductionist principle, 'one-size fits all', coined by Allwright (1981). EFL textbooks legitimise the interest of the prevailing social order (Giroux, 1997) and serve elitist interests permeated by colonialism, neoliberalism, and discriminatory discourses (Gray, 2013). Hence, content of EFL textbooks reproduce ways of being, knowing, and exercising independence that silence subjects that do not belong to the predominant Anglo-Saxon countries. According to Kincheloe (2008), this takes place in a world that is immersed in power dynamics that naturalises the predominant ways of continuous exclusion. Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2014) claims that the methodologies that underlie EFL textbooks neglect the post-method condition. First, they disregard the parameter of particularity that entails comprehension of the sociocultural context (Sapir, 1949; Whorf, 1956). Second, they disdain the parameter of practicality that implies the self-contextualisation and self-construction of pedagogical local knowledge (Canagarajah, 2002; Giroux, 1988; González,

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2009; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Usma, 2009, Walsh, 2005b) from the theorisation of practices and the practice of theorization. Third, they ignore the parameter of possibility that involves critical socio-political awareness for the formation of identity and for social transformation (Freire, 1998, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2003); all being inherent in language teaching pedagogy. This standardisation of contents, methods, ideologies and privilege of English variety assumes uniformity in EFL teaching and learning processes. Hence, sameness leads to the naturalisation and perpetuation of ways of being, understanding, learning, interacting, and coexisting autonomously that marginalise and exclude subjects that originate from periphery countries (Asian, African, and Latin American).

It is necessary to resist hegemonic predetermined and decontextualized knowledge originating from Western countries and from the centre with the view of generating localised knowledge and teaching practices. Resisting the tradition of received knowledge with a critical understanding (Pennycook, 1998) is needed since language use implies "a position within the social order, a cultural politics, (and a) struggle over different representations of the self and other" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 34). For this reason, decolonised local practices and ideologies should constitute the basis for materials development, implementation and innovation. Considering that one's own cultural plurality conditions the development of knowledge in varied configurations (García, 2004) and that the teaching textbooks need to be questioned, deconstructed, and rethought (Edge & Wharton, 1998, Núñez-Pardo, 2020b), we need to reduce dependence on Eurocentrism as the unique source of knowledge[3] (Walsh, 2009) and achieve validation of locally-built materials and methodologies for EFL teaching. It means, discerning the criteria for other contextualised and decolonised materials, as "mediations in sociocultural interactions among learners from diverse cultural worlds" (Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, p. 18), in which differences and sociocultural diversity coexist, at the same level of importance and validity.

The enforcement of linguistic policies in Colombia have also been exposed to a permeation of hegemony of power, since the teacher becomes a technician, reproducer and preserver of foreign methodologies and contents, whose performance is evaluated according to the achievement of said parameters. In Giroux' (1998) insight, it is necessary to examine the ideological forces and materials that have contributed to the proletarisation of the teacher's role. This tendency brings teachers down to the level of a technician, who fulfils functions of management, and complies with curriculum programs instead of developing or critically assimilating the curriculums to adjust to specific pedagogical concerns. Diminishing the intellectual, pedagogical, and transformative role of teachers dehumanises them, limits their agency in making contextualised curriculum and materials decisions, and "perpetuates hegemonic language teaching and learning discourses" (Lucero-Babativa, 2020, p. 144).

If teachers wait for the MEN to make curricular, methodological and materials decisions, subordination is promoted on this imposition of predetermined knowledge. It

paves the way for the resulting reproduction, dissemination, perpetuation, and naturalisation of decontextualized knowledge. One clear example of this situation is the existing alliance between the MEN and the British Council for the inclusion of a Suggested Curriculum (2016) in state-funded education institutions. Indeed, it is not a suggested curriculum but rather an imposed one, since the MEN is constantly sending managers to 'train' teachers on what should be taught and how it should be taught. It is evident that public bilingual education policies do not consider the particularities of education institutions, since it is through a 'suggestions' guise that they impose a series of predetermined contents and centre methodologies to support the bilingual programme Colombia *Very Well* (2014). In view of that, Moreno and Pájaro (2018) recommend 'indisciplining' the EFL syllabus to support bilingual educational achievements.

Coloniality of Being

It is rooted on the binaries reason - no-reason, humanisation - dehumanisation in which the English language teacher is not considered a member of the centre community (Anglo-Saxon countries) (Kachru, 1992), but of the subaltern one (Asia, Africa, Latin America), without the capacity to produce knowledge and instead to consume it. This is related to the dichotomies of native-speakers - non-native speakers (Graddol, 1999; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Pennycook, 1998), the prevalence of hegemonic ideology of the native speaker (Faez, 2011; Fairclough, 1989; Kachru, 1992; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Viáfara, 2016), and the binary hegemonic community - peripheric community (Dussel, 2007). Then, teachers and students should make critical sense of such domination dynamics that shape identities, knowledge, and self-directed actions.

If the subaltern community of non-native speakers wants to unsettle and disarticulate hegemonic power structures, it should resort to the 'decolonial option' (Mignolo, 2010), a category originally developed under the name 'decolonial turn' by the Puerto Rican philosopher Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2006). This decolonial alternative requires not only intellectual work, but also social action with coordinated and agreed collective results to resist the unilateral hegemonic power. Kumaravadivelu (2014, 2012) exhorts the subaltern intellectual teacher to provoke an epistemic rupture in the English language teaching field; he also proposes Mignolo's 'epistemic decolonisation' (2010). Similarly, Foucault (1972) recognises the existence of multiple epistemes within a specific discourse, since according to Kumaravadivelu (2014), the epistemic rupture is not exerted in a universal way. On the contrary, the subaltern subjects ought to use this epistemic discourse to make sense of and to legitimate their practices, as suggested by Fanon's (1963) decolonial discourse. The author claims that in times of struggle colonised intellectuals feel the need for expressing their nation being the speaker of a new reality in action. Thence, it is through the stimulation of

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collective and coordinated creative capacity of local subjects, who know the local conditions, that action is impelled to produce valid knowledge in pedagogical contexts.

As education for transformation and emancipation raises serious challenges, it deserves teachers' and students' concern and endeavours. Resistance to hegemonically imposed centre-based methods may be exerted by proposing other context sensitive methodologies that underpin other contextualised materials that foster both students' high-order thinking skills, critical socio-political awareness, and teachers' generation of "valid local knowledge, aligned with local needs and to the historical moment" (Núñez-Pardo, 2020b, p. 215). In this regard, Núñez & Téllez (2018) claim that "by resisting the use of decontextualized and standardized materials, teachers become producers, not consumers, of context-bound teaching resources" (p. 83). Developing other contextualised materials informed by locally generated methodologies and learning strategies points to a decolonialised pedagogical practice that cultivates teachers' and students' critical socio-political awareness, going beyond 'abysmal thinking'⁴ or 'modern occidental thinking' (De Sousa, 2014). Conducting research that stems from the local demands generates genuine knowledge with a view to disrupting exclusive and absolute dependence from Eurocentric visions and cultural universalism.

It is the duty of teachers and students to enquire into and develop materials, learning strategies, and methodologies that emerge from their particular settings, including contents that account for their voices, life experiences, and community problems. This action of generating localised materials and methodologies acknowledges teachers as historical thinkers and transformers of the world (Freire, 1998), and subjects of knowledge (Foucault, 1980; Quiceno, 1988) since they possess not only 'content, pedagogical, curricular, learners, and educational purposes' knowledge (Shulman, 1987), but also "empirical, experiential, normative, critical, ontological, and reflective-synthetic domains" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 51). In the Colombian context, Castañeda-Londoño (2018) argues both a traditional and universal as opposed to a critical and emancipatory teachers' knowledge base. Teachers are also regarded as "agents of permanent change" (Núñez & Téllez, 2009, p. 184), "subaltern intellectuals" (Kumaravadivelu, 2014, p. 76), and public and transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) within their communities. In essence, teachers' cognitive and critical knowledges enable them to express critical dissent and proposals regarding curricular, materials, and teaching-practices decisions.

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This proposal problematises decontextualised EFL textbooks produced by foreign and local editing companies. Their contents, cultural representations, iconography and learning activities, as well are their methodologies do not comprise the changing complexity of historic, sociocultural, political, economic, education, and aesthetic experiences of local contexts and communities in which they are used. Power structures, originating from colonialism, affected sociability, public space, private space, culture, ways of thinking and subjectivities (De Sousa, 2010) that are maintained through capitalist globalisation in the periphery, and transcend

racial and social status, reproducing epistemic and territorial dominions. Such structures exploit individuals on global scales, subordinate and obstruct knowledge emanating from the living experiences of the other submissive and exploited (Quijano, 2014) which, according to Dussel (2007), aims at homogenising humankind under criteria and values derived from a single English-speaking culture.

The previous condition implies that the anti-capitalist struggle in tandem with the anti-colonialist fight advocates for social class and ethnic equality, in which difference is appreciated and respected, and equality is sensitive to sociocultural diversity from across the world. However, global capitalism, represented through the 'cosmopolitan' or 'global' EFL textbook, idealises and naturalises consumerism practices including international trips, entertainment, and free time activities that impose the idea to irrationally spend money on gross luxuries (e.g. visiting exotic international landmarks and spatial touristic places). While teachers turn into naive consumers instead of critical producers of knowledge, students become dependent users, who can memorise and mechanically learn grammar structures, and who neither develop their communicative competence (Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Gómez, 2015), nor their intercultural communicative competence (Rico, 2012).

Constraining the production of culturally, methodologically and epistemologically localised EFL materials maintains the asymmetry in sociocultural, economic, political, and academic relationships world-wide. Other contextualised materials reject the idea that there is a common homogenised culture. Also, they stimulate the inclusion, tackling and discussion of deep culture aspects as opposed to the exacerbated superficial culture. According to Byram (1997), Kramsch (1998), Moran (2001), and Núñez-Pardo (2020b), superficial culture supports, exaggerates or poorly represents culture through racist, sexist, classist, hetero sexist, ageism, and ableism stereotypes, privileging dominant cultures to the detriment and marginalisation of local ones. Since individuals' life experiences form part of the essential and complex aspects of their cultural universe, other contextualised EFL materials, based on critical interculturality, may offer better possibilities for cultural revival and appropriacy, and for students' and teachers' construction of high order thinking skills, critical socio-political awareness, and critical intercultural communicative competences.

This research proposal aims at providing a set of criteria for the development of other contextualised EFL materials grounded on critical interculturality. A contribution is intended towards this political, social, epistemic, and ethical project, which is also aesthetic in relation to its construction (Walsh, 2009). Firstly, it is conceived by the individuals in diverse educational places, in which the difference between local and foreign is harmonised (Walsh, 2005). Moreover, omissions of inexistences, denials of knowledge, time, differences, and covered faces are questioned (Dussel, 1994), as well as the absent (e.g. missing) categories (De Souza, 2010a). Secondly, spaces are created for equality-in-difference, since we have the right to be equal when the difference makes us inferior, and to be different when equality

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puts our identity at risk (De Sousa, 2010b). Diversity requires us to decentre and to critically ponder our own experience to make possible the education of autonomous, conscious, informed, and solidary citizens. Diversity demands attaining structural changes in our society (Pérez-Gómez, 1998), which are not limited to recognition as they dismiss differences and inequalities regarding ways of being, knowing, learning, feeling, dreaming and coexisting in an autonomous way.

Review of Related Studies

Mainstream research on EFL textbooks demonstrates latent tensions, criticisms and tendencies in the national and international context, as I have already discussed elsewhere (See Núñez-Pardo, 2018a). The 50 related studies reviewed (see next lines) argue how the content of EFL textbooks operates and contributes to the naturalisation and perpetuation of ways of being, knowing, and exerting power; ways that hide, distort or misrepresent the multiplicity of sociocultural realities in local contexts.

Several categories were identified:

- Sexism and stereotypical representation of genders (Craeynest, 2015; Dabbagh, 2016; Datzman, 2013; Ghorbani, 2009; Hall, 2014; Hill, 1980; Lee, 2014; Ndura, 2010; Nofall & Qawar, 2015; Pereira, 2013; Porreca, 1984; Syarifuddin, 2014).

- Discourses of otherness and Eurocentric knowledge represent, reproduce, and perpetuate geo-cultural, historical, sociological and ethnological stances about 'the other' (Guijarro, 2005) with a manifest ranking of cultures (Yasinne, 2012).

- Decontextualisation of knowledge and an uncritical approach as hegemony legitimise official knowledge (Aicega, 2007; Di Franco, Siderac, & Di Franco, 2007).

- The cultural component in the texts, learning activities and iconography privilege the superficial, visible, aesthetic, and monolithic culture of Anglo-speaking countries (Ahmed & Narcy-Combes, 2011; Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2013; AL-Obaidi, 2015; Bahrami, 2015; Bonilla, 2008; Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh & Kafipour, 2014; Fuentes, 2011; Habib, 2014; Jahan, 2012; Kirkgöz & Ağçam, 2011; Nguyen, 2015; Rimani & Soleimani, 2012; Varón, 2009; Xiao, 2010).

- Intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence are not developed through EFL textbooks (Jiang, 2010; Rico, 2012; Gómez, 2015; Ajideh & Panahi, 2016).

- Literacy findings suggest that contextualised reading comprehension activities foment literacy whereas the instrumental comprehension activities do not promote abstraction, inference, or critical reading (Valencia, 2006; Anvedsen, 2012; Zhang, 2017).

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- Children are not represented as rights-holders but as passive subjects who are un-aware of them (Herrera, 2012). In light of this, Núñez-Pardo (2018a) recommends teachers and students to recognise "the hidden messages in these materials… to identify their poorly constructed and represented lost voices, and to critically examine their life experiences and their relationship with others in their communities and the wider world". (p. 235)

Despite this range of studies, research particularly centred on the analysis of EFL textbooks from the critical interculturality perspective is incipient and continues to awaken tensions and debate. As the criteria of knowledge, power, and being founded on critical interculturality have not been established to orient the development of other contextualised and decolonised materials, this proposal disrupts the uncritical instrumental approach of developing commercial EFL textbooks. As Núñez-Pardo (2020a) claims, "contextualisation destabilises mainstream ways of developing standardized, homogenized, decontextualized and meaningless materials" (p. 19). Undeniably, these criteria advocate other contextualised materials informed by locally emerging content and methods that are sensitive to cultural diversity, without omissions, distortions, biases, favouring the development of politically and culturally-aware subjects in accordance with their ethnic origin, social status, gender, age, creed, identities, and capacities.

Critical content analysis is proposed for the written texts, the iconography, and the reading comprehension activities of the six most used EFL textbooks in the Colombian context, during 2004 and 2016. This period corresponds to the time when the MEN's education policy was formulated and reformulated, affecting the production of EFL textbooks. Nonetheless, local and foreign EFL textbooks are facing a crisis in developing individuals' intercultural communicative competence, as it was previously argued. Lastly, the absence of critical analysis of the reading texts, iconography and comprehension activities in EFL textbooks used in the Colombian education context makes this enquiry worthy. Therefore, a main research question and three subsidiary questions are posed, as shown in Table 1 below.

This research proposal does not seek to analyse critical interculturality in the six most used textbooks since it arises as a response to existing coloniality in EFL textbooks; it does not assume the creation of an education EFL programme as the study stems from my own trajectory as an educator of in-service EFL teachers; and it does not suggest the development of a textbook because it cannot be decolonised with the same colonising instrument. This study calls for students' and teachers' resistance to hegemony, a search for their critical socio-political awareness, a committed agency, and generation of local knowledge, so that subaltern communities are considered as the locus for other epistemologies.

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Table 1. *Research Questions and Sub-questions*

Title: Decolonising the EFL Textbook in the Colombian Context: A Venture from Critical Interculturality
Research question: What are the ontological, epistemological, and power criteria grounded on critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative that orient the development of the EFL textbook to overcome its decontextualisation, from the voices of Colombian teachers, authors and experts? **Research Objective**: To unveil the ontological, epistemological, and power criteria, grounded on critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative, to orient the development of the EFL textbook with the aim of overcoming its decontextualisation from the perspectives of Colombian teachers, authors and experts.
Subsidiary Questions **Subsidiary question 1**: What coloniality traces can be observed in the written passages, the iconography and the learning activities of the EFL textbooks, which have been most widely used in the Colombian context in the period from 2004 to 2016? **Subsidiary question 2**: What possible transformations have taken place in the existing contents of the written passages, iconography and learning activities in the EFL textbooks that have been most widely utilised in the Colombian context in the period between 2004 and 2006? **Subsidiary question 3**: What perceptions do Colombian teachers, authors and experts have regarding existing coloniality among the written passages, comprehension activities and iconography contained in the EFL textbooks that have been most widely used during the period between 2004 and 2016? **Specific Objectives** **Specific Objective 1**: To characterise the contents related to existing coloniality in the written passages, comprehension activities and iconography within the most widely used EFL textbooks in the Colombian context during the period between 2004 and 2016, to identify coloniality traces. **Specific objective 2**: To identify the discourses related to decoloniality that are evident in the written passages, comprehension activities and iconography contained in the most widely used EFL textbooks in the period between 2004 and 2015, to determine the aspects related to decoloniality. **Specific Objective 3**: To understand the perceptions of Colombian teachers, authors, and experts regarding any existing coloniality in the written passages, iconography and comprehension activities that are contained in the most widely used EFL textbooks in the Colombian context during the period between 2014 and 2016, to unveil their awareness of coloniality.

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HOW

Statistics for Classroom Language Assessment: Using Numbers Meaningfully

Estadística para la evaluación en el aula de idiomas: el uso significativo de los números

Frank Giraldo[1]

Abstract

Large-scale language testing uses statistical information to account for the quality of an assessment system. In this reflection article, I explain how basic statistics can be used meaningfully in the context of classroom language assessment. The paper explores a series of statistical calculations that can be used to examine test scores and assessment decisions in the language classroom. Therefore, interpretations for criterion-referenced assessment underlie the paper. Finally, I discuss limitations and include recommendations for teachers to use statistics.

Keywords: criterion-referenced testing, language testing, language assessment, score interpretation, statistics

Resumen

La evaluación de lenguas estandarizada utiliza datos estadísticos para evaluar la calidad de un sistema de evaluación. En este artículo de reflexión, explico cómo se puede usar la estadística de manera significativa en la evaluación en el aula de idiomas. El artículo explora una serie de cálculos estadísticos que pueden usarse para estudiar las notas y decisiones provenientes de instrumentos de evaluación en la clase de idiomas. Por ello, la evaluación criterial es la que utilizo para las in-

1   Frank Giraldo holds an MA in English Didactics from Universidad de Caldas and an MA in TESL from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the USA. He works for the foreign languages department of Universidad de Caldas. His main research interests are language assessment literacy and teachers' professional development.
frank.giraldo@ucaldas.edu.co
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5221-8245

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terpretaciones en el artículo. Finalmente, discuto unas limitaciones, y hago recomendaciones para que los docentes de idiomas puedan usar la estadística.

Palabras claves: estadística, evaluación criterial, evaluación de lenguas, interpretación de puntajes

Introduction

Numbers have power in language testing. Language tests such as TOEFL iBT and IELTS Academic yield scores that are used to make life-impacting decisions about people. These decisions should be sound given correct interpretations of test scores, and certainly a fundamental consideration for interpreting scores is that they represent the state of language ability as the main construct about which tests provide information (Chapelle, 2012; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Thus, scores from a language assessment can be considered a bridge between language ability as a construct and decisions in educational and other contexts.

To produce numbers, language testing professionals utilize basic and advanced statistical calculations through which the quality of assessments is scrutinized. For example, correlation coefficients are calculated to find out whether and to what extent scores from two different tests seem to be representative of similar constructs: Generally speaking, a correlation coefficient of 0.89 between two sets of scores can mean good news for test developers. However, in a statistical calculation known as Item Difficulty (ID), a set of items with ID levels between 0.80 and 0.95 may be bad news as these items are overly easy, even for students with a low level of proficiency. Thus, numbers in language testing are full of meaning.

Given that advanced calculations are fundamental to interpret scores or to evaluate large-scale language testing –it is in fact a core condition–, there is a belief that language teachers tend to fear or dread statistics and mathematical calculations in general (Brown, 2013; Fulcher, 2012). In fact, in Fulcher's (2012) study, language teachers from various cultural contexts reported that they need statistics explained conceptually rather than through mere calculations: They seem to want the meaning around the numbers.

When it comes to educating teachers in language testing and assessment, scholars have diligently answered this call. Publications on language testing have evolved and are now more teacher-friendly and practical in nature (Malone, 2017). However, statistics are, in my opinion, still presented without context and in rather abstract terms. To paraphrase the teachers in Fulcher (2012): Numbers are presented as numbers but not much is explained regarding their possible meanings. When interpretations are presented (for example, see Brown, 2011), they are limited to what the data present in a table, with limited allusion to classroom purposes for assessment. This may seem sensible, because these textbooks are written for a wide audience, so perhaps standard procedures suffice to explain statistics.

Interestingly, language teachers inevitably deal with numbers that should account for language learning. Scores in educational contexts are means by which teachers and other stakeholders can be informed about whether and to what extent students have learned course contents and/or achieved learning objectives (Carr, 2011). Authors such as Inbar-Lourie (2012) and Popham (2009) have suggested that teachers have at least a basic understanding of statistics so that they can be in a better position to evaluate assessment instruments and/ or the decisions that are based on scores.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this paper is to explain foundational statistics with an emphasis on context-specific interpretations for the language classroom. To provide context for this journal's readership, I will use English language education in Colombia (high school and university) as a point of reference. However, the statistical calculations and interpretations in this paper may be relevant in other contexts where teachers are tasked with evaluating their assessments.

I start by providing a general framework for the aforementioned context in Colombia, along with some assumptions that ideally should be met before doing statistics. Then, I illustrate the use of descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, distributions; mode, median, mean, and standard deviation) and possible related interpretations. Further, I explain what I call evaluative statistics, used for examining test items, tasks, and decisions. In evaluative statistics I include possible contextual interpretations; the evaluative statistics in this paper include item facility, difference index, B-index; agreement coefficient and kappa coefficient. I end the paper with limitations, conclusions, and recommendations.

Context and Theoretical Framework

Context

Although the overall reflection and explanations in this paper can be geared towards language teachers in general, I refer to the assessment system that is common in the Colombian educational context, specifically English language teaching in elementary, high school, and universities. In this system, scores are commonly called grades (*notas* in Spanish), and the scale that is used to assess students goes from 0.0 to 5.0. Generally, students pass a task or a course with a grade of 3.0, which translates to students having developed or learned 60% of task/course skills, contents, or objectives. This information may be different according to specific institutional policies, but the aforementioned scores represent the trend in Colombia.

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Specifically, in elementary schools and high schools, the English language curriculum is driven by state-mandated standards (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2016).

Such standards establish communicative competence as the major construct for language teaching, learning, and assessment. This construct is operationalized through the skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking (monologues and conversation).

Largely, universities in Colombia follow a general English language curriculum based on communicative skills, while others drive learning through ESP syllabi; these universities are not expected to follow the aforementioned standards. Notwithstanding these specifics, their scale and passing grade are generally as just explained.

Theoretical Framework

Scores from language assessments are interpreted differently depending on whether they are norm-referenced or criterion-referenced. In norm-referenced testing, a person's score is compared to other people's scores and their relative standing, i.e., from lowest to highest performance (Douglas, 2014). Tests such as TOEFL and IELTS are norm-referenced. On the other hand, criterion-referenced testing examines an individual's score against a criterion. For example, the criterion can be a passing grade (e.g. 3.0), or a percentage (70% of course skills), or whether they can or cannot do something in the target language. In this case, decisions are not relative but absolute, which means a person's language performance is not compared to that of others (Fulcher, 2010).

I will discuss scores in this paper mostly from a criterion-referenced perspective, as it is the one with which most teachers may be engaged. For this, educational purposes for language assessment need to be considered. To begin, one of the purposes for classroom language assessment is to diagnose students' constructs before a course starts. The idea is to find out what students can and cannot do in the language, so, appropriate instructional adaptations are devised (Hughes, 2010). Another purpose for classroom language assessment is to analyze progress. In progress assessment, teachers are interested in finding out how students are (not) learning the specified curriculum objectives; with the data from progress assessment, teachers make other instructional decisions that positively impact student learning (Fulcher, 2010). Finally, achievement assessment "summarizes" what students have learned during a course. This type of assessment generally leads to a score which tells stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, etc.) to what extent students achieved the criterion for a unit or course. Through achievement assessment, teachers report how much of the construct (e.g. communicative competence, speaking, or others) students learned (Brown, 2011). I will use these three purposes –diagnostic, progress, and achievement– to explain and discuss the interpretations and related implications for the statistical calculations in this paper. Additionally, there are some assumptions that should be met for calculations to be useful.

First and foremost, classroom language assessments are supposed to yield information about students' constructs. This means instruments should provide data about the language

curriculum objectives teachers are helping students to attain; this key consideration is what scholars call content validity (Brown & Hudson, 2002). The assumption then is that language assessments and curriculum objectives should have a clear and direct relationship. If this is not the case, the data from instruments may lead to invalid decisions about students' language ability.

Another condition for scores to be meaningful is that assessment instruments have been designed soundly. A poorly designed assessment is not likely to trigger the relevant constructs and, by default, leads to unfair decisions about students' abilities. Indeed, the design of assessment instruments is a science of its own: Authors have dedicated extensive treaties on how to create useful items and tasks for language testing (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995; Brown, 2011; Carr, 2011; Giraldo, 2019).

A third condition for meaningful interpretation of scores deals with test administration. In ideal circumstances, when an assessment instrument is given to students, there should be no glitches: Sound systems should work properly, there are enough test copies for students, seating arrangements deter cheating, and there exist no background noises that can annoy students, among others. Even though teachers seem to discourage test administration as an important dimension of language assessment (see reports by Fulcher, 2012; Giraldo & Murcia, 2018; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014), administration is a key moment in the assessment enterprise.

Finally, readers of this paper should be familiar with Excel in order to perform basic calculations. In this paper, I include tables with the results of the calculations but do not explain how to arrive at such results; in other words, this paper is not a tutorial on how to use Excel for doing statistics. Interested readers may consult Brown (2011) and Carr (2011) for step-by-step guides. As explained, the core of this paper lies in the meaning and interpretations that can be made of basic statistics for classroom language assessment.

Descriptive Statistics

The purpose of descriptive statistics is to describe scores or numbers. They should be organized in a clear, informative way to allow teachers to report test results to interested parties (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). Additionally, as I suggest throughout this section, descriptive statistics can be used to evaluate patterns in assessments and student language performance, although their main purpose is to describe a score distribution and report overall results.

Frequencies and Percentages

The first statistics in this paper are frequencies and percentages. Table 1 presents these data based on the scores for a fictional reading test taken by 20 students. As stated earlier,

the interpretations are discussed through the lens of diagnostic, progress, and achievement purposes, within the overall framework of criterion-referenced testing.

Table 1. *Scores, Ranges, Frequencies, and Percentages for a Reading Test*

A	B	C	D	E
Student	**Score**	**Range**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	1.5	0-0.9	0	0%
2	1.7	1.0-1.9	2	10%
3	2	2.0-2.9	5	25%
4	2.1	3.0-3.9	7	35%
5	2.5	4.0-4.9	6	30%
6	2.6	5.0	0	0%
7	3.2		20	100%
8	3			
9	3.1			
10	2.9			
11	3.4			
12	3.5			
13	3.7			
14	3.9			
15	4			
16	4.2			
17	4.3			
18	4.3			
19	4.7			
20	4.8			

Column A has all the numbers assigned to each student in this test; they might as well be your students' names. Column B contains every student score for this test, while C has the range of scores; these ranges are of course arbitrary and may represent levels of performance. For instance, students who get between 0.0 and 0.9 may be said to have an elementary level in the construct(s); students between 1.0 and 1.9 a basic level, and so on and so forth. Column D details how many students got scores within the specified range. For example, six students got scores between 4.0 and 4.9. If you count every score (Column B) that has a value between 4.0 and 4.9, then you get a total of six. If you add all of the values in column D, you should obtain twenty, the total of scores. Finally, column E tells you the percentage of students who fell within a specified range. So, out of twenty students, 25% got scores between 2.0 and 2.9.

Based on the results in Table 1, we can conclude that 35% of the students (or seven students) do not seem to have the constructs that the reading aimed to activate. Sixty-five % of the students do seem to have them. However, the percentages cannot be interpreted as pass-fail; for example, if these results came from a diagnostic assessment, they would be telling you that 65% of the students (or thirteen students) already seem to have mastered the reading skills under consideration. In other words, if the diagnostic assessment was based on the reading objectives for a course (and that should in fact be the case), then thirteen students have already learned them, without being in this particular course. Thus, based on these results, teachers might need to make changes to the language curriculum and devise ways to help the seven students who did not achieve a minimum score of 3.0.

A radically different interpretation is that the seven students who did not get a minimum of 3.0 are actually ready to be in the course. In other words, the diagnostic test is suggesting that the course is right for them, and they do not have the constructs the course aims to help students learn. This begs the question as to whether or not the other students (seventeen) are in the right course and should be in one with more advanced objectives.

If this assessment was being used for progress purposes, the results might be considered good news. Thirteen students seem to be learning the reading skills for the course, and seven of them need remedial work. The teacher in this course might decide to move on to other reading constructs for the course (or reading objectives), while assigning extra work for those who are not progressing well.

Finally, if this was used as an achievement test, you can conclude that thirteen students achieved the objectives in the reading course and seven did not. In such case, a teacher using this test would need to study why seven failed, given that the idea in an educational context is that all students learn the relevant constructs (Brown, 2011; Fulcher, 2010). Additionally, student 8 and student 9 got scores of 3.0 and 3.1 respectively, which means they barely passed the test. This begs the question as to whether the students really have the reading skills they were supposed to have.

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Mode, Median, and Mean

As statistics, modes, medians, and means help you understand the central position of numbers (or scores) in a set of numbers. In Table 2, the same scores from Table 1 are reproduced with some minor modifications; additionally, this time the mode, median, and mean are added as statistical values.

Table 2. *Mode, Median, and Mean Values for a Set of Scores*

A	B	C	D
Student	Score	Statistic	
1	1.5	*Mode*	*4.3*
2	1.7	*Median*	*3.3*
3	2	*Mean*	*3.27*
4	2.1		
5	2.5		
6	2.6		
7	2.9		
8	3		
9	3.1		
10	3.3		
11	3.3		
12	3.5		
13	3.7		
14	3.9		
15	4		
16	4.2		
17	4.3		
18	4.3		
19	4.7		
20	4.8		

The **mode** is the most frequent score in a group of scores. In Table 2, students 10 and 11 got 3.3, which is the mode for this set of scores. No other number happens twice or more times. The **median** is the score that divides the set of scores into two. If the scores are ordered between 1.5 and 4.8, the number in the middle would be 3.3. Finally, the **mean** (3.27) is the mathematical average of a set of scores. To get the mean, one must add all the values in column B and divide this result by the number of scores, by 20 that is.

The mean is a useful statistic because it provides information about the group of students who took the test (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). In fact, means are widely used in applied linguistics research (Brown, 1988) because they help you to compare test scores for different groups of language learners. In the present case, if the mean was used for diagnostic purposes and with a "passing" grade of 3.0, then it is telling us that the group have a fairly good level of the assessed constructs. The mean then confirms, in one single number, that the interpretations of percentages made in the previous section are supported. It seems that most students already have the constructs that this test targeted.

If this assessment was used as a progress test, then a mean of 3.27 is telling us that students are doing well (i.e. progressing) and therefore learning the reading objectives for the course. On the other hand, should 3.27 be the mean for an achievement test –with 3.0 as the passing score–, then it would represent a fair level of achievement: In percentages, students in this group got 65.4% of the course reading skills.

Score Distributions

There is an assumption related to norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing that I must address. In norm-referenced situations, the distribution of scores should be normal, as Figure 1 shows (from Carr, 2008, p. 51). Technically, the mode, median, and mean scores should be around the middle of the distribution.
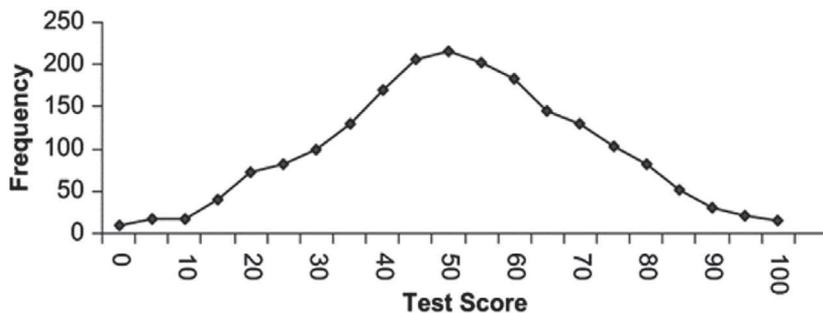

Figure 1. *Example of a Normal Distribution in Norm-Referenced Testing*

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This distribution tells us that some test-takers scored low, the majority scored between 40 and 70, and a small fraction (approximately 50 test takers) scored between 80 and 100. Such distribution is normal and expected in tests such as TOEFL and IELTS; these tests are designed on a norm-referenced framework in which test takers are compared to one another based on their scores. If most people scored between 80 and 100, that would produce a bell-shaped curve at the far right, and, importantly, it would mean the test was too easy: Even students with a low level of language ability passed for reasons other than the constructs of interest, which would make interpretations and decisions relatively invalid for these norm-referenced tests.

In criterion-referenced testing, there are different expectations for the shape of a distribution of scores. For example, in Figure 2 (from Carr, 2008, p. 55), most scores are on the right end, and thus mode, median, and mean should be on this end, too. This can entail that, in this particular assessment, most students passed (if the passing score were 50). So, we would expect a shape as that in Figure 2 for achievement assessment. In diagnostic assessment, the bell-shaped curve should be on the left end, meaning most students would "fail" the test and are ready for instruction.

To summarize, modes, medians, and means give information about sets of scores. In norm-referenced testing, the values for these statistics should be roughly located in the middle of a score distribution as in Figure 1; in contrast, in criterion-referenced testing these values should be on the left end of a score distribution for diagnostic testing and right end for achievement testing.

Standard Deviation

Standard deviations are usually presented alongside modes, medians, and means. However, I find this statistic worthy of special attention and discussion, more so when
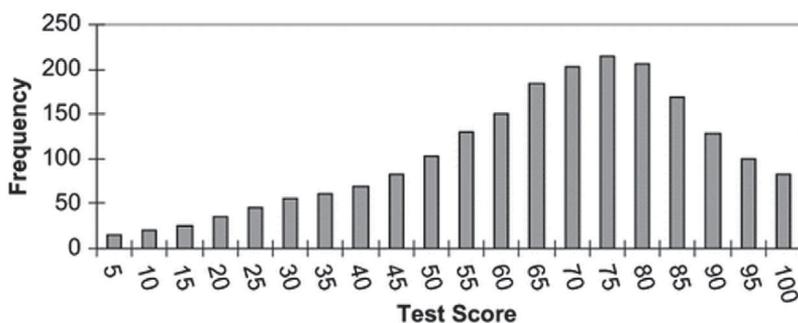
Figure 2. *Example of a Criterion-Referenced Score Distribution for Achievement Purposes*

interpretations from assessment are needed. Like means, standard deviations are common in language testing research. Brown (2011, p. 294, my emphasis) states that the standard deviation is "used to summarize the variation or distribution of scores around the mean; an averaging process considered a strong estimate of the dispersion of scores". A simple example may help illustrate conceptually the standard deviation.

Suppose Roberto got a 4.0 and Luisa a 4.4 on a listening test in which the group mean was 4.2. In this case, Roberto's score is away from the mean below by -0.2 and Luisa's above by +0.2. If you add these two scores and divide by two (0.2 + 0.2 / 2), then the result is 0.2. On average, Roberto and Luisa are 0.2 decimals away from the mean. So, 0.2 is the standard deviation: The average distance between all scores and the mean.

If we use the same values from Table 2, we get a mean of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.98. This standard deviation means the scores are rather spread: Some are really low and some are really high. Notice in Table 2 that Student 1 got a 1.5 and Student 20 got a 4.8. This is a big difference when constructs are to be interpreted. Student 1 does not have the constructs and Student 20 definitely does. To add to the dispersion, there are scores from ranges 2.0-2.9 to 4.0-4-9 (see Table 1). If we factor in the mean, we can say that, statistically speaking, some students got 2.29 (mean - standard deviation: 3.27 - 0.98) whereas some got 4.25 (mean + standard deviation: 3.27 + 0.98).

Additionally, the standard deviation has implications for the different language assessment purposes. If this standard deviation came from the scores in a diagnostic test, then we could argue that students have wide differences when it comes to the constructs under consideration. Thus, such a high standard deviation means some have the constructs and some do not, as I have argued so far in this article. Under ideal circumstances, scores from a diagnostic test should be low (no one should "pass") and the standard deviation should be low, too. These values would tell you that students do not have the constructs and are ready for instruction. Table 3 has an example.

Table 3. *Sample Values for a Diagnostic Test*

Mean	Standard Deviation
1.6	0.3

With the values in Table 3, we can conclude that some students got a score of 1.9 (+0.3 above the mean) or 1.3 (-0.3 below the mean). The interpretation is that the students have, similarly, a low level in the construct of interest.

A high value for a standard deviation may be fine for a progress test, because such assessment should tell you who is doing well and who is not. Students learn at different rates, and so dispersion around a mean is expected. Finally, as in diagnostic assessment, a low standard deviation is expected in achievement assessment, but with hopefully a high value for the mean, as Table 4 exemplifies.

Table 4. *Sample Values for an Achievement Test*

Mean	Standard Deviation
4.6	0.3

The values in Table 4 tell you that some students got a score of 4.9 (+0.3 above the mean) or 4.3 (-0.3 below the mean). You can now argue with certain confidence that the test used was fit for achievement purposes and that the students who took it have the constructs they studied during the course, i.e. they achieved the criterion.

In conclusion, the standard deviation is a useful statistic for criterion-referenced testing because it can tell you how similar or different students are in terms of their language constructs. Of course, this statistic needs to be analyzed against the mean and the purposes for which an assessment is used.

Evaluative Statistics

The name evaluative statistics is arbitrary. With descriptive statistics, we describe scores and their behavior; surely, we can also derive evaluations related to language constructs. With evaluative statistics, the purpose is to aim for test quality: They help us understand if something is off with assessment instruments or how they are used and help us to study possible solutions (Brown, 2003).

Item Facility, Difference Index, and B-Index

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Item Facility. These three statistics are calculated specifically for tests which contain close-ended items; for example, multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and true/false are amenable to these statistics. Item facility (IF) tells you the proportion of students who got an item right or wrong, as the following example shows.

Suppose your students took an MCQ listening test, and you want to know the IF for all its items. If twenty students took this test, and nine students got Item 5 correctly, then

IF is 9/20 = 0.45. That is, 45% of the students got this item correct. Thus, MCQ 5 was a somewhat difficult item. Excel can help you to calculate IF for all items in a test by creating a spreadsheet as Table 5 illustrates.

Table 5. *Item Facility Values for a 10-Item Test*

Student	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
3	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
4	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
5	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
6	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
7	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
8	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
9	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
10	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
IF	7	6	7	2	6	6	4	0	5	7

In all cells, a 1 means the student got the item right, and a 0 wrong. The values in Table 5 tell you that the IF for Item 1 was seven: 70% of students got this item right. Item 8 was the most difficult because no one got it right. For a diagnostic test, IFs should be low, perhaps 45% or lower. If IFs on a diagnostic test are 50% or higher, then it may mean the items were easy or the students already have the constructs under consideration. In a progress assessment, IFs should have varying values, because they can be interpreted as some students having the constructs and some students not having them. Finally, on an achievement test, IFs should be high, meaning students have the construct. To further use IFs meaningfully, the following two simple calculations can be useful.

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Difference Index and B-Index. These statistics are related to measurable language learning in a course. The difference index (DI) tells you to what extent a group of items shows what students learned during the course. To calculate it, two assumptions must be met. First, the same test or a similar test (assessing the same constructs) must be used as

diagnostic (pretest) and then as achievement (posttest). And second, IFs for the diagnostic and achievement must be calculated separately. Table 6 (based on Brown, 2011, p. 81) shows the DI for a fictional grammar test.

Table 6. *Values for Difference Index in a Grammar Test*

Item #	Post-Test IF	minus	Pre-Test IF	equals	DI
1	0.823	-	0.245	=	0.578
2	0.789	-	0.425	=	0.364
3	0.654	-	0.639	=	0.015
4	0.688	-	0.145	=	0.543
5	0.712	-	0.223	=	0.489
6	0.611	-	0.129	=	0.482
7	0.521	-	0.227	=	0.294
8	0.123	-	0.423	=	-0.3
9	0.742	-	0.514	=	0.228
10	0.645	-	0.396	=	0.249

In Table 6, Item 1 had an IF of 24% in the pretest (diagnostic) and an IF of 82% in the posttest (achievement). The DI tells you that there was a difference of approximately 57%, which means students started the course without the construct and now they seem to have it. Thus, the higher the DI, the more language learning seems to have occurred. One problem with DI is that an assessment has to be used twice. To solve this issue, Brown (2011) suggests the use of B-Index.

B-Index is a statistical value that tells you to what extent an item separates those students who have the construct from those who do not. In the case of an achievement test, B-Index helps you to identify how each item contributes to making a decision: Either pass or fail. Consequently, for B-Index to be useful, a cut score (or minimum passing grade) should be set. Recall that a passing grade in Colombia, generally, is 3.0 on a scale from 0.0 to 5.0. Table 7 shows B-Index values for a fictional achievement listening test.

Table 7. *B-Index Values for All Items in an Achievement Listening Test*

Student	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10	Score
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
2	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3.5
3	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	3.5
4	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2.5
5	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2.5
6	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2.5
7	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
9	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
10	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
IF pass	0.67	0.67	1.00	0.33	0.67	1.00	0.67	1.00	1.00	1.00	
IF fail	0.71	0.57	0.57	0.000	0.57	0.43	0.29	0.000	0.429	0.57	
B-Index	-0.04	0.09	0.42	0.33	0.09	0.57	0.38	1.00	0.57	0.43	

According to the B-Indices in Table 7, we can conclude that Item 8 undoubtedly separates those who learned the construct from those who did not. On the contrary, Item 1 is not doing a good job because it was easier for students who failed than it was for students who passed. Other good items are Item 6 and Item 9. As with the DI statistic, the higher the B-Index, the easier it is to ascertain that the assessment is working properly. In the case of the data from Table 7, Item 4 was difficult (IF = 0.33), even for those students who passed and five items (1, 2, 4, 5, and 7) are not separating "passers" from "failers" well. These items need revision. In conclusion, if this test was used, then its quality should be questioned and interpretations and decisions contested.

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Agreement Coefficient and Kappa Coefficient. These last two statistics help you to analyze the decisions that you make based on data from an assessment. In other words, these coefficients will not tell you anything about the internal workings of items, as DI and B-Index do. Rather, they help you to determine whether pass-fail decisions are reliable, i.e. the degree to which a set of decisions is consistent across students and administrations. These statistics

can also be used with performance assessments of speaking and writing, in which raters use rubrics for decision-making. Since rubrics are not amenable to the calculations explained thus far, the main focus is on ascertaining to what extent raters agree with one another.

To calculate agreement coefficient, the same test needs to be administered twice so that the coefficient can tell you to what extent you were consistent in deciding whether students passed or failed the test on both occasions. This means you need two sets of scores for each student. The coefficient can easily be calculated by hand. The first step is to create a table as Table 8. Then, each cell in the table needs to be filled accordingly.

Table 8. *A Table for Calculating Agreement Coefficient*

A (pass-pass)	B (pass-fail)	A+B
C (fail-pass)	D (fail-fail)	C+D
A+C	B+D	A+B+C+D

In cell A, write the number of students who passed on both administrations. In cell D, write the number of students who failed on both occasions. Cell B should contain those who passed the first time and failed the second time. Lastly, in cell C write the number of students who failed the first time and passed the second time. Once cells A to D are filled in, proceed to calculate the rest of the information in Table 8. Table 9 includes an example for a test administered twice to a 30-student group.

Table 9. *Sample Values for Calculating Agreement Coefficient*

8	8	16
4	10	14
12	18	30

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Now the values are ready for calculation. Add values A + D and divide them by the total number of students. Thus, 8 + 10 / 30 = 0.6, which translates into 60% in agreement. For this test, the teacher made the same pass or fail decision consistently 60% of the time. However, the values in the other cells (B and C) are not considered. In this case, the kappa coefficient is necessary as it uses all of the values for a more accurate number representing the consistency of pass-fail decisions. Before calculating kappa, another statistic is necessary:

pchance. Pchance uses all of the values from the table with pass-fail decisions. Here is the formula:

$$Pchance = \frac{[(A+B)(A+C)+(C+D)(B+D)]}{N^2}$$

With the values from Table 9, calculate Pchance.

$$Pchance = \frac{[(16)(12)+(14)(18)]}{30^2}$$

$$Pchance = \frac{[192+252]}{900}$$

$$Pchance = \frac{444}{900} = 0.49$$

Now that we have Pchance (**0.49**), the calculation for kappa is:

$k = \frac{(Po - Pchance)}{(1 - Pchance)}$ where Po means agreement coefficient. Thus, $k = \frac{(.60 - .49)}{(1 - .49)} = k\frac{.11}{.51} = 0.21$

In conclusion, because kappa used all values in Table 9 and because there were inconsistencies (pass-fail and fail-pass cases), there was in fact little consistency (21% of the cases) in the decisions the teacher made. This is a serious issue with several possible causes: Students did not perform similarly on both occasions given extraneous circumstances, there was a problem scoring test responses on one or both occasions, or the students knew the answers to the test the second time they took it. Further investigation is warranted.

As scholars agree, it is not practical to have students take the same test twice, though scores from comparable tasks could be used, as Fulcher (2010) argues. As I see it, there is another useful application of the agreement and kappa coefficients: A speaking or writing test scored by two teachers. In this situation, every student will have two scores, so consistency can be calculated as before.

For example, suppose that you and another teacher diagnosed students' writing skills before a course started. Both used a rubric and produced a score for each student. Then, upon going over your decisions, you have these data for 40 students in Table 10.

Table 10. *Decisions for a Diagnostic Writing Test Scored by Two Teachers*

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18 (pass-pass)	2 (pass-fail)	20
2 (fail-pass)	18 (fail-fail)	20
20	20	40

With these numbers, the agreement coefficient is 0.90, or 90%. Kappa turned out to be 80%. In general, this means both teachers reached a substantial level of agreement. Fulcher (2010, p. 83) provides this rule of thumb for interpreting kappa:

.01–.20   slight agreement

.21–.40   some agreement

.41–.60   moderate agreement

.61–.80   substantial agreement

.81–.99   very high agreement

There are some interpretations for the resulting kappa (80%). First and foremost, it seems like both teachers knew what they were assessing, which then means the way the construct of writing was specified in the writing rubric was clear for both. Second, in a related manner, both teachers used the rubric fairly well: It seems that they were not influenced by extraneous factors not considered in the assessment. Notwithstanding this good news, the teachers did not agree 20% of the time (eight students out of 40), so they should discuss what they differed on and substantiate their decisions so they can reach a fairer score for the eight students involved. Criterion-referenced assessments should aim for substantial agreement or above.

To summarize, agreement and kappa coefficients help you to ascertain to what extent decisions were consistent (i.e. reliable) across two administrations of a test. Low levels of agreement should alert teachers so that they can evaluate what is happening with assessments and the way they are used.

Limitations

Since this paper is mostly concerned with criterion-referenced language testing, I paid little attention to large-scale testing, even though it has the potential to influence classroom assessment, as some authors have indicated (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; 2012). However, my aim was to show how numbers can be useful in classroom language assessment through simple yet useful calculations that teachers can do. For advanced statistical calculations and interpretations in norm-referenced situations, readers may wish to consult especially Bachman (2004), but also Brown (2011) and Carr (2011).

As I mentioned in the introduction, this paper does not deal with issues pertaining to the design of assessments. Statistical calculations can provide information about items or tasks that are not working properly, so a more design-based approach is needed to identify what happens at the level of instruments themselves. Thus, teachers can conduct expert reviews

of items and tasks to further investigate the quality of their assessments after they have done the calculations presented here. For qualitative expert review, Brown and Hudson (2002) and Brown (2011) provide suggestions.

Fulcher (2010) emphasizes the fact that, in language assessment, we live with uncertainty. It is unlikely for an assessment system to provide perfect numbers (i.e., a kappa of 100%; a standard deviation of 0.0 on an achievement test), but we need to make every possible effort to ensure that our assessments are useful for their intended purposes. To do so, statistics can help monitor quality. In the particular case of classroom language assessment, the major focus is on substantiating the consequences of our actions (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Moss, 2003), to which statistics can contribute. Living with uncertainty is expected and inevitable.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Large-scale language testing largely depends on using appropriate statistics to argue for the quality of tests and the consequences that can derive from interpreting their scores. Similarly, as I have attempted to show in this paper, interpretations of scores, and numbers in general, can provide information about classroom language assessment: state of students' constructs, quality of items and tasks, and appropriateness of decisions based on scores. For interpretations, I used two types of statistics, descriptive and evaluative, to describe scores and numbers and what they could mean for diagnostic, progress, and achievement purposes in the language classroom. With these available statistics, the following recommendations may prove useful for language teachers in general.

Teachers new to the area of statistics for language assessment may see this task as daunting. However, statistics can be used for tests which have high stakes in their school. For example, a final achievement test worth 50% of a course should have a high quality. Teachers in this context may use the pretest/posttest treatment and calculate descriptive statistics, IF, DI, and B-Index. The resulting numbers can certainly help in raising the quality of such assessment.

Other recommendations based on the statistics presented in this paper are the following:

- Calculate descriptive statistics and compare and contrast groups that are in the same grade and should have similar levels in the constructs of interest.
- Calculate IF, DI, and B-Index with different groups of learners; for instance, a group of students who already passed a course and a group who is about to start the course (pre and post). Brown and Hudson (2002) call this a differential groups study.
- Calculate agreement coefficient and kappa with a speaking or writing test you can assess two times. Assess performance the first time, wait a few days, and then as-

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sess again. Finally, do the statistics. This is commonly called intra-rater agreement (Hughes, 2010; McNamara, 2000): To what extent do you agree with yourself when you decide on a passing or failing grade?

- Use all of these calculations, and others, with your colleagues to collectively learn what numbers can tell you about language assessment in the classroom.

In closing, a modicum of statistics nurtures your language assessment literacy, which in turn can help you become more critical towards the language assessment enterprise. In the end, if used appropriately, knowledge and skills in basic statistics will have positive consequences on language assessment, teaching, and learning.

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HOW

A Critical Review of the Word Classification System

Una revisión crítica del sistema de clasificación de palabras

Razieh Gholaminejad[1]

Abstract

In this reflective paper, we review the currently-used word classification system proposed by linguist Paul Nation (2013, 2015) and the position of the academic vocabulary in this system. Different lexical layers in this system are explained as well as the underlying assumptions. Then, taking a critical position, we raise a number of criticisms against three different aspects of Nation's classification. The first criticism involves the fact that the system has sacrificed function for form in developing the lexical layers. The second focuses on the problem of equating 'academic words' with Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) and 'high-frequency words' with West's (1953) General Service List (GSL). Finally, the system is criticized for the lack of an independent lexical layer for discipline-specific academic vocabulary by ignoring disciplinary variation at the level of academic words. The critical points raised in the paper can be useful for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) materials developers, teachers, test developers, and syllabus/curriculum designers.

Keywords: academic vocabulary, English for academic purposes / EAP, high-frequency words, technical words, word classification system

Resumen

En este artículo reflexivo, revisamos el sistema de clasificación de palabras utilizado actualmente propuesto por el lingüista Paul Nation (2013, 2015) y la posición del vocabulario académico en este sistema. Se explican las diferentes capas léxicas en este sistema, así como los supuestos subyacentes. Luego, adoptando una posición crítica, planteamos una serie de críticas contra tres aspectos diferentes de la clasificación que hace Nation. La primera crítica implica el hecho de que el sistema ha sacrificado la fun-

ción por la forma en el desarrollo de las capas léxicas. El segundo se centra en el problema de equiparar las "palabras académicas" con la Lista de Palabras Académicas de Coxhead (2000) y las "palabras de alta frecuencia" con la Lista de Servicios Generales de West (1953). Finalmente, el sistema es criticado por la falta de una capa léxica independiente para el vocabulario académico específico de la disciplina al ignorar la variación disciplinaria a nivel de las palabras académicas. Los puntos críticos planteados en el documento pueden ser útiles para los desarrolladores de material, profesores, desarrolladores de pruebas y diseñadores de planes de estudios / planes de estudio de inglés para fines académicos.

Palabras clave: vocabulario académico, inglés con fines académicos, palabras de alta frecuencia, palabras técnicas, sistema de clasificación de palabras

Introduction

Paul Nation's Word Classification System

In order to determine a methodical sequence for teaching English words in ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings, researchers have always been interested in disambiguating vocabulary types by proposing different classification systems. Nation (1990, 2001) and Schmitt (2000) divided words into four categories: high-frequency, academic, technical, and low-frequency words. Later, Schmitt and Schmitt (2012) proposed a frequency-based classification of high, mid, and low-frequency words. These three levels included respectively the top 3,000, 4,000-9,000, and beyond the 9,000-word families in terms of frequency bands. Inspired by the classification proposed by Schmitt and Schmitt (2012), Nation (2013, 2015) restructured his system. In the revised version of the classification system, Nation classified the levels based on both frequency (high, mid, and low) and text type (academic and technical). These levels are assumed to sequentially complement each other by serving the needs of different language users at any stage. The definitions provided by Nation for each level have been used by researchers as a basis for lexical studies, and in a sense, have developed into distinct constructs. In Table 1, an outline of the lexical layers proposed by Nation's classification is displayed. What follows is a description of each lexical level in his system separately.

Table 1. *The Lexical Levels in the English Corpus*

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High-frequency words		General words (GSL)	The top 1000, 2000, and 3000 words	
Mid-frequency words	Technical words	Academic words (AWL)	The 4000, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, and 9000 words	
Low-frequency words		Rare words	The 10000 words onward	
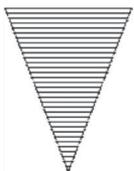
High-Frequency Words

High-frequency words are defined as core words encountered "with the highest frequency and widest range" in "all kinds of use of the language" whether formal, informal, written or spoken (Nation, 2015, p. 571). They are the top 2,000-3,000 words of English, which cover approximately 80% of the tokens in texts. Many of them are function words and very common content words. The classic and most widely used high-frequency wordlist, which is still influential, is the GSL (General Service List) developed by West (1953). Derived from a five-million-word corpus, the GSL includes 2000-word families for which West used various selection criteria including frequency, learning ease, coverage, necessity, and stylistic level. The GSL provides coverage for 92% to 76% of fiction (e.g. Hirsh & Nation, 1992), and academic texts (Coxhead, 2000), respectively.

Mid-Frequency Words

The words from the fourth 1,000 to the ninth 1,000 are classified as mid-frequency words. Nation (2015) considers academic words as the mid-frequency lexical layer, and asserts that knowledge of these two initial levels (i.e. high- and mid-frequency words) provides around 98% coverage for most types of texts, a coverage which is supposed to allow unassisted comprehension of texts. Nation (2015) introduces Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) for this vocabulary level. Academic words serve as the next goal for learners who need to study at university via the medium of English. In addition to improving the serious tone of the writing (Nation, 2015), this lexical layer involves formal words that provide the building blocks for reporting the experiences of science (Coxhead & Nation, 2001) through performing the rhetorical functions of exemplification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, concession, and reformulation (Paquot, 2010, as cited in Gholaminejad, 2020a). In order to develop the AWL, Coxhead (2000) used a 3.5-million-word corpus of academic English texts in 28 sub-disciplines of four fields of Art, Commerce, Law, and Science, and developed 570 word families based on three criteria: (a) minimum frequency of occurrence (100 times in the corpus), (b) minimum range of occurrence (10 times in each of the 4 disciplines and in 15 or more subject areas), and (c) specialized occurrence (not included in the GSL words). The AWL, as demonstrated by Coxhead (2000), has a high coverage in academic texts (around 10%), which together with the 2,000-word family of the GSL (which already provided 75–80% coverage) is supposed to allow for the unassisted comprehension of texts. The AWL is argued to serve as an essential measure of learners' academic competence. In fact, academic vocabulary can differentiate the academically well-prepared from the under-prepared college students (Kuehn, 1996). According to Nation (2001), knowledge of academic vocabulary doubles the amount of comprehensible texts

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for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) [2] learners. This knowledge is essential not only for developing academic reading comprehension but also for enjoying an effective and appropriate writing skill (Corson, 1997). That is why it is argued that "any time spent learning it is time well spent" (Nation, 2001, p. 258).

Technical Words: High, Mid, or Low-Frequency Words

Technical vocabulary refers to domain-specific words, whose meaning is related to one specific area and may (or may not) require specialist knowledge to be understood (Chung & Nation, 2004). In addition, they include acronyms, abbreviations, chemical formulas, and symbols (Nation, 2001). They are usually referred to as "terms" (Cabré, 1999, p. 81), as opposed to 'words'. They can be high, mid, or low-frequency words and are learnt while learners study within a particular subject area (Nation, 2015). That is why some practitioners argue that teaching this vocabulary level should not be assigned to English language teachers (Nation, 2001), but to those who are expert in the subject area.

In the beginning of the new millennium, it was assumed that technical vocabulary accounts for a very small percentage (about 5%) of the words in academic texts (Nation, 2001; Coxhead & Nation, 2001). However, later studies (Chung & Nation, 2003, 2004) demonstrated that technical words account for up to one third of the text, covering 20-30% of tokens (Chung & Nation, 2003), which can be increased if multi-word phrases are also included (Nation, 2015).

Low-Frequency Words

Low-frequency words comprise rarely-used terms, occurring from the 10th 1,000 onwards. They account for approximately 5% of the tokens in an academic text and include proper names, words rarely encountered in language use, infrequent words, and technical words of other academic disciplines (Nation, 2001).

Nation's classification system has served as a source for ELT materials developers and syllabus makers in arranging the order of presenting new vocabulary, selecting the lexical counting unit, or developing English wordlists. In view of that, ELT teachers have long used the GSL for teaching general vocabulary and EAP teachers in Higher Education have long

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[2] EAP is nowadays an increasingly developing area in ELT. Placed at the intersection of applied linguistics and education, EAP is usually defined as teaching English intended to help learners study or carry out research in English (Hyland & Tse, 2007). Indeed, EAP is concerned with researching and teaching the English language which is used by those who intend to carry out academic tasks using English (Charles, 2013). Assuming that teaching the whole of a language is an impractical goal, EAP is "founded on the premise that the students' target language situations contain classifiable components which should be incorporated into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in order to satisfy the specific language needs of learners" (Gholaminejad, 2020b, p. 105).

used the AWL for teaching the academic vocabulary for students of different disciplines. Test developers have also adopted these wordlists in developing ELT and EAP tests. Syllabus makers and curriculum designers have also been inspired by this system. This classification system is even considered by many researchers, including Quero and Coxhead (2018, p. 53), as "the most comprehensive classification of its kind up to the present". In the present paper, however, some reflections on the problematic aspects of this classification system are proposed.

The Underlying Assumptions of the System

According to Nation (2015), frequency-based wordlists are an important resource for ELT, due to the fact that words in a language occur with different frequencies. Wordlists can be considered as the basis for designing ELT materials, or for developing vocabulary tests, for conducting research, and for ELT curriculum design. The purpose for developing a wordlist determines the way it is developed, which has a direct influence over the kind of corpus adopted by the researcher and the selected unit of counting (Nation, 2015).

The vocabulary levels included in Nation's (2015) classification are connected by assuming the GSL as a high-frequency wordlist, and the AWL as the mid-frequency wordlist. Nation maintains that the division between these levels is not clear-cut. Each level is a priority and complements the next one. High-frequency words are supposed to be essential for all language users (Coxhead & Nation, 2001) and need to be acquired before others, while academic and technical words serve the language users with academic and specific purposes in mind.

A Critical Discussion of the System

In the present paper, a number of criticisms are leveled against Nation's (2015) word classification system.

Sacrificing Function for Form

The main issue about the system proposed by Nation (2015) is that it is primarily based on a superficial basis: frequency. This, indeed, sacrifices function for form. The top 3,000 words are classified as high-frequency, the 4,000-9,000 as mid-frequency, and beyond the 9,000 as low-frequency words. This arbitrary-based classification system disregards the fact that most words have multiple senses, which are determined by the context. Therefore, classifying words based on frequency cannot specify which of the senses of the word is more frequent. If a word such as 'head' is classified as high-frequency, it is not clear in what sense. More importantly, the same word which is classified in the high-frequency level can

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occur quite frequently in the mid-frequency (academic) or even technical vocabulary level with a different meaning. Researchers have illuminated this in their findings. Martínez, Beck, and Panza (2009), for instance, demonstrated that there are words from the GSL that appear frequently with academic meaning and use in their academic corpus. Also, Sutarsyah, Nation, and Kennedy (1994) found that some high-frequency words and academic words are used frequently in specialized texts, playing the role of technical vocabulary.

Hyland and Tse (2007) examined the meaning of the AWL items in their corpus and found that they did not occur with the same intended meaning across disciplines. They demonstrated that words behave semantically differently in various disciplines. Words in each discipline take on highly specialized meanings that are meaningful to members of the specific disciplinary communities. They illustrated the polysemy problem of words in the AWL items through words such as 'volume' which has various preferred meanings across science and in social sciences. Using lemmas as the counting unit has been an attempt to partially tackle semantic problems. However, it is not sufficient as the polysemy problem persists.

Equating 'Academic Words' with the AWL and 'High-Frequency Words' with the GSL

Another problem with the system is that the GSL (produced by West in 1953) is introduced as the high-frequency word level. Despite its wide use, the GSL has been criticized for its age, unit of analysis, and coverage. The new-GSL, developed by Brezina and Gablasova (2015), is a newer high-frequency wordlist which can be considered as a recent update of West's GSL. Four corpora characterizing different time periods were used for development of the new-GSL. In addition to the criteria of frequency, dispersion, and distribution, lemmas were the unit of analysis. It contains 2,494 lemmas covering 80–81% of the texts. It is recommended that future word classification systems use updated and lemmatized high-frequency wordlists such as the new-GSL.

Additionally, Nation (2015) introduces the second level of his system by equating the 'academic words' with Coxhead's AWL indisputably. He recommends that the AWL be mastered by students subsequent to the first level. He seems to be closing his eyes to the rising criticisms against the AWL. Many researchers have demonstrated the limited use of the AWL for different disciplines. Chen and Ge (2007) found that only about half of the AWL's items were frequent in medical texts, and accordingly, concluded that a separate medical academic wordlist needed to be developed. Similarly, Li and Qian (2010) examined the presence of the AWL items in a financial corpus and found only a 28% overlap. Wang, Liang, and Ge (2008) found a 54.90% overlap between the AWL and their medical corpus, and attributed the marked difference of the coverage of the AWL in different corpora to the argument that different disciplinary communities require discipline-based lexical repertoires. Martínez,

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Beck, and Panza (2009) demonstrated that the AWL not only contains words that learners may not need, but it is also deficient in words that they *may* need. Finding that only 92 out of 570 words on the AWL occurred frequently in their corpus, Martínez et al. (2009) suggested that a more restricted wordlist is required to be developed. Similarly, by identifying 128 non-AWL word forms that were used quite frequently in their corpus, Vongpumivitch, Huang, and Chang (2009) showed the prospective strength of building a field-specific academic list.

Lacking an Independent Lexical Layer for Discipline- Specific Academic Vocabulary

In his explanation about the technical lexical layer, Nation (2015) introduces the notion of disciplinary variation explicitly. To do so, he discusses the differences among the technical terms of different disciplines. He asserts that medicine, botany, and zoology have very large technical vocabularies, while applied linguistics, geography, and psychology have smaller technical vocabularies. However, the existence of such disciplinary variation seems to be ignored when it comes to the academic word level. Nation's classification system assumes that after learners have mastered high-frequency words, they should move to learn mid-frequency vocabulary, which is equalized to the AWL (Nation, 2015). In this system, regardless of their disciplines and how well the AWL can serve their needs, all learners are supposed to master the AWL to move on to the next phase.

However, a cursory glance at the contributions to the EAP literature in the past decades reveals that researchers have started to develop academic wordlists for each discipline independently. As research repudiates the equal usefulness of the AWL in serving the needs of students of all disciplines, an increasing trend toward the development of discipline-specific academic wordlists has begun (Lei & Liu, 2016).

So far, academic wordlists for computer science (Lam, 2001), engineering (Ward, 2009; Mudraya, 2006; Hsu, 2014), business (Hsu, 2011), medicine (Wang, et al., 2008; Lei & Liu, 2016), agriculture (Martínez et al., 2009), environmental science (Liu & Han, 2015), nursing (Yang, 2015), chemistry (Valipouri & Nassaji, 2013), applied linguistics (Vongpumivitch et al., 2009) and language teaching and applied linguistics (Gholaminejad & Anani Sarab, 2020) have been developed. Besides, a series of discipline-specific wordlists have been generated for secondary school education, covering eight core subjects: biology, chemistry, economics, English, geology, history, mathematics, and physics (Green & Lambert, 2018). Researchers working in this area, by using corpus-based evidence, assert unanimously that a single academic wordlist cannot be used equally well for all disciplines. Furthermore, an Academic Spoken Word List (Dang, Coxhead, & Webb, 2017) has been specifically developed for comprehension of academic speech in English-medium universities, based on

the assumption that the linguistic features of academic spoken English are different from those of academic written English.

According to Gholaminejad and Anani Sarab (2020), the emergence of discipline-specific academic wordlists has shaped a new type of lexical layer at the intersection of academic words and technical terms, which can be added to Nation's classification system. Due to the lack of a clear definition for the notion of 'discipline-specific academic vocabulary' in Nation's classification system, researchers (e.g. Wang, et al., 2008; Vongpumivitch et al., 2009; Martínez et al., 2009; Valipouri & Nassaji, 2013; Yang, 2015; Lei & Liu, 2016) have adopted the common definition of 'academic vocabulary' as the words commonly used in academic texts *across different disciplines* and changed it into the words commonly used in academic texts *across different subject areas within a discipline*.

Thus, a novel construct has come into being without having a place in Nation's classification system. This has muddled up researchers, which is manifested in the unharmonious ways researchers in this area present their findings. For instance, while Ward (2009) repeatedly emphasized the "non-technicality" (p. 177) of their academic engineering wordlist throughout the paper, Wang, et al. (2008), developing a Medical Academic Word List (MAWL), included in their wordlist words such as *lesion* and *vein* that are typically classified as technical words. But they claimed that to people in medical field such words are academic. They explained that "Academic vocabulary is a class of words between technical and non-technical words and usually with technical as well as non-technical implications. The word families included in their wordlist (i.e. MAWL) are medical academic vocabulary common across various sub-disciplines of medicine but not within one single sub-discipline of medicine" (p. 451). On the other hand, Lei and Liu (2016) established a medical academic wordlist, which includes highly-technical terms such as *cytokine, endothelial* and *tomography*, as well as words typically classified as high-frequency such as *age, best* and *group*. Such disagreements in researchers' conceptualization of the academic vocabulary may be ameliorated by a clear operationalization of the construct of discipline-specific academic vocabulary in the future word classification systems.

Conclusion

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A number of issues regarding Nation's word classification system have been discussed in the present reflective paper. Considering the criticisms, we propose that the next logical stage in improving future word classification systems should consider the following suggestions. First, the word levels should be classified not only based on frequency, but also based on the sense in which the words have been frequently used. It is recommended that sense-identifying software programs, such as WordStat dictionary builder (Provalis, 2016), be developed and used for this purpose. For instance, if a word such as 'head' is classified in the

high-frequency category, it should be clear as to which sense and part of speech it occurred in the high-frequency lexical layer. Second, it is suggested future classification systems be founded on more updated and improved wordlists for the high- and mid-frequency level. Third, the construct of discipline-specific academic words needs to be added to the system as a separate level with a clear definition and operationalization.

Discipline-specific academic wordlists are important in that they focus learners' attention on the words that they most probably encounter in their own academic studies (Nation, 2013). This can create a shortcut to decrease the learning load, and also can increase learners' motivation by seeing the usefulness of the words that they have to learn and feel are relevant to their discipline. Underscoring the unique features in the academic words within disciplines, discipline-specific academic wordlists present a useful guide for EAP learners to closely meet their needs. Besides, if by vocabulary teaching we aim to help students with their academic education, then we should target students' *immediate* needs, rather than burdening them with irrelevant words they may rarely need. Students need to learn primarily those academic words which they most probably encounter in their own academic studies.

The points raised in the present paper can be useful for EAP materials developers, teachers, test developers, syllabus makers, and curriculum designers. Materials developers and syllabus makers, particularly in the development of graded readers, are recommended not to arrange the order of presenting new vocabulary merely based on the frequency-based word classification system proposed by Nation (2015). Rather, the selection and presentation of new words need to be principally a meaning-based process. That is, the most frequent sense in which words frequently occur should be the criteria for presenting the new words for each level. Furthermore, materials developers can consider adopting newer lemma-based academic wordlists and general core wordlists rather than the AWL and the GSL for developing the materials for the students of each level.[3] Finally, the materials developers working in discipline-specific areas in higher education are recommended not to use discipline-crossing academic wordlists; rather, they need to develop their materials based on the academic wordlists developed separately for each individual discipline. As previously mentioned, discipline-crossing academic wordlists, such as the AWL, are derived from the corpus of a variety of different disciplines. This overlooks the fact that each word can occur with a different sense in each discipline (Hyland & Tse, 2007).

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In addition, language teachers and test developers are recommended to present and evaluate the English language words based on the most frequent *meaning* of the word. It

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[3]   For instance, Gardner and Davies (2014) developed the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) using lemmas as the counting unit. They argued that lemmas (inflectional relationships only) should be preferred to word families (inflectional and derivational relationships) in developing wordlists. In addition, Lei and Liu (2016) and Gholaminejad and Anani Sarab (2020) developed discipline-specific academic wordlists using the new-GSL (Brezina & Gablasova, 2015).

is also suggested that teachers and test developers use lemma-based wordlists such as the new-GSL (Brezina & Gablasova, 2015) and the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) (Gardner & Davies, 2014) for teaching and testing the core general and academic vocabulary. Language syllabus makers and curriculum designers also need to consider drawing on lemma-based wordlists such as the new-GSL and the AVL in designing the ELT syllabi or curricula.

It is required that EAP teachers and test developers be aware of the disciplinary variation at the level of academic words and use discipline-specific academic wordlists for teaching and evaluating the academic vocabulary. Syllabus makers and curriculum designers also need to use discipline-specific academic wordlists to develop separate syllabi and curricula for each discipline based on the idiosyncratic lexical characteristics of each discipline in order to meet the specific academic needs of the students of each discipline.

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Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

The purpose of this declaration is to clarify the expected duties and ethical behavior for all the parties involved in the process of submission, evaluation, and selection of manuscripts sent to the *HOW* journal.

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- The Editor is responsible for maintaining the quality of the contents of the journal and, as such, has the final say on whether to accept or reject a manuscript.

- The Editor ensures that all submissions comply with the editorial policies and the guidelines for authors found on the journal website and in the print version.

- The Editor guarantees that all authors are treated fairly and their manuscripts evaluated without regard to the authors' race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, political philosophy, ethnic origin, institutional affiliation, or citizenship.

- The Editor is expected to be in constant communication with authors and reviewers about the status of a manuscript or about any other issue that may arise along the process of submission, evaluation, and selection of manuscripts and which requires the attention of some or all of the parties involved.

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- The Author submits manuscripts that follow standards of academic writing and that are based on original research. The manuscript should advance the knowledge in the

field by presenting data that are easily replicated and relevant to interested readers. Falsification and manipulation of data are unethical and unacceptable behaviors.

- The Author should consult and comply with the guidelines for authors and the editorial policies of the journal prior to the submission of a manuscript.

- The Author must be aware that practices like parallel submission (sending the same manuscript simultaneously to other journals), plagiarism, and self-plagiarism are unacceptable. All manuscripts with evidence of any of those practices will be immediately rejected and no future submissions from the same author will be considered for evaluation.

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- The authorship of a manuscript is only granted to the people who made significant contributions either during the development of the study or during the composition of the manuscript. The inclusion of "guest authors" (people who did not actually collaborate at any point but who, for some reason, are listed as authors) or the omission of "ghost authors" (authors who made significant contribution but who are not listed as authors) are unethical and unacceptable practices. People who made minor contributions can be labelled as collaborators and their help mentioned in an acknowledgement note at the end of the manuscript.

- The maximum number of authors per submission to the *HOW* journal is three. In this case, the corresponding author makes sure that the co-authors agree with the version of the manuscript submitted for evaluation or with that which results after a process of revision and resubmission.

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- The Author discloses any potential conflict of interest that may originate along the process of evaluation. The Author is also required to give information about the funding sources of the study described in the manuscript.

- The Author maintains a respectful and professional tone in the communication with the Editor and in the comments addressed to the Reviewers. The Author is entitled to object to any evaluation if it is considered poorly carried out.

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- Reviewers 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.).

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Guidelines for Contributors

HOW Journal is a biannual publication by and for teachers of English who wish to share outcomes of educational and research experiences intended to add understanding to English language teaching practices (ELT). Therefore, the journal falls within the field of education and, specifically, the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language (ESL, EFL).

HOW Journal is an academic publication led by ASOCOPI, the Colombian Association of Teachers of English. The journal is indexed in the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Latindex, Redalyc, SciELO Colombia, and Publindex-Minciencias, classified in **category C**.

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Our journal's main objective is to maintain communication among English teachers both in Colombia and abroad by offering opportunities for the dissemination of knowledge resulting from educational and research practices that concern English language teaching issues.

Deadline for submissions

The deadline for submissions of manuscripts for the first issue (published in January) is **April 1st** of the previous year. Submissions for the second issue (published in July) will be received until **October 1st** of the previous year.

Sections of the Journal

You can submit your manuscript to one of the three sections of our journal as follows:

Research Reports: In-progress and final reports of studies carried out by teacher-researchers or student-teachers studying in BA programs. The abstract of the paper should explicitly indicate this and the structure of the article should include the main components of a research report: introduction, method, results, conclusions, references, among others.

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In general, it is advisable that manuscripts contain clear pedagogic implications stated in no less than three pages. Additionally, there should be a section at the end indicating suggestions and ideas for further research in the field. **Important note:** Manuscripts signed by more than three authors will not be considered.

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Translate all excerpts, appendices, quotes, and other long pieces of information into English indicating in a footnote the original language and that the translation is 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.

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American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *APAStyle.org: Electronic references.* http://www.apastyle.org/manual/index.aspx

Conference Presentations

Rodríguez, M., Cárdenas M. L., & Aldana, C. (2008). *The design of Alex virtual courses: Challenges and implications for ELT* [PowerPoint Slides]. Plenary Session 8 at ASOCOPI Conference, Tunja, 2008.

Unpublished Master's Thesis

Ochoa, M. (2004). *Meaning negotiation in EFL project work: How students express themselves and interact with others* (Unpublished master's thesis). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá.

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