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Editorial 2023-1

Edgar Lucero¹

In this issue, HOW journal keeps the share of outcomes of local scholars' research studies and literature reviews. This new issue is another number that aims to add more understanding to English language teaching practices in Colombia and other Latin American countries; it also seeks to maintain communication among English language teachers worldwide. In this way, the journal insists on offering opportunities for disseminating knowledge resulting from educational and research practices that concern English language teaching-learning issues.

This issue is composed of eight articles. Concerning research studies, the topics are gender, culture, impact of a language teaching approach, and technological resources in ELT. In the first article, Claudia Patricia Mojica describes the main findings of a case study about the discourses and practices of an English language teacher to promote gender equity, eradicate differential treatments, and contribute positively to her students' learning experience while enrolled in a gender-based optional course. This article also presents how the dynamics of the hidden curriculum of the course affect the participating teacher's students' gender subjectivities. In the second article, Jose Adriano Barbosa Corredor reports a study on the culture and history of Colombia and Boyacá through art as part of an English language course at a private university in Colombia. Considering the narratives of three female students, analyzed under a decolonial perspective, the author reports their processes of reconstruction as sociohistorical subjects. The article then demonstrates how each student had specific anecdotes connected with culture and history of Colombia and Boyacá as they reconstructed their experiences, relationships, and plans during the development of that course topic. In the third research article, Adriana García Echeverry and Alexandra Novozhenina determine the impact of the language teaching approach of Task-Based Instruction on the writing skills of a group of intermediate English language students while taking online lessons at a private institute in Cartagena. By implementing six workshops, the authors demonstrate that teaching under this approach helped the students improve their writing

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strategies and vocabulary in English and the use of ICT tools. Besides, the implementation impacted positively their English language learning process in other language skills.

Incorporating technological resources is also part of the research articles in this issue. In the fourth article, José Antonio España Delgado presents a mixed-method study on digital resources and their impact on motivation during online lessons. The study focuses on the perceptions of a group of students concerning the implementation of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize during EFL virtual lessons. The results show that the students perceived the learning platforms as useful, entertaining, fun, and engaging; situation that increased their motivation and level of attainment to the lessons. The fifth article, by Maria Fernanda Jaime Osorio, Maria Alejandra Campos Perdomo, and Gilber Ignacio Rodriguez Artunduaga, reports the results of an exploratory and descriptive-transversal study that exposes primary and secondary school students' perceptions about their experience with remote learning during 2020's Covid-19 pandemic. The population is 101 secondary and primary school students from Neiva and Pitalito, two towns in Huila, Colombia. The findings demonstrate the potential teaching and learning issues inherent to remote education in which the participants' learning was influenced by several factors affecting interaction inside and outside of the classroom setting. Besides, with respect to the use of technology in English language lessons, Héctor Rubén Luna Martínez and Rebeca Tapia Carlín report a study on four female English language teachers' teaching practice and emotional responses while using the iPad in their lessons. The study occurred at a private primary school in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. The results show that the participants' practices and emotional responses evolved similarly during the process of the iPad implementation by following four stages: initial reactions, sense of realization, change, and adaptation.

Two out of the eight articles of this issue are literature reviews. In the seventh article, Catherine Benavides Buitrago shares the main developments related to Intersectional Identities in Colombian English Language Teaching and general educational contexts worldwide. She indicates two core trends in the review: intersectional studies in educational contexts and intersectional studies in ELT contexts. The last but not least article, another literature review, Alexánder Ramírez Espinosa presents the main research concerns of Colombian scholars regarding the place of culture in the context of Foreign Language Teacher Education programs. The article also explores the implications for curriculum design in Colombia that culture-related literature produced by scholars in the last decade can draw.

The topics of the above-introduced articles are part of the authors' current interests. Disseminating this knowledge is crucial to understanding the great variety of interests of the ELT community in Colombia, Latin American countries, and the world. Knowledge is created all around; its acknowledgment should be equitably made everywhere. These interests undoubtedly reveal the dynamism of contexts, teaching practices, pedagogical knowledge, and academic scholarship in ELT. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, there

can be multiple manners to study gender, culture, language teaching, and incorporation of technological resources in ELT; there are also reviews of intersectional identities and the place of culture in EFL education programs. HOW journal hopes that readers can consider these articles, and the previously published in other numbers, as of interest and foundation for further studies and reflections in the ELT community.

Understanding Gender in the Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum: An ELT Colombian Case Study

Comprendiendo las Dinámicas de Género en el Currículo Oculto: Un Estudio de Caso en el Contexto de la Enseñanza de Inglés en Colombia

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Abstract

This article describes the main findings of a Colombian case study in which an English language teacher, who was enrolled in a gender-based optional course, carries out small-scale research to understand gender in her ELT practices. The study aims at describing what and how English language teachers learn when they incorporate their gender consciousness in their teaching practices. The study focuses on Martha's case who seeks to understand how her learning comes about when integrating the gender perspective in her educational practices and teaching context. The qualitative analysis indicates, among other things, that Martha becomes aware of how the dynamics of the hidden curriculum affect her students' gender subjectivities. Through this learning process, Martha adopts discourses and practices to promote gender equity, eradicate differential treatments, and contribute positively to her students' learning experience.

Keywords: case study, ELT, gender, hidden curriculum, subjectivities, teachers' learning

Resumen

Este artículo describe los hallazgos más importantes de un estudio de caso colombiano en el que una profesora de inglés, quien toma un curso de género en el contexto de la enseñanza de lengua en su programa de Maestría, realiza un proyecto de investigación a escala menor para comprender la relación

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entre género y sus prácticas de la enseñanza de inglés. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo describir qué y cómo aprenden los docentes de inglés cuando incorporan su conciencia de género en sus prácticas de enseñanza. Este estudio se enfoca en el caso de Martha, quien quiere comprender cómo surge el aprendizaje de esta perspectiva en sus prácticas educativas y en su contexto de enseñanza. El análisis cualitativo indica, entre muchas cosas, que Martha se hace consciente de cómo las dinámicas del currículo oculto impactan las subjetividades de género de sus estudiantes. A través de este proceso de aprendizaje, Martha adopta discursos y prácticas para promover la equidad de género, erradicar tratos diferenciales y contribuir positivamente en la experiencia de aprendizaje de sus estudiantes.

Palabras claves: aprendizaje de los docentes, currículo oculto, estudio de caso, género, ELT, subjetividades

Introduction

In Colombia, during the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of publications and research works that focus on gender matters in foreign language teaching contexts. This is positive considering that it is through education that issues of discrimination, segregation, and gender inequity can be abolished in a society with social support (Connell, 2011). Due to the fact that the classroom or school is a place where meanings of gender are produced and have an impact on students' identities, teachers are considered to play a central role in addressing and challenging those discourses that promote sexist practices or differential treatments that little favor students' learning experiences (Litosseliti, 2006; Hruska, 2004; Sunderland, 2000). Consequently, it is pivotal that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, and all teachers in general, learn to identify and challenge ways in which discourses and classroom practices may produce inequities embodied in dominant discourses (Mojica & Castañeda-Peña, 2017).

In this line of thought, the main aim of this article is to present the most insightful findings of a case study whose teacher participated in a gendered-based optional course offered to English language teachers in a Master's Program of Applied Linguistics of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Bogotá, Colombia. The objective of the course was to raise gender awareness and to help teachers find or reflect on gender matters in their teaching settings and practices². This is one of the three cases that I, as the researcher of the cited study, addressed as part of my doctoral dissertation with the objective to understand what and how English language teachers learn when they incorporate their gender consciousness in their teaching practices. Thus, this multi-case study allowed me to explore aspects related to English language teachers' education, their learning trajectories, gendered practices, and roles with the aim to reach gender equity in their classrooms.

² A complete description of this course can be found in Mojica & Castañeda-Peña (2017, 2021).

Nowadays, integrating national and international mandates to reach gender equity is an important task that the educational systems of all countries committed to the Sustainable Development Goals have; hence, this aim could be reached if teachers are involved in a pedagogical process that leads them to become aware of gender in schooling. On the one hand, while I was doing the literature review of my doctoral dissertation, I learnt that there were a few pedagogical experiences in Colombia that accounted for teachers' learning of this perspective in their teaching contexts (i.e., Calvo et al., 2006). On the other hand, similar experiences in which EFL teachers put into practice their gender awareness in their learning contexts were scarce. In this sense, this research report might provide hints for Teaching English Programs to include gender as a category of learning in their courses. Additionally, English language teachers may find fruitful to learn paths to incorporate this view within their daily reflection and practices.

In this article, I present the theoretical and methodological frameworks under which the study was conducted. After that, the background of the case along with the research questions will be described. Then, a section named findings and discussion presents a few relevant examples of the data collected in the light of the two categories that emerged in the study. At the end, I describe a number of implications and conclusions that may be applied for the contexts of other ELT teachers in Colombia.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most relevant categories for the analysis of the data collected in this study is the *teachers' learning*. The sociocultural perspective offers a helpful framework called '*Participate and Learn*', or *Communities of Practice* (Wenger, 1998; Johnson, 2009). This category was chosen as it entails features that account for the ways a teacher can learn to raise her/his gender awareness in the teaching endeavor.

Participate and Learn views teachers' learning as an *in-situ* process in which participants construct meanings based on the particular settings and conditions where they work (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Johnson, 2009). In this sense, learning is contextualized, and it depends on an ongoing engagement with other members of the community. In other words, learning is produced as a reflection on the participation in the teaching contexts where teachers are situated. The cited authors connect the issue of the participation with a collaborative work done with other(s), who ideally are more experts on the skill, theme, or perspective that is intended to be learnt. In this interaction, both novice³ teachers and more experienced teachers produce and co-construct situated learning based on the reflection

³ A 'novice' teacher in this case refers to a teacher who has little or no experience in incorporating the gender perspective in the teaching practice.

and the dialogic mediation that responds to the questions, the learning objectives, and the situations that they are trying to understand, as reflected in this quote:

Teaching as a dialogic mediation involves contributions and discoveries by learners, as well as the assistance of an “expert” collaborator, or teacher. Instruction in such collaborative activity is contingent on teachers’ and learners’ activity and related to what they are trying to do. The assisting teacher provides information and guidance relevant to furthering learners’ current goal-directed activity. Both information and guidance need to be provided in a way that is immediately responsive and proportionate to learners’ varying needs. (Johnson, 2009, p. 63)

In this case, the dialogic mediation allows novice teachers and the more expert teacher to communicate and verbalize their ideas, beliefs, and assumptions about their gender subjectivities or the historical understandings that have been formed in the culture with respect to gender equity, education, and teaching practices. Hence, learning to be gender aware in the EFL context is a subjective, context-dependent, and in-situ process that is informed by cultural, social, and historical discourses about gender and education (Mojica, 2017; Mojica & Castañeda-Peña, 2021).

Accordingly, language teacher’s learning is not produced when they learn generic principles and contents; Kumaravadivelu (2001) argues that teacher’s learning does not happen when teachers directly apply the expert theories that they have learned; rather, he sees learning as an individual process in which teachers construct personal theories about their practices as teachers. This model aims at closing the gap between theory and practice by suggesting that it is important to involve teachers in research-like activities through which reflective teaching and learning can be produced. Those activities lead them to discover genuine and relevant questions for the collaborative work between them, as possible novice teachers, and more expert teachers when learning to incorporate the gender perspective in their classrooms.

Gender & Education

Learning to integrate gender in the ELT classroom involves, from a critical approach, understanding that language classrooms are epistemological sites in which students learn different meanings about gender, class, race, and other social categories; thus, what happens in the classrooms is connected to macro social and cultural structures in the society (Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Alonso-Geta & Sánchez, 2011). Within this view, schools are not neutral places where students simply learn knowledge related to a subject; instead, those are places in which students may learn to reproduce the status quo of dominant groups through social and cultural practices or discourses (Giroux, 2006). Clearly, teachers aware of this can play an important role in challenging these forms of inequity to help students discover, critique, and subvert those forms of oppression and domination (Giroux, 2006).

Therefore, in this study, being a language educator entails being concerned not only about teaching English successfully, but also recognizing how teachers' scenarios and practices may reproduce gender inequities.

This study then positions gender as a category beyond the dichotomic sex difference (male or female). Following Butler (1990) and Foucault (1972), gender is a socio-cultural construction in which the bodies are connected and informed by historical and cultural discourses and practices. Litosseliti (2006) shares this vision and argues that “gender refers to the social behaviors, expectations and attitudes associated with being male and female [...] gendered identities are both social and individual, but also variable [...]” (p.1). The gender identity is an ongoing process that individuals construct drawing on the available historical discourses about men and women; however, these discourses are not fixed, people may adopt or embody different forms of masculine and feminine.

Therefore, to guarantee a more educational and inclusive view of this concept, I find helpful to position gender from a perspective of multiplicity to avoid identifying womanhood and manhood as fixed and opposed discourses. Thus, “there is not a particular masculinity, but masculinities; and there is not a single femininity, but femininities [...]” (Castañeda-Peña, 2009, p. 25). The main goal of this perspective is to step aside from rigid, hegemonic, and often discriminatory discourses of how the genders should ideally be and act in the world.

Methodology

Considering the participants' role and the research objective in this study, two methodological paradigms were implemented: Case study (Stake 2006) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). As stated above, I report here the insights that emerged from one of the cases that I selected in the doctoral research project. The participant of this case is a teacher who enrolled on an optional course of a Master Program for English language teachers. The learning objective of the course was to raise gender awareness in the English language teaching contexts. To do this, the student-teachers (STs) were asked to do a small-scale research project in which they posed genuine questions that they wanted to explore as part of their learning in the course. While doing this, some STs accepted to be assisted by one of the teachers of the course (ToT) to do their data analysis. In fact, the cases selected for this study were STs who were willing to work collaboratively with one of the teachers in this course (ToT)⁴ in their own research agendas concerning gender in their English teaching scenarios.

⁴ ToT refers to the acronym Teacher of Teacher coined by Maggioli (2012).

Since the category of teachers' learning of gender was going to happen through the research-like activity, the ST became a researcher and participant of this research. Thereby, one of the methodological frameworks I drew on in this study was Participatory Action Research. My participation in this study was not only to observe and collect data, but also to assist the STs with their small-scale research project. Within this context of the collaborative work between the STs and the ToT, PAR is a paradigm that facilitates the production of knowledge based on the participation and the collective learning in the research activity (Small, 1995; Calderon & Cardona, 2014). In this sense, the learning is a process of co-construction that emerges through the interpretations of the participants, in this case the STs and the ToT, while experiencing the small-scale research.

The second paradigm chosen was a case study. This framework was selected as it allows researchers "experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and its particular situation" (Stake, 2006, p. 3). In this study, 'experiencing the activity of the case' means that both the STs and the ToT account for their interpretations of the situations lived as they progress on the small-scale project. In this line of thought, the case study is a qualitative research framework that is based on the participants' experiential knowledge (Stake, 2006). These two epistemological frameworks are congruent in that both promote the construction of the reality using the intersubjective meanings and interpretations that are produced in the participants' mutual interaction of the situations and contexts under study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Several instruments of the qualitative research were used and designed to collect the data. For example, for the participant Martha (see further information below), to whom I focus on this article, I visited her teaching context and video recorded seven of her English language classes. The school where she worked gave us full support and consent to do the recordings and to develop her small-scale project. Afterwards, she and I met three times to talk about the video recorded class observations. I also transcribed and recorded those encounters that lasted from one to three hours each. Additionally, I designed a series of semi-structure interviews based on the class observations and the Martha's logs from the course. The interviews were to raise gender awareness, orient the analysis, and cover key issues that emerged during the class observations and connected with her research questions.

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Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) was the approach used to analyze the data collected since I intended to identify the categories that naturally emerged in each case. In this process, the data were organized using a software to do an open coding (axial coding). These codes were labeled and grouped with other codes that share similar features; this merging process allowed me to discover the complexity and scope of each category. At the end of this process, I used two forms of triangulation associated with peer triangulation; one in which I asked the STs to validate the interpretations of the data analysis and the other in which I invited other researchers familiar with the study to cross-examine the data and interpretations.

Background of the Case Study

This case study is about an English language teacher named Martha, a pseudonym, who has more than 10 years of experience as a teacher. She works for a private bilingual school in Bogotá- Colombia, she is a homeroom teacher⁵, and she also teaches Math, Science, and Religion in different grades of the primary section. However, she decided to conduct her small-scale study with a group of third graders in her English language classes since the study aimed at understanding the relationship between her English language teaching practices and the category of gender. Martha's group is compounded of 14 girls and 11 boys whose ages range between eight and nine years old. English is taught six hours per week.

As a student in the course about gender and language learning, Martha kept a journal in which she reflected on her teaching context. In one of her class observations, she noticed unusual behaviors from one of her male students that did not correspond to the social expectation of what male students are supposed to do. This reflection allowed Martha to formulate a first genuine research question: How are gender identities expressed through interactions in my EFL classroom of third graders? Hence, most of our collaborative work focused on understanding the issue of interaction gender-wise. Nonetheless, two questions guided this research study: “What does this English language teacher learn about the meaning of a gendered practice in the framework of a gender-oriented course in their English language teaching education?” and “How does this English language teacher learn to incorporate her gender awareness in her teaching practices?” Based on these two research questions, I present the main findings and categories emerged from the data collected.

Findings and Discussion

Figure 1 below shows a summary of the category and subcategories that answer the first research question. These categories emerged from the cross-analysis of the three case studies that I analyzed for the doctoral dissertation.

Nonetheless, I only present here the data from Martha's case to illustrate what happens in the teaching practices of the *hidden curriculum* since the *interaction* is the main issue that Martha is interested in learning. The hidden curriculum is usually understood as the set of values and norms that are transmitted to students through implicit messages by which they are socialized about issues related to gender, race, class, authority, academic knowledge, abilities, among others (Posner, 2005). In other words, the hidden curriculum corresponds to

⁵ A homeroom teacher usually has more formative responsibilities with a particular group. Martha decides to work with the third-grade group as she feels that she knows it more since she has a closer relationship with those students.

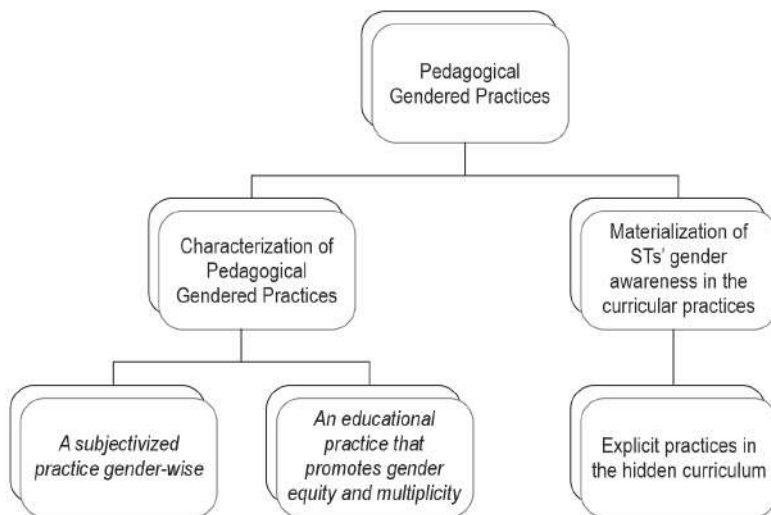


Figure 1. Pedagogical Gendered Practices 1

the discourses of the school culture, and intentional but subtle actions camouflaged inside the dynamics of everyday class interactions.

The category of Pedagogical Gendered Practices is divided into two subcategories: characterization of the pedagogical gendered practices and the materialization of the ST’s gender awareness in the curricular practices.

Characterization of the Pedagogical Gendered Practices

The analysis of the data indicate that the characterization of the pedagogical gendered practices has two main features: (a) it is a subjectivized practice gender-wise in which the practice is educational; (b) it promotes gender equity and multiplicity. Thus, what does a subjectivized practice gender-wise mean? The following example is helpful to illustrate this:

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Extract 1

“I had always taken for granted that gender relations among my students were “normal”, “normal” in terms of the socially fixed roles of girls and boys in everyday situations. What I had evidenced [sic] in the gendered behavior of the children seemed “natural”: on the one hand, girls helping me organize the classroom’s tables into perfect rows, playing with their teddy bears and dolls during recess time, keeping their uniforms really neat, behaving respectfully, or having conflict with other

girls (as it happens among women); on the other hand, boys playing only soccer or other rough games, employing rude words, behaving disrespectfully and disruptively, or being careless about their personal appearance. To me it had been always the way it had to be just because, as claimed by Connell (2002, p. 3), “These (gender) arrangements are so common, so familiar that they can seem part of the order of nature.” (Log.)

As it can be noted in this extract, Martha presents a few of her gender subjectivities constructed in her experience as a teacher. The subjectivity refers to a set of meanings that individuals construct because of their participation and socialization in the world. Following García-Muñoz (2014), this concept is based on the relation subject-culture through which people make sense of themselves (how to be, feel, and act) in the interaction with others in the world. This subjectivity implies an understanding of the masculinity in opposition to the femininity, Martha positions these gender differences as something that is normal according to the social behaviors for the sexes in the school organization and the cultural practices.

Other evident aspects in this first extract become part of our conversations with Martha. First, there is an explicit exercise in which this teacher becomes aware of daily gender practices at the school. This is important for Martha’s learning since she begins to identify what she has usually taken for granted; this implies opportunities of reflection and transformation. Besides a process of awareness, Martha describes several negative consequences that these gender behaviors may bring, such as the fact of accepting that boys are disrespectful and disruptive in classes as it is inevitable for them to act like that because they are boys. The third aspect of the analysis shows that Martha writes the word *normal* using quotations, this may be interpreted as a way of questioning the naturalization of these gender constructions. To sum up, Martha becomes aware of these gender arrangements that had passed unnoticed and made her believe that they were part of the “natural order” of her classroom dynamics. Discovering and reflecting on these issues suggest a step forward in Martha’s understanding of how gender subjectivities are configured and materialized in the socialization process (García Suárez, 2004).

One of the central themes discussed with Martha had to do with what happens in the interaction when the gender expectations unmet traditional gender constructions, or when the masculinities or femininities differed from what people attributed for boys or girls as normal. The next extract describes what Martha found in her context:

Extract 2

“A gender issue I have been able to identify in the educational field I am immersed in has to do with a boy who is constantly “on the girls’ side”. Such “out of order” gender behavior made me really concerned as I thought it could possibly bring rejection on the part of the boys or even on the part of the girls. I started to closely observe the possible implications his “feminine” behavior could be bringing in his relationships with peers, but I could evidence [sic] nothing about

bullying, rejection, or inequality in the relationships of the group. Then, something else happened, his mother told me about how his behavior troubled her and his dad. She asked me to provide opportunities for him to feel integrated into “more masculine” activities.” (Log 02)

This “out of order” behavior is what inspired Martha to formulate her initial research question. Martha described this boy as a different student who did not behave as it was described in the Extract 1. In other words, this boy does not have, according to Martha, a hegemonic masculinity. Under this circumstance, this boy’s masculinity is misjudged causing others to question its legitimacy, as it can be read in this example: a boy who is constantly “on the girls’ side”. This conveys a risk in educational scenarios, children who do not fall into these hegemonic subjectivities can be object of rejection, bullying, and inequality as it was well stated by Martha.

Another aspect that is interesting to notice is the fact that this boy’s mother is also able to identify this type of masculinity as something strange or as Martha mentioned “out of order”. In this respect, García Suárez (2004) states that subjectivities are not a product of individual thought but rather a set of understandings produced in the interaction with others in the world and in the processes of intersubjectivity that are constructed in everyday conversations. Therefore, it is not strange to see that both Martha and this boy’s mother have hegemonic subjectivities in relation to the masculinity. Then, the hegemonic subjectivities refer to fixed and essentialist ways to interpret and see the masculinity and femininity. They are sustained from a patriarchal perspective from which the gendered bodies are materialized in a symbolic order of the cultural practices and discourses about women and men (García-Muñoz, 2014).

Contrary to the hegemonic subjectivity, this boy embodies attitudes and behaviors often associated as feminine; in this scenario, Gramsci’s work contributes to understanding the power relations and culture “one group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At a given time, one form of masculinity [or femininity¹¹⁸] rather than others is culturally exalted” (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Conversely, the Extract 3 shows that Martha, through the collaborative work and our dialogues, becomes aware of adopting alternative ways to interpret her students’ gender subjectivities and embrace the difference as part of having a more educational discourse or practice as a language educator.

18

Extract 3

“I would say that my perception on gender has changed. I used to think of girls and boys from a differential perspective, assuming fixed manners in which they should behave, talk, and interact with others, but I have **become aware** of the multiplicity of gender identities coexisting in my teaching environment and how they can hinder or foster learning opportunities.” (Survey)

This example is taken from a survey that Martha and other STs filled out at the end of the course about gender and English teaching contexts. Here, it is possible to identify

that a gendered practice implies becoming aware of gender ways that are different from the binary hegemonic constructions; this is what I named in this study as ‘resisting subjectivities.’ These refer to those discourses in which there are alternative ways to interpret and embrace the masculinity and femininity (Mojica, 2017). Thus, the gendered practice allows a teacher to adopt a more inclusive and pluralistic view or discourse through which it is possible to recognize these non-traditional constructions as legitimate and valid (Muñoz-Onofre, 2004).

In this sense, teachers who adopt a gender view within their teaching scenarios can orientate a more educational practice that promotes gender equity and multiplicity. The following extract illustrates the second feature of a gendered practice. An educational practice that promotes gender equity and multiplicity.

Extract 4

“You see... generally what happens in the classroom when their school bags are disorganized, that you noticed it is quite common, eh, I always used to say “three girls who help me organize the bags” but I have not done it lately. Then, in that sense I am assuming one of those three positions, I mean... last time you were not here (ST referring to the ToT), but I assigned Tomas, the big one [...] to do that and I have just become aware of this; that I used to say “three girls who help me with the bags, a girl who stays in and tidy this room up, and I realized that boys also like to help with that too [...] absolutely, then I cannot imagine that by saying “three girls who tie up” I was reinforcing that social construct that comes since... I do not know when.” (Interview 3)

An educational practice, according to this example, means that the ST recognizes how she may reinforce messages that contribute to perpetuating traditional sex roles through her discourses and interactions; in this case, girls are usually assigned to do tasks related to tidying the classroom. This is considered an educational practice in which Martha makes changes in her discourses to send implicit messages that promote gender equity; as a result, her students can learn that this type of task can be performed by either girls or boys. In the hidden curriculum, these types of implicit messages break with traditional and normative discourses, which are relevant for the construction of her students’ gender subjectivities. This extract exemplifies the way this ST puts into practice her gender awareness in her curricular practices.

Materialization of STs’ Gender Awareness in the Curricular Practices

This category describes the ways Martha discovers that she may impact or affect her students’ learning (as indicated in Extract 4 above). In Figure 1, this category has a sub-category named explicit practices in the hidden curriculum. These practices correspond to intentional but subtle actions or discourses camouflaged inside the dynamics of everyday class interactions (the hidden curriculum). According to the data analysis, Martha’s practices are a result of her reflection on matters related to the interaction among classroom actors and class participation.

An important theme that was analyzed in our collaborative work had to do with identifying different types of femininities and masculinities. To do that, Martha and I observed her video-recorded classes; then, we made a few notes concerning issues of class interaction among her students and talked about them as they emerged. The following example shows what happens in Martha's class when students are asked to work in groups.

Extract 5

Martha: [...] and **he** sits right next to a boy like Tom who is a manipulative boy [sic], and sometimes intimidates others, and he is domineering [...] but I had to immediately take him away from him; and I know that Ricky is more... he is more supportive with his classmates, and with the girls, he has good cross-gendered relationships with those girls, they love him. (Interview 2)

I contextualize the situation to understand this example. Martha is describing here three boys, the first one [he] is a boy who is a well-behaved and quiet student; he is also constructed by Martha as a low achiever who hardly ever participates in class. Tom, the second student, is characterized by hegemonic masculinity as explained by Martha in Excerpt 5. The third one is Ricky, a boy who seems to get along with the girls and boys; he is constructed as a good student, academically speaking, who is appreciated by the girls in the group but who does not often participate in class; yet, when he is asked a question, he can answer it correctly. Characterizing Martha's students during our conversations allows us to identify different types of masculinities and femininities in her classroom. Thus, for instance, the first boy's masculinity is constructed considering the characteristics described earlier; therefore, he is classified in the group of the '*quiet boys*'. Ricky's masculinity belongs to the group of the 'bookworm boys' and Tom's masculinity belongs to the group of the 'naughty boys'. There was a total of four groups that we managed to identify during the analysis. Nonetheless, why is this analysis an example of an explicit practice in the hidden curriculum?

Besides recognizing the different masculinities and femininities in this group, the exercise is helpful for Martha in that she discovers that masculinities are not fixed constructions but that there are other legitimate ways of being masculine. More importantly, when Martha problematizes femininities and masculinities and the relationship that her students established with others, the existence of certain masculinities and femininities that facilitate or hinder group activities or collaborative work among peers in her class was evident. In Extract 5, Martha comments that she had to relocate the 'quiet boy' to another group because his group work would be affected negatively and because there may be problems between Tom and this boy. Within this view, Martha learned that these types of relationships may affect the interaction among the students in ways that support or constrain the possibilities of learning together in the classroom. This finding suggests that teachers who learn to recognize the complexities of the class interaction gender-wise will be able to find ways to deal with those complexities within their teaching contexts.

Class participation was another point of analysis and transformation in the development of collaborative work. One of the first things Martha and I learned about participation in this particular group was that not all students had the same access to the process of participation. As it is illustrated in Extract 6, participation was constructed through power exercises produced within the class interaction.

Extract 6

“There are four well-differentiated groups in the class: (1) SOCIALLY SKILLED- ACADEMICALLY “POOR”: They are popular among their peers, very talkative and outgoing. Although their discourse is dominant, their participation is not relevant to the development of the lessons, they tend to be disruptive. There are girls and boys in this group (more boys than girls). (2) SOCIALLY SKILLED-ACADEMICALLY SKILLED: They are respected and valued among peers. Their participation is really relevant for the development of the lessons. There are as many girls as boys in this group. (3) SOCIALLY POOR- ACADEMICALLY SKILLED: Although they are academically very talented, their social skills are not well developed, they are not very popular among their peers, and their shyness does not allow them to interact very successfully in class. (4) SOCIALLY POOR-ACADEMICALLY POOR: They are not popular among their peers, they depend on what the others say and rarely participate not only because of their lack of social skills but because of their lack of academic strength.” (ST’S Final research report)

In this example, Martha characterizes three types of participation: academically, disruptive, and silent. In this process, we discover three elements that constitute access to class participation: knowledge or lack of knowledge, popularity in the group, and students’ disruption. Although Martha explains that there are boys and girls in each of these accesses to participation, she eventually recognizes the existence of several tendencies in which boys usually have more access to class participation. This analysis is done considering the different types of femininities and masculinities identified in the group. For instance, more boys were classified with disruptive participation given their masculinity. We also identify more girls than boys who seem to be better academically; despite this, they were classified with silent participation. Nonetheless, the analysis suggests that there are girls and boys with low participation.

Within the analysis of the class participation, Martha and I revised her video-recorded classes and identified aspects of frequency of class participation, strategies to access class participation, inequalities in participation, and ways in which power relationships were evident in the class. While doing this, Martha became aware of her role during class participation. The next example illustrates this.

Extract 7

“Whereas Sara and Blanca immediately obey the teacher’s direction and sit down without making any attempt to negotiate the rule, Tom intends to manipulate the situation and looks at the teacher

as if he wanted to subvert the rule imposed on him. Also, the teacher gives a differential treatment to the situation; when the two girls approach her, she doesn't look at them or hear what they need to say, she just tells them to sit down and that is exactly what the girls do. In Tom's case, the teacher stops talking, approaches him and looks at him for a moment, reminding him of the necessity to be attentive in class. As soon as the teacher turns, Tom continues to behave disruptively. Through such a differential treatment, the teacher unwittingly fosters inequalities among girls and boys, empowering who is already empowered and silencing the powerless." (Small-scale report)

Here Martha problematizes her own role within the process of participation. First, she identifies the strategy employed by Tom to negotiate the class rule; then, she compares the way she as a teacher reacted with the boy and the two girls, indicating a differential treatment. Finally, she judges herself for this treatment and recognizes the consequences this has on her students' subjectivities. The process of critical reflection in Martha's small-scale project becomes paramount to discover things that had passed unnoticed in her daily teaching practice. Within this process of critical reflection, the Extract 8 shows the way Martha starts implementing strategies to promote different subtle messages to her students and to bring more gender equity in her class participation.

Extract 8

"[...] that's something I tried to do because, I found the recordings really relevant; because there are some things that I am not aware of while giving the class. The other day I told you, Clara raising her hand for more than 10 minutes and I think... was I there? So why I didn't see her, and she was in front of me. So, I was trying to take care of that situation and to empower those students as I said here, as I wrote, some of them, Richy for example, Pamela, they are academically speaking good but they never, they very rarely say, they rarely participate [...]" (Audio-recording)

Based on the inequities identified in this group, Martha proposed several strategies to improve the balance in the class participation. These changes aimed at empowering those students with low participation, such as Richy and Pamela in Extract 8, and at reacting more effectively in class when students with a high participation drew on their strategies to obtain a turn to speak in class. In Extract 9, Martha acknowledges that this is not an easy task; however, she was convinced that it was important to regulate and lessen the gender inequities in her teaching context to guarantee a better learning experience for all her students.

Extract 9

Martha: So, I was telling you that my intention was to empower those silent students, to provide them with more opportunities to participate in class, right? In that sense, I started to regulate their participation more and to make it more evident. Although sometimes I notice that manage to do it, but sometimes I cannot do it, right? Like in the last class that [inaudible] he was rising his hand during the whole class, and I thought... but how come? (Interview)

This example shows that although Martha tries to regulate the speaking turns to empower the silent students to participate more in class, she still needs to manage this with more balance. Consequently, this is an ability in which Martha needs to keep working to improve her students' learning opportunities.

So far, I have presented data to answer the question 'What does this English language teacher learn about the meaning of a gendered practice?' Now I present data to address the question "How does this English language teacher learn to incorporate her gender awareness in her teaching practices?"

Martha's Learning Trajectory

The following figure shows the characteristics of Martha's learning trajectory according to the data analysis.

The question about how a ST learns and owns this perspective in his/her teaching practices can be addressed by analyzing what happened in the experience of doing the small-scale project in collaboration. Therefore, learning emerges as a result of having engaged in reading, observing, experimenting (innovating new practices), talking to a ToI, who helped the ST reflects on what had happened in their classroom. In Martha's case, and as it is illustrated in Extract 10, learning means to become aware of naturalized daily practices in the dynamics of her hidden curriculum.

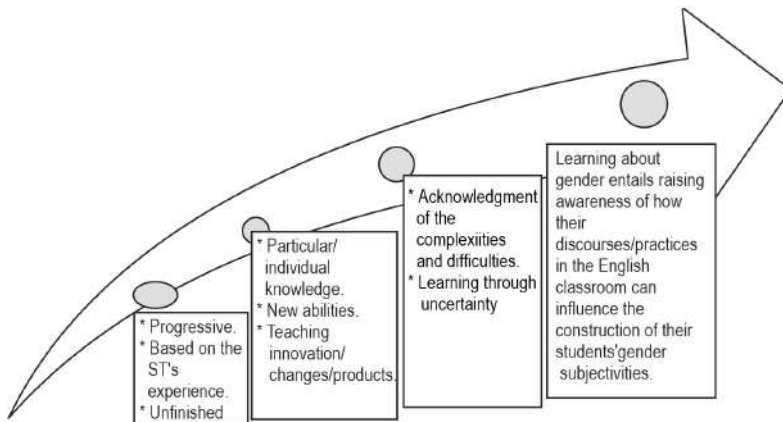


Figure 2. Learning Trajectories 1

Extract 10

Martha: If I had to tell someone what the course was about, I would say that it was aimed at empowering teachers with useful tools to unveil the gender identities present in the educational scenarios and the way in which they are connected with learning opportunities, power relationships, or inequities not only in the classroom but in different areas of social interaction. (Survey)

Several aspects can be analyzed in this extract. First, Martha refers to the word ‘unveil’ in different moments of our conversations to describe that this learning experience helped her become aware of things that she used to take for granted or as normal. In this sense, learning can be assumed as a process of discoveries that STs make in their teaching context. Learning is in-situ as Wenger (1998) describes it; consequently, what Martha learned was not the same as what other STs of the course learned. Second, Martha considers her learning to represent a ‘tool’ to improve her students’ learning experiences as well as to understand and discover gender inequities that may be taking place in her teaching scenario. Martha also believes that, beyond discovering gender inequities, it is important for her to find ways to lessen or eradicate them and to better her students’ learning.

In the following extract, Martha reflects on the role the ToT had within this process.

Extract 11

ToT: [...] How do you feel about the analysis Martha?

Martha: well, I feel it helps me, in the sense that ... and I was telling you the other day, I do not know up to what point my eyes can see, no, no, no

ToT: they cannot see...

Martha: Yes, yes, and somehow your questions, without saying that I have not thought about it before, they give me a path, they help me. The first time we met, we managed to explain so many things that I had thought about before but not in that systematic way. Maybe pieces here and there and somehow the questions helped me to orient the whole thing. And new little things keep emerging in the way. (Audio 2) [Own translation]

I would like to emphasize the fact that I unexpectedly directed Martha’s actions or decisions in her small-scale research experience. The way I see it, this process was more about discovering things *with* the ST as we lived the experience of working together on her project. As it can be read in the example, Martha recognizes that working in collaboration with the ToT oriented her analysis and helped her reassure what she had seen and taken as normal in her classroom. In the first part of the analysis, Martha talks about what she could or could not see in the recording of her classes. She manifests that sometimes she felt she could not see anything in her classes and that she was uncertain of her reflections and observations. Hence, she acknowledges that doing this small-scale project was a difficult process in which the collaborative analysis had a key role. In summary, learning is progressive; Martha is

learning as she lives the experience of her reflection and observation in her research activity. However, this is an unfinished process. Martha needs to continue learning; for example, how to find ways to create strategies to lessen gender inequities. In the case of the analysis of the participation, Martha states that it is difficult to do this; she sometimes manages to regulate her students' speaking turns, but she still cannot react at the right moment. Consequently, she needs to keep sharpening her learning abilities gender-wise.

Conclusions

The analysis of this pedagogical experience led me to conclude several aspects that can be generalized for other teachers in the process of integrating gender within their teaching practices. This view offers teachers the possibility to think of themselves more as language educators rather than just language instructors. I present a key conclusion that Martha manifested in the last interview:

Martha: And above all, I'd say learning with respect to how I can remove that veil from my eyes, and see a bit beyond, I think [...] and I have opened my eyes in such a way that now I am able to see other things and not only the worksheet, the filling the blank activity, or the song, but more in relation to other matters related to power relations [...]. (Interview 3)

This conclusion suggests that teachers may discover the complexity and the political responsibilities they have as teachers through these experiences. Martha points out that her learning can be compared with being able to see things that passed unnoticed by her in her teaching exercise. Therefore, recognizing the role that students' subjectivities play in the construction of a country that aims to reach gender equity in society is important to learn. Within this view, a teacher can recognize her English language classrooms not only as places where students learn English but also as places where gender meanings are reproduced in the dynamics of the hidden curriculum. In this scenario, teachers may have opportunities to create strategies or ways to promote gender equity according to the contexts, needs, or situations where they work.

Additionally, in the exercise of learning this perspective, Martha develops a critical analysis in which she had to interpret and problematize those meanings of gender that did not promote values of equity, justice, and tolerance towards gender difference. This suggests that teachers become aware of their social and political responsibility as language educators by understanding their own hegemonic and resisting subjectivities in tune with educational practices or discourses. This allows teachers to propose ways to incorporate discourses and practices to work against meanings of oppression, domination, and discrimination.

Finally, this study also leads me to conclude that English language teachers' professional development needs to prepare future teachers to become aware of gender matters

in schooling. To do this, schools of education in Colombia ought to construct a critical teaching proposal that leads teachers to live an experience in which they can be autonomous researchers who are constantly analyzing their classes, problematizing what happens in their teaching milieu, finding solutions, and critically judging the practicality of those solutions in their contexts. As discussed in these findings, teachers' learning of this perspective is facilitated when assisting them in their reflection processes and their research projects.

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Stories to Wake Up: Women Narratives Reconstructing Themselves as Sociohistorical Subjects

Historias para Despertar: Narrativas de Mujeres que se Reconstruyen como Sujetos Sociohistóricos

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Abstract

This article reports on a research conducted at a private university in Colombia, as part of an English language course in which the topics of study addressed the culture and history of Colombia and Boyacá through art. Narratives from three female students were analyzed, from a decolonial perspective, to observe their processes of reconstruction as sociohistorical subjects considering their experiences in the contexts where they study, live in, and come from. The data for this research was gathered inside and outside the classroom through learners' diaries and dialogical interviews held with the researcher. Narratives served the purpose of making visible elements of those processes and allowed to explore three of them: (1) The construction of particular relationships in and with the world; (2) a perception of unity of past, present, and future; and (3) a sense of their personal and spiritual growth in time. Nevertheless, the narrative of each participant had unique features and values. The results showed that each female had specific anecdotes constructing their experiences, relationships, and plans in their world. One conclusion of the study refers to how the relevance of family, context, childhood memories, and life expectations offer meaningful and memorable topics of discussion within English language lessons for undergraduate learners.

Keywords: English language course, decolonial studies, narratives, reasoning, sociohistorical subjects

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Resumen

Este artículo reporta una investigación que se desarrolló en una universidad privada en Colombia como parte de un curso de inglés en el que los temas de trabajo se dirigieron hacia la cultura y la historia de Colombia y Boyacá en diferentes expresiones artísticas. Las narrativas de tres mujeres fueron analizadas, desde una perspectiva decolonial, para observar sus procesos de reconstrucción como sujetos sociohistóricos teniendo en cuenta sus experiencias en los contextos en donde ellas estudian, viven y provienen. Los datos de esta investigación se recogieron dentro y fuera del salón de clase por medio de diarios escritos por los estudiantes y entrevistas dialógicas sostenidas con el investigador. Las narrativas visibilizaron algunos elementos de esos procesos y permitieron explorar tres de ellos: 1) Relaciones particulares en y con el mundo; 2) una percepción de unidad de pasado, presente y futuro; y 3) una idea de crecimiento personal y espiritual en el tiempo. Sin embargo, las narrativas de cada uno de los participantes tienen características y valores particulares. Los resultados mostraron, de manera general, que cada mujer tiene anécdotas que construyen sus experiencias, relaciones y planes en su mundo. Una conclusión de este estudio señala cómo la relevancia de la familia, el contexto, los recuerdos de infancia y las expectativas de vida ofrecen temas de discusión significativos y memorables dentro de las clases de inglés de estudiantes de pregrado.

Palabras claves: curso de inglés, estudios decoloniales, narrativas, razonamiento, sujetos sociohistóricos

Introduction

This paper details a research process conducted with the participation of three female students from a private university in Boyacá, Colombia. The main objective was to explore what women narratives revealed about their reconstruction as sociohistorical subjects. The main elements observed were related to their relationships in and with the world, the reconstruction of their experiences in time, and their ideas about their personal and spiritual growth. Although the information that they provided connected to these elements, each narrative was singular and had unique elements to them. Thus, one of the outcomes was not a categorization of elements in the construction of a sociohistorical subject but an outline of the participants' voices.

Rather than a generalizing theory, the information analyzed during the research process was connected to a theoretical discussion. This allowed presenting the participants individually and portraying their unique voices, experiences, and perspectives. The initial contact between the teacher-researcher and the participants occurred in an English language class. The initial intention was to locate the research process beyond classroom borders and get a closer understanding of the participants. When offering reflecting opportunities inside and outside the actual space of the English language class and by establishing dialogs with students beyond the authority system in the relationship between a teacher and learners, the borders of the English lessons are transgressed. Then, the information was gathered, inside

and outside the classroom, through a diary that they wrote, and dialogical interviews held with the researcher. That information allowed the researcher to organize and study their ideas as part of a narrative.

In this study, narratives are understood both (1) as the way a person portrays experience in the world in connection with cultural representations, social constructions, and historical heritages; as well as (2) a body of ideas containing meanings and providing a channel to power manifestations. The use of narratives has generally been associated with what diverse social groups and contexts express. Narrative explorations have consistently focused on critical race methodologies, particularly conditions such as IVF (In Vitro Fertilization), motherhood experiences (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004), identity construction of LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual) groups, and even violent extremism, which is believed to transmit a determined narrative. Thus, approaching a personal narrative represents the possibility to defy hegemonies, i.e., the “success of the dominant class in presenting their definitions of reality and truth” (Chisholm, 2015, p. 1).

Not only a way to display the self and identities (Guerrero, 2011), a narrative refers to power discourses that take the form of language. Human beings live immersed in a narrative (Polkinghorne, 1988). The ambivalence of the term locates narratives both in the individual action and in social interaction. From a sociohistorical stand, a narrative can also represent the synergy of “past, present and imagined worlds” (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 19). Having Latin America as the big context of the research process conducted, past, present, and imagined worlds cannot be thought of without including colonialism and the demands for proposals and critiques of the existing social orders from a contextualized standpoint or, as Santos (2009) proposes it, thoughts and actions from our South.

The process aimed to be an alternative approach to English Language Teaching (ELT) practices; understanding that the learners to the language classroom own a past, have expectations about their future, and are not there to reproduce grammar rules or statements only. What they have to say is important and could be the point of departure to discuss perceptions of history and society. English language teaching and learning is the opportunity to approach history under a decolonial and critical perspective, from which learners could recognize themselves as part of a complex socio-historical process.

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Approaching the narratives of three university female students, led to singular and alternative visions from our South. The interest in these visions was a part of the phenomenological stand and the decolonial character of this research. The narrators of this study produced written texts in the form of diaries, based on class discussions about history and art in Tunja. The dialogical interviews took place outside the language classroom. Product of their statements in their diaries and the transcription of the interviews, a narrative text appeared and was used to connect the threads between theory and the information

gathered. The analysis then allowed to observe three lines under which the narration of the participants could be understood concerning their construction as sociohistorical subjects.

Narrators constructed themselves in relationships in and with the world, in line with what Freire (2005) stated. Engagement in relationships in and with the world is a sign of liberation and connection to history. *In* and *with* the world means not only a location or a point of view in the established relationships but the construction of empathy and the union to a world. In this continuum, the other line that arose was related to the construction of past, present, and future as unity. For the narrators of this research, their past and present experiences occur all at the same time in their narrations when they reconstruct and justify ideas or a position about their plans and projects.

Narrators have a sense of their personal and spiritual growth in time. Their family history and their past experiences led them to see their process as a sign of progress, considering that they are studying an undergraduate program at a university and that they hold a lot of expectations about their future. Although these lines of understanding appeared as a frame to approach the narrators' experience in terms of their reconstructions as sociohistorical subjects, each one of the participants had unique experiences, anecdotes, ideas, and expectations that emerged in their narrations.

Rooted in an English language course, the research process concluded that exploring personal narratives opens the possibility to unveil sociohistorical conditions and ways of transgressing time and experiences by women who pursue a life project supported by their family and beloved ones. The research process challenged the pre-conceived views of the researcher. A more detailed and careful view of each narrator gave evidence that each held relevant and meaningful experiences, showing singularity and uniqueness. The researcher focused on particular elements that future research could expand with more details by giving more focus on sociohistorical positioning.

Methodological Approach

The narrators in the research process had fictional names. Mariana, Lucy, and Diana were part of an English language course at a private university located in Tunja, Boyacá. The initial approach to the course aimed for a historic overview and reconstruction of Tunja, based on art and architecture. For four months, the students of this course explored art representations from the precolonial, the Conquest, the Colony, and contemporary periods. Thus, elements such as Muisca's petroglyphs, religious art, and paintings from modern artists were the basis to discuss the vision of the inhabitants of the territory and its transformations throughout history.

This discussion led to personal connections made by the students in which their past and experiences connected to Muisca's culture and heritage. Product of these reflections, the students wrote a diary where their thoughts and ideas were registered. Then, a second moment of the process took the dialogue out of the classroom. More precisely, the study followed the concept proposed by Chisholm (2015), in which *reasoning* is an alternative to creating participatory spaces for students. *Reasoning*, being a dialogical engagement, represents a self-discovery process. Reasoning around a topic allows the students to connect in an empathetic and intense dialogue around familiar issues, which are explored and re-evaluated to gain understanding.

Three female students of the course volunteered to expand on the ideas in their diaries, exploring meaningful experiences from their childhood, families, birth places, professional studies, and projects. These three female students were narrators reconstructing and making sense of the past, present, and future (Yin, 2011). Product of a dialogue held with the researcher, audio recordings were transcribed, following the cleanup approach suggested by Gee and Green (1998). The interest for the analysis of the transcripts was first in identifying anecdotes. Anecdotes, as defined by van Manen (1989), are social products that reveal the character of a person and his or her time. An anecdote could be a sentence, a statement, or a group of sentences supporting a position assumed by the narrator. The identification of anecdotes connected to metaphors.

A metaphor is essentially constitutive in nature. It relates to the meaningful substance being represented in the knowledge obtained by experience and the literal signification (Gill, 1991). Metaphors, embodied in narratives, are part of the way things are conceived. Then, not only textual but sociohistorical performative factors are represented and open in the narrative texts by Diana, Mariana, and Lucy, the three participants of the study. Metaphorical references turned the information of the narratives into a body of ideas reflecting experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and projects that could be related to a process of construction of their sociohistorical subjectivity.

Each transcription of the three narrators contained several anecdotes and metaphors that allowed to observe a face of their reconstruction process as sociohistorical subjects, as it is detailed in the findings below. The life experiences of the narrators were at the center of the exploration and systematization process (Yin, 2011). According to Yin (2011), qualitative research explores the meaning of people's lives. A narrative embodies conscious and non-conscious processes and constitutes the bridge between words, experiences, and meaning. Narrating permits individuals to explore themselves and paint an image of the world for the reader.

Following the theory, the researcher analyzed the narratives from different standpoints: textually, conversationally, culturally, politically/historically, and in terms of performance

(Riessman, 2005). Each one of those methods corresponds to a particular value assignation to certain aspects present within the narrative. The analysis process conceived narratives as performance and aimed to go beyond the spoken word. The word was the means to relate to anecdotes and metaphors in the narrative. Following the ideas of Richardson (1994), and in line with decolonial perspectives, for this research process, I as a researcher understood that my role was as a writer and storyteller that sought for meaning and understanding that may contribute to coping with the circumstances of the participants and myself. As a researcher, I see myself not as a scientist only trying to discover the laws that govern behavior. Writing is not only a dynamic and creative process but also a method of discovery and analysis. The writing process means to me creating reality: “no textual staging is ever innocent” (Richardson, 1994, p. 518).

Data Analysis and Findings

Approaching the narrative analysis demanded of me to frame and assume a perspective of core elements. One of the first aspects that I considered was that a narrative analysis comprises a family of approaches in social and human sciences, all of them aiming to unveil the diverse, complex, and multidimensional texts found in storied forms (Riessman, 2005). Diversity appears as a determining factor to start conceptualizing and organizing the way to approach and represent a personal narrative. Thus, each one of the narrators’ anecdotes represented a personal and unique way of representing their experience, not subjected to comparisons among them.

The self-discovery process of reasoning for the narrators was activated based on a previous experience in the classroom setting. The approximation to the narrators started from a pedagogical implementation in which the class experienced different learning possibilities. The students were involved in spaces where they had the possibility to explore art in Boyacá and Colombia as presented in different socio-historical moments: Pre-colonial, Colony, Conquest, and contemporary. Each workshop of the pedagogical implementation was divided into different moments. When they studied the Pre-colonial period, they were presented with images of Muisca’s petroglyphs to state and connect to previous possible aesthetic experiences. After connecting the topic to personal aspects, the students explored information about the specific art representation and its meaning to the community.

The students made evident the connections or disconnections to that type of art, the symbolism from their own set of values, and observed a particular narrative of the world through art. Considering the comments and the discussions with the students in the class sessions, the researcher presented a general invitation to participate in a dialogical interview to explore their life experiences related to society and history from a more human and personal perspective in which they could feel more comfortable and engage in a reasoning

process. Three female students accepted voluntarily the invitation to participate in those dialogs to construct that reasoning process.

Reasoning is a self-discovery process occurring simultaneously while narrating and it installs as a dialogical engagement between narrator and listener (Chisholm, 2015). The dialogical subjects connect empathetically while exploring familiar issues. In the study, those familiar issues were the product of the English language lessons of the course in which the main theme was history and society as reflected in art and culture in Tunja. The three narrators projected and connected the narratives to a broader level, including their experience with family, traditions, and places, involving their reconstruction as sociohistorical subjects, in and with the world.

Lucy, Diana, and Mariana had particular and individual ways to reconstruct themselves as sociohistorical subjects. To prioritize, organize, and code the information found in the transcripts, each particular conception of the world narrated by them was divided into narrative threads. Those narrative threads corresponded to different thematic groupings unveiling each narrator's sociohistorical subjectivity. Internally, the content of each thread was understood as an anecdote. As stated by van Manen (1989), an anecdote connects the social experience and transforms it into a social product containing the revelation of the deep and true characteristics of the subject and his or her time. The anecdotes were contrasted with the narrative thread to determine symmetry and validity. Next in this document, each narrator will appear along a discussion of the elements found in the data analysis process.

Diana

Volunteering is not a meaningless decision. Diana decided to participate in the process without showing any doubt. She used part of her time to participate in a dialogue with the researcher. The level of attachment to family is relevant in her case and it constituted the biggest connection to the story of her people and the experience of society:

Eso es lo que más recuerdo con mi abuelo. Porque él era una persona muy humilde, muy consentidora conmigo, con sus nietos. (Diana, Narrative 2018)

[That is what I remember the most with my grandfather. He was a very humble person, pretty loving with me, with his grandchildren.]

A memory is an immediate contact with the past. For Diana, that memory is linked to her family and in particular to her grandfather. Diana presents love and the connection to a generation that made life better, tattooed in her memory. The grandfather constitutes the model of a good human being by portraying an invaluable characteristic: Being humble.

This is a positive characteristic. Demonstrating affection to her and the children in the family is a determining factor to connect personality and a way to live with acts and facts.

The image of her grandfather is a piece of art that changes the configuration of places and communities. Diana embellishes the countryside because of him:

Del pueblo no es que me guste mayor cosa, porque es como un pueblito fantasma. Uno va y no se ve nada por ahí... Del campo sí; por mi abuelo, por las personas que conocemos. (Diana, Narrative 2018)

[Not many things I like about the town because it is like a ghost town. Anyone can walk by and see nothing around... I like things about the countryside, because of my grandfather, because of the people we know there.]

The reconstruction of Diana as a sociohistorical subject involves her grandfather and how his image configured the experience of places and society at a particular point in time. She understands herself as a human with a past (Riessman, 2005). The narrative here is praxis, a form of social action. A form of reconstructing the pillars of one's life with the people who have witnessed the evolution of the narrator. Diana reconstructs the history of the world initiating with her roots and experiencing memory as the act of recreating and transgressing temporality to bring her grandfather back to her and her feelings and attitudes towards life. Demonstrating affection for her and the children in the family is a key factor to connect her grandfather's personality to a way of living:

Él, por ejemplo, a mi papá le daba muchos consejos sobre sus hijos. Él no era nada tacaño, ni con sus hijos ni con sus nietos. Él se fue muy joven. Era enfermo y sufría mucho; pero él era feliz, así le doliera todo. (Diana, Narrative 2018)

[My grandfather, for example, advised my father about his children. He was not selfish, neither with his children nor with his grandchildren. He left us when he was young. He was ill and suffered a lot; but he was happy, though all his body ached.]

Diana, portraying an image of the love that her grandfather shared with her, talks about him with a similar love, connecting to her values, feelings, the past, and to the events that marked her with a particular and special sign. She remembers that there is not a human living in complete isolation. There is a past; a millenary road constructs who individuals are and the time each is living in.

She reconstructs her history and her life by the hands of the people she loved and the ones who loved her. She connects generations and highlights an oral tradition between father and son, in which, no matter the age, the father continues to provide advice and care about the coming times and generations. She reconstructs her grandfather as a brave and wise man, showing his best face in the worst moments.

When she was narrating this episode, I could spot how she remembered it peacefully and with a positive attitude. Just like her grandfather, bravely, she was able to connect it to painful memories, like her grandfather's illness, with a positive attitude. She was remembering

the best. No matter the pain, there was always a smile, and there was always a reason to be happy. These humanistic lessons stayed in her mind; during the process of narrating, she reconstructed herself as a sociohistorical subject with a past and a reason to assume things with a positive attitude and to value the best that society can offer: Love and support.

Y compartíamos muchas cosas con él. Cosa que no se ve ahorita. Él se fue en el 2010. Y se fue literalmente joven. Y pues fue muy duro para nosotros. Él tenía 52. Le llegaron todas las enfermedades al tiempo y eso lo fue matando poco a poco, pero a pesar de todas sus enfermedades él era muy buena gente. (Diana, Narrative 2018)

[And we shared a lot of things with him. That is something you cannot see now. He passed away in 2010. He was young, literally. That was very hard for us. He was 52 years old. He suffered from several illnesses at the same time and that started to kill him slowly, but despite his illnesses, he was a very good person.]

Diana responds to the principles of our performative analysis. She locates herself as a subject at a point in time, making sense, reconstructing, and acting. Her words and the metaphor of society and history underneath are artful and meaningful (Riessman, 2005). Her narration related to a ‘self’ with a past, “doing rather than telling alone” (p. 5).

Yo creo que nos deberíamos arriesgar. Uno no sabe qué pensar. Que si con la izquierda si va a mejorar el país o va a empeorar como se dice. Que va a ser otra Venezuela. Yo creo que nos deberíamos arriesgar a ver qué pasa. De pronto se mejora mucho el país y no vamos a seguir en las mismas. Porque digamos con Duque sería estar ahí otra vez y empeorar y que haya más guerra y todo. Por ejemplo, acá nosotros no podemos como hablar mucho sobre el tema. Y por eso acá la gente votó más que todo por Duque. Porque ellos no han vivido la guerra, no la han sentido. Pero Duque va a quitar lo de las firmas del acuerdo y eso es terrible para las personas que de verdad fueron víctimas, que de verdad vivieron todo eso. Yo creo que acá es muy difícil. Yo creo que, en Colombia, los altos mandos están acostumbrados a la corrupción a no ser tan honestos y mucha gente va por Duque, odian la izquierda. (Diana Narrative, 2018)

[I think you should try. One does not know what to think. If the left-wing is going to improve the country or if it is going to turn Colombia into another Venezuela. I think you should take that risk, to see what happens. Maybe everything gets a lot better, and we are not going to stay in the same situation. Because, for instance, Duque would imply to be there again and get worse, to have more war and everything else. For example, here we cannot talk much about that topic. That is why most people here voted for Duque. Because they have not suffered war, they have not felt it. But Duque is going to remove the peace agreements and that is terrible for the people who are the true victims, the ones who lived all of that. I think here it is pretty difficult. I believe that, in Colombia, the high powers are used to corruption, they are not used to be honest, and a lot of people support Duque; they hate the left-wing.]

This projection of what at the time was the future presidential elections portrays how locating in the past implies evaluating the historical and social conditions that configure

human communities. Diana makes an overview of a political landscape in which political forces are part of a big narrative. But it is in Diana's narrative where her critical perception and experience reconstruct herself with a positioning and an ideology to which she is faithful.

This positioning is the one that allows Diana to connect to her future in a determined way:

Yo me proyecto como una profesional y cualquier trabajo que haga, ser muy honesta. Ahorita se están viendo muchas cosas de los ingenieros civiles. Digamos yo miro noticias y me siento como mal cuando dicen que los ingenieros civiles o ingeniería civil [sic]. Tratar de ser mejor persona primero que todo. (Diana, Narrative 2018)

[I see myself as a professional and, in any job that I could do, being very honest. Now one can see a lot of things about civil engineers. When I watch the news, I feel bad when they mention civil engineers or the civil engineering career [sic]. First and foremost, I am going to try to be a good person.]

Lucy

Communication is essential to narrative research since it represents a space for a dialogical encounter. The encounter with Lucy was funny, interesting, and revealing. She attended the interview with a positive attitude and what she narrated was the way her mother and childhood were two pillars in her reconstruction of society and the past. Her mother and sister represent the metaphor of childhood and love:

Era divertido, era un encuentro muy tierno con ella. Como no teníamos la posibilidad de que ella nos pagara un show de títeres y la cuestión... que ella se pusiera en el trabajo de crear ese tipo de distracción para las dos, era muy significativo para ambas. (Lucy, Narrative 2018)

[It was fun, it was a very tender encounter with her. As we did not have the possibility of paying for a puppets' show and stuff... to have my mother working to create that type of entertainment for both of us; that was very meaningful for my sister and me.]

Lucy reconstructs her childhood as a metaphor for her past and connects to her mother and her sister in the feeling of joy. Here, motherhood is reconstructed as the act of a brave woman supporting her children and providing them with happiness and love despite a particular financial situation. The family constitutes the resistance to the forces acting in society over the people.

No matter the financial situation, motherhood is reconstructed as a subversive act to state that leisure is a human right. A toy made with old socks and the act of performing for these two little girls represented motherly love and joy, no matter the available resources.

Her reconstruction has to do with her society as well, as evident in the following narrative anecdote:

Ejemplos drásticos los D1, los Justo y Bueno, los Ara que ahora monopolizaron todas las ciudades. Pues entonces digamos todos esos pequeños negocios ya no van a surgir como antes, digamos que uno solo tenía la tiendita del vecino y uno iba allá y compraba todo, pues ahora no, ahora hay esos D1, que en cada barrio hay dos, entonces ya uno va allá. Y hasta uno comete el error de no apoyar su propia industria. (Lucy, Narrative 2018)

[Drastic examples are D1, Justo y Bueno, and Ara stores, now monopolizing every city. Then, all of those small stores are not going to take off like they used to do, for example, before you only had the small neighbor's store where you could go and buy everything. That does not happen now, now we have those D1 stores, two in every neighborhood, then you go to those places. And even one makes the mistake of not supporting own industry.]

Lucy moves beyond her past and previously existing financial conditions to evaluate the role that a person should have in terms of consuming and supporting local businesses. It is in this way that her reconstruction permeates society and culture and how she presents a sensible perspective of her community. She continues narrating and presenting the general perception of this particular issue:

Yo por lo general compro en donde la vecina porque me fía, porque tengo la cuenta abierta. No, pues sí se trata de pedir a la tiendita de arriba pero sí hay cosas que se compran en el D1, hay que ser justos, y en el Justo y Bueno. Es que empieza desde uno. Ya uno no apoya sus cosas. Hay que crear conciencia entre nosotros mismos. Si no nos apoyamos entre nosotros no vamos a surgir, el país no va a surgir. Crear conciencia en la gente que apoye su propia industria. Igual esos D1 son legales, entonces no se pueden cerrar ¡No se pueden quitar los desgraciados! No hay una competencia perfecta, así la tienda te ofrezca un arroz bueno cultivado acá, cultivado acá, un D1 te ofrece arroz sintético que es mucho más barato. (Lucy, Narrative 2018)

[Generally, I buy in the neighbor's small store because she sells on credit, I have my account open there. We try to buy things from the small stores up there, but we also buy things in the D1 store, we must be fair, and in the Justo y Bueno store. Everything starts with oneself. One does not support local business. We must raise awareness among ourselves. If we do not support ourselves, we are not going to progress, our country is not going to progress. We need to raise people's awareness to support own industry. Anyway, those D1 are legal, so we cannot close them. They cannot be removed. There is no perfect competition, even though the small store offers good quality rice, grown here, the D1 store offers synthetic rice that is a lot cheaper.]

Lucy critically reconstructs herself as a social subject and evaluates the market dynamics, not only providing a concept but establishing the possible ways to improve the situation. Next, the voice of Mariana is going to illustrate her experiences and perceptions regarding her society and history. This final narrative concludes the interventions of the narrators throughout the entire document, concluding the transversal narrative analysis.

Mariana

Mariana reconstructed society as a complex field where economic forces determine the destiny of people and the way they conceive the world. Economic power was the metaphor she used to reproduce the society she perceives. In her case, mining and the politics of economy permeate a society in which practices and mindsets reproduce a system that has governed the territories of Boyacá historically:

Digamos el primo de mi papá, él es accionista en esta empresa. Produce miles de miles de millones al año. Es muchísima plata. Toda es de esmeraldas. Él es de los que llega en helicóptero. Que la mujer, ella va a pagar la nómina, ella llega con bultos de plata. Digamos, ellos llegan a la casa y ponen anillos de seguridad. Digamos, entran todos los de seguridad, con fusiles. A él a veces le mandan de aquí casi medio batallón. (Mariana, Narrative 2018)

[For instance, my father's cousin is investing in this business. It produces thousands and thousands of millions per year. That is a lot of money. Everything is about emeralds. He is one of the people who get here in a helicopter. His wife, when she is going to pay the salaries, she comes with huge packages of money. For example, they get home and place security rings. The security guards get in with guns. They sometimes send almost half a contingent for him.]

The construction of the experiences in the family is permeated by the economic configuration inside the society. She observes and reconstructs a society in which wealth reaches incredible levels, which are not easy to understand. In conjunction with that perception of society, she goes back to her past, to her father and her grandfather, and reconstructs the history of the territory, once the land for indigenous communities:

Mis tíos y mi papá sacaron unas ollas de esas de barro como las que hacen en Ráquira. Y tenía una tapa, como una taza. Y la que tenía la tapa tenía todas esas figuras. Tenía soles, tenía triángulos, tenía todas esas cosas. Varias veces han intentado escarbar para ver si encuentran algo más. Sacar entierros. Han encontrado esas hachas en piedra. También como esos collares. Pero mi papá le pasó eso a un ingeniero. Y pues él se llevó eso y no volvió. (Mariana, Narrative 2018)

[My uncles and my father discovered some clay pottery like the ones from Ráquira. It had a cover, like a pot. The one that had that cover had some images. It had sun shapes, triangles, it had all of that stuff. Several times they have tried to dig to see if they find something else. To pull out some entombments. They have found stone axes. Necklaces as well. But my father gave that to an engineer. He took those things away and never came back.]

Her relatives, serving as empirical archeologists, discovered ancestral pottery of indigenous communities inhabiting the territory they live in. Mariana reconstructs her remote history connecting first to the experience of her father; then, the remaining testimonies of the indigenous communities that populated the place, which is now the stage for the exploitation of emeralds. Mariana connects her history through her grandmother:

Mi abuela es toda chiquita, toda negrita y arrugada y los hermanos son así como ella. Ella es de las que camina, camina y camina. Ella camina descalza. Por todos los potreros. Como si nada, a la hora que sea. Los hermanos eran igual. Entonces yo digo que ellos tienen como algo de indígenas. (Mariana, Narrative 2018)

[My grandmother is tiny, all black and wrinkled and her brothers are just like her. She is one of the people who walk, walk, and walk. She walks barefoot. Across all the fields. Like nothing, at any time. Her brothers were the same. Then, I say they have something indigenous.]

Mariana reconstructs her sociohistorical subjectivity by reconstructing the social, political, and economic forces enacted in her town. Politics and economy work in the same line to decide on future configurations and maintain the same system that has historically dominated societies:

Pero siguen quedando los otros. Terrible. Por lo menos en Farfacá, la gente es muy uribista. Para el cierre de campaña llevaron a Peter Manjarrés. Cuando abrieron campaña fue Duque y Uribe. Fueron los dos. Papá Uribe. Sea quien sea, no pueden ganar. Ellos tienen muchísimo poder. Por Duque iba el primo de mi papá y por lo menos este señor, tiene muchísima plata y así sea hasta para el Consejo puede ser... Se mueve bastante plata. (Mariana, Narrative 2018)

[But the ones elected are the others. Terrible. For instance, in Farfacá, people are very Uribista. To close the campaign, they brought Peter Manjarrés. When they started the campaign, Duque and Uribe went there. They both went. Father Uribe. Whoever it is, they cannot win. They have a lot of power. My father's cousin was supporting Duque. My father's cousin has a lot of money, it can even be for the council... a lot of money is transacted.]

The narratives by Diana, Mariana, and Lucy revealed their reconstruction as socio-historical subjects. Human beings with a past and in contact with the people who have been around, as agents of time and memory. In the coming section, I state the final remarks and the conclusions that emerged from the research process.

Conclusions

Bearing in mind that the reasoning process was an initial spark that maintained and transformed the three narrators, diversity took place as well. Diversity appeared embodied in the narratives of Mariana, Diana, and Lucy. The narratives, represented in storied ways of knowing and performing (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997), revealed how they reconstructed themselves as sociohistorical subjects, in contact with their past and their family, and transgressing past, present, and future. Meaningful and memorable personal experiences can also be part of English language lessons and planning. Interest in society, culture, and history told from the South is a window for research within the English Language Teaching (ELT) community.

The narrative thread established in the three narrators' anecdotes and metaphors was the sense of belonging to a home, the union to people, and connection to a place, time, and particular social groups. Time transforms as well, depending on the conditions set by society and the people closest to one's life. Future research can explore the complex forces taking place in society and the construction of historical narratives that have affected the way people perceive the world. The narrators in this study are in and with the world, revealing they are sociohistorical subjects. The journey reported in this article does not finish with the last page of the document. In a long and personal way of emancipation, this is a meaningful step to continue on the same path and learn from the people who are next to me as a teacher, a learner, and a human being.

The study presented the narratives of three university female students, reconstructing their experiences, memories and building up the scenery of their history and society. The English language class became a meaningful space to explore the history of the territory and that process acquired personal relevance for the learners. Narrating constituted the path to transgress time and space and recreate the sensations and the footprint left by life experiences. Additional explorations could include how to involve personal experiences and emotional bounds to family and homeland in English language teaching and learning.

These life stories are the narration of common individuals immersed in a complex world of politics, history, economy, religion, and culture. The three narrators owned their history and made evident that every single decision-making process involves a dialogue with the world. Assuming and portraying a perspective is an adding process to a myriad of factors grouped into colorful narrative threads: history and society.

Locating in time, enacting the past into the present, and constructing a model of society is an initial step for the sociohistorical subject to walk the path of emancipation. This research effort started with a particular perspective held by the researcher; however, the ever-changing process of research transformed the researcher. Thanks to a polyphonic choir, I, as a learner and researcher, approached and explored how we, as individuals, are all united and interwoven by the territory where we live in and the ancestors whose life deserves to be told.

The three narrators gave evidence of how personal narratives relate to historical events and social constructions. This study presented specific aspects intervening in their reconstruction as sociohistorical subjects. This was a personal and partial exploration that would vary if there were different participants. Future studies can explore how institutional and structural narratives, such as gender narratives, are related to the narratives of members of a particular social group. The main limitation of this study is that it constitutes a personal and individual exploration of a broad topic that involves a great number of aspects. To conclude, I would like to thank the reader for being a part

of this journey, although a first step, we are now moving into different territories with new perceptions.

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The Impact of TBI on Intermediate Students' Writing Skills in Online Classes at a Private Institute in Cartagena de Indias

Impacto de Tareas Basadas en Instrucciones en la Habilidad de Escritura en Estudiantes de Inglés Intermedio en un Instituto Privado de Cartagena

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Abstract

This qualitative research project aims to determine the impact that Task-Based Instruction had on fifteen Intermediate English language students' writing skills in online classes at a private institute in Cartagena. A journal, a questionnaire, and a checklist were used as instruments to collect information during the diagnostic stage. During the action stage, six workshops were implemented, each with a different writing strategy: webbing, peer-editing, asking questions to revise writing, revising and editing, using templates, and reorganizing ideas. At this stage, the same instruments were used to measure the impact of the strategy and to achieve the research objectives. Results show that implementing

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six online workshops predicated on the task-based instruction helped the students to improve their writing, learning new vocabulary, use ICT tools, and writing strategies, thus having a positive impact on their English language learning process not only in writing but also in other skills. TBI was favorably accepted by learners and affected positively their writing skills.

Keywords: online learning, online tools, task-based instruction, writing skills, writing strategies

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación cualitativa busca determinar el impacto que tienen las instrucciones basadas en tareas sobre la habilidad de escritura de 15 estudiantes de nivel intermedio en clases virtuales en una institución de inglés en Cartagena. Un diario, un cuestionario y una lista de verificación se usaron como instrumentos para recolectar la información durante la etapa diagnóstica. Durante etapa de acción, seis talleres se implementaron, cada uno con una estrategia de escritura diferente: red de ideas, editar en parejas, formulación de preguntas para revisar escritura, revisar y editar, utilizar plantillas y reorganizar ideas. En esta etapa, los mismos instrumentos se usaron para recolectar la información requerida a analizar y alcanzar los objetivos de la investigación. Los resultados demuestran que la implementación de los seis talleres ayudó a los estudiantes a mejorar su habilidad de escritura, aprender nuevo vocabulario, usar las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, y a un uso positivo de las estrategias de escritura, además de generar un impacto positivo en su aprendizaje no solo en escritura sino también en otras habilidades. Los estudiantes aceptaron las instrucciones basadas en tarea que incidieron de manera positiva en su habilidad de escritura.

Palabras clave: herramientas virtuales, instrucciones basadas en tareas, estrategias de escritura

Introduction

This action research studied the effect of Task-based Instruction (TBI) on the writing skills of adult learners that studied English online. It was implemented during the pandemic that affected the world during 2020. This course was offered to students who had to change to online learning due to COVID-19 and hoped to learn as much as they did in a classroom. For most institutions, synchronous learning became the first option to keep teaching, but at the same time, it led to concerns such as less practice of English skills, internet connection problems, content-related issues, and planning of tasks (Rineksó & Muslim, 2020). Most teachers were not only uncertain of what was expected for them to do regarding online classes, but also lacked support from their coordinators and directives, which led to many problems both of academic and organizational character (Romero, 2022). Therefore, there was a strong need to explore the effects that the sudden change to online learning had on students' learning process.

The purpose of this study was mainly to examine the impact of TBI on intermediate students' writing skills in online classes. This qualitative action research was implemented with 15 students from course 12 at a private English language institute in Cartagena. Data,

results, and codes were collected using three instruments: a journal, questionnaire, and checklist.

TBI was selected as it is appropriate for students to have meaningful learning in online classes and as it presents certain advantages with tasks that are used in real situations. Egbert (2020) provided an idea about how tasks should be considered to promote language practice. He stated that “first, teachers can strategically integrate relevant engagement facilitators into one or more of the task elements and so keep students engaged throughout the task. For example, with an interesting and authentic topic to attract their attention” (p. 3). Therefore, this study also considered students' perceptions of the kind of tasks they wanted to learn.

During the diagnostic stage, a number of codes were identified and organized considering three main sections: TBI, writing, and ICTs. It was found that most students expressed a high interest in learning real activities in which they could use language in real-life situations. After this, a research question emerged: What is the impact of TBI in online classes on intermediate students' writing skills at a private institute in Cartagena de Indias? To answer this question, six workshops were implemented, and the data gathered throughout the evaluation stage of the study allowed the researcher to analyze the effect of the intervention on students' learning. In the course of the evaluation stage, five codes emerged and all of them reflected students' positive perception of the intervention as well as improvement in their writing skills. The findings concluded that TBI was an effective approach to improve the writing skills and impact online learning positively.

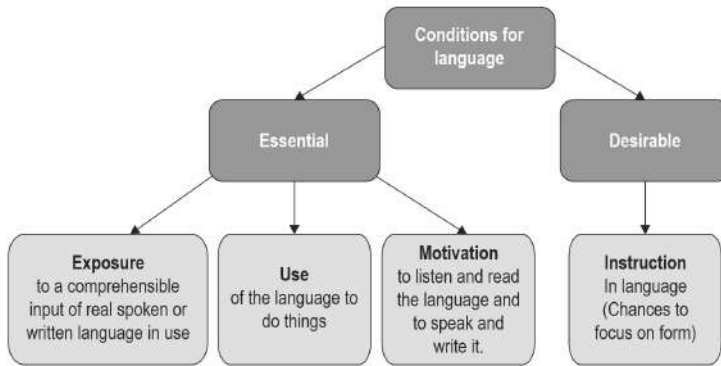
Literature Review

This section suggests a review of different theories and studies that aim to support the variables found in terms of three main aspects: TBI, writing skills, and information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Task-based Instruction (TBI)

To decide whether an approach would be convenient for this study or not, it was required to consider students' needs and wants as well as to plan the time it would be necessary for implementing the lessons. One of the most suitable options was TBI which according to Willis (1996) provides a natural context where learners can be exposed to real communication and for that matter, there should be conditions to consider such as exposure, use, motivation, and instruction (see Figure 1).

Several visions have emerged to define a *task*, one of them is the definition proposed by Willis (1996), who described a task as “activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose so they can achieve an outcome” (p. 28). This



Note: This figure summarized the conditions for language learning that influence learner's communication.

Figure 1. Conditions for language learning. Adapted from Willis (1996)

indicates that tasks are collaborative and conversational whose result depends on how the task is addressed and how teachers lead the learning process. Hence, the focus of a task is also on meaning in which real writing interaction increases motivation and comprehension. Furthermore, Nunan (2004) has defined a task as:

A piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning and in which the intention is to convey a meaning rather than to manipulate form. (p. 224)

Nunan's definition demonstrates that tasks are not merely activities that teachers assign students to collect grades without any purpose. It involves something deeper such as developing comprehension and creating a learning space for students to understand a message without caring about the structure.

An important study done by Skehan (2003) explores tasks as a way to facilitate learning. This author examined different theories to define a task by considering the quality and context to use it and how authentic and connected to real-world circumstances of life it is. To have a better idea of this, another study provides a definition of what task is: Bygate et al. (2001) claim that "a task is a focused, well-defined activity, relatable to learner choice or to learning processes, which requires to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which elicits data which may be the basis for research" (p. 12). This, in terms of students' learning, is appropriate and helpful to enhance learners' motivation toward online classes and authentic tasks.

Writing Skills

Writing is used for different purposes, from writing a letter or an email to texting. It is used for almost everything and in different ways such as by using a pen and paper, a computer, with fingers, through signs or even on sand. In the context of second language acquisition, writing tends to be a demanding skill to develop, and at the same time, it may be difficult to advance. Shin (1993) argued that:

Traditionally the majority of ESL teacher education programs have placed more emphasis on developing students' oral and reading skills than on their writing skills; writing has often been the last skill to be taught (if at all) after listening, speaking and reading. (p. 326)

This skill is useful to practice; it requires teaching other language features, such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, among others. It happens to be really demanding and time consuming since learners need certain skills. When it comes to a second language, then English language students must also learn and adapt their writing knowledge to a second language (L2) context (Friedlander, 1990).

According to Harmer (2004), writing has four main elements: Planning, drafting, editing, and final draft. All of them need to be seen to organize the structure of a paper. When it comes to authentic communication, genuine texts seem to be focused on text, author, and audience, which allows for interaction and a level of understanding (Widdowson, 1978).

Writing Strategies

During the process of writing, students use different mechanisms that will help them monitor their writing. "As writers compose, they also monitor their current process and progress" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 374). Common strategies in writing (as brainstorming, proofreading, editing, peer feedback, and revision) are directly related to the use of cohesion and coherence that are necessary for the organization of a paragraph and the understanding of it to convey a message and its importance in revising (Briesmaster & Etchegaray, 2017).

Edugains (2012) presents a set of strategies to use when teaching English language skills. He provides a clear idea on planning lessons based on writing strategies. The strategies chosen for this study were: Mapping, peer editing, asking questions to revise, revising and editing, using templates, and reorganizing ideas. These strategies help students to organize their ideas before writing to produce coherent paragraphs.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

There have been many changes in education, but there is one that has now forced education to adapt teaching to some current methods and strategies. That is the case of ICTs,

which contribute to the use of online material and tools, and the production of authentic writing that provides a challenging but meaningful experience for students (Mayora, 2009). The use of ICTs during the online classes during the pandemic is now a resource for most teachers and students who have faced this new educational modality.

At the beginning of the global emergency, people started to look for online platforms that could help keep them in communication and interaction with their students. One of those tools that became useful in every online meeting, online classes, and videoconferences was Zoom. According to Korman (2020), Zoom is “one of the markets’ leading applications for videoconferencing devices” (p. 7). This means that this platform has proved to be equipped with many tools intended to focus not only on business but also on educational purposes.

The type of web source plays an important role when planning a lesson since it can provide a more diverse pathway to learning and creates opportunities that allow-motivation (Ko & Rossen, 2017). One of the first options to consider for the implementation of the lessons was Padlet that offers a series of options for students to be creative and motivated in writing. A more detailed description could be done as follows:

Padlet is media that can be used to create a virtual wall similarly, with certain significant benefits. It runs on nearly every web-enabled device all over the world. The “Walls” can be stored and copied. The “Walls.” It is possible to post multimedia files and documents. (Fadhilawati et al., 2020, p. 159)

Another tool used in the implementation stage of this study was Google Drive. It was chosen because there is enough space to store all the information. Moreover, it allowed students to work on the same document simultaneously. According to Slavkov (2015), “Google Drive is an integrated sharing and synchronization service available as a free Google app with 15 gigabytes of cloud storage” (p. 80). It is now well known as an easy way to share information and do collaborative work. It is also perfect for students to post their activities and update their work, in which they will receive feedback through their Gmail accounts.

Method

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This qualitative research took place at a private English language institute in Cartagena in the adult program. To achieve the objective of this research project, a qualitative study was conducted, which was implemented to study the behavior of a specific community in a diagnostic and an action stage. As Mason (2002) argues, “Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants” (p. 1).

This research paradigm was chosen to examine the difficulties that English language students had when practicing their writing and to propose a few strategies to help them develop and improve their writing skills. This qualitative research also includes the characteristics of an Action Research that Stringer (2008) describes as an organized process seeking for increasing social issues that may change people's lives. According to that, this study followed these steps: identifying a problem, creating a plan, implementing the plan, and describing the effect.

In addition, the description and analysis of data regarding the diagnostic stage was carried out through triangulation according to Creswell's (2014) theory about implementing research: From the specific to the general. As soon as the instruments were administered, the information was interpreted by classifying the sentences and paragraphs in themes. After the information was analyzed carefully and the categories were identified, it was then coded to see the frequencies and tendencies of the data. Furthermore, the process of coding was implemented by using highlighters of different colors to make it easier to identify the repetitiveness of the categories. The codes were named and classified by the researcher in primary and secondary categories. The primary were the ones concerning the research problem and directly related to the objective of this research project. It was also necessary to give each code a number to provide a more accurate result when collecting the information and counting the frequencies.

Participants

The study was conducted with a group of fifteen students: five of them were male and ten females. Their ages ranged from 16 to 35. Considering the results of the diagnostic test and the data collected from it, this population was chosen since they had weaknesses in the writing process during online classes.

Data Collection Methods

The data were collected through three instruments: a researcher's journal, a questionnaire for students, and a checklist for peer-observers. As seen in Appendix A, the first instrument involved class observation by the researcher which was completely focused on analyzing their writing skills and ICT use as well as identifying the strategies implemented to enhance the writing skills. Lessons were observed, and journals were filled to collect the information through the observation. The second instrument consisted of a structured survey that was applied to the students. In Appendix B, there is a sample of the survey which purpose was exploratory, and it was focused on the language process and the level of use of ICTs in the online class. The third instrument was a checklist used during the observation stage by a peer-observer (See sample in the Appendix C). It helped to have a better idea of the English

language proficiency level that the students had as well as their opinion on having more practice of English.

Below is the description of the data collection that was administered during the diagnostic stage and evaluation stage:

Table 1. Techniques and Instruments for Data Collection

Diagnostic	Action-Evaluation
Technique: Survey Instrument 1: 1. Questionnaires for students	Technique: Survey Instrument 1: 1. Questionnaires for students
Technique: Classroom observation Instrument 2: 2. Journal for researcher	Technique: Classroom observation Instrument 2: 2. Journal for researcher
Technique: Classroom observation Instrument 3: 3. Checklist for external peer / observer	Technique: Classroom observation Instrument 3: 3. Checklist for external peer / observer

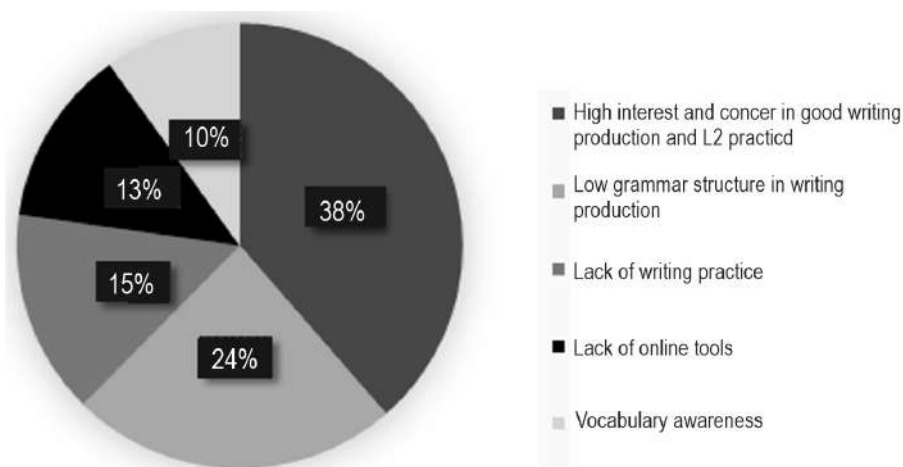
Note. All the three instruments in action-evaluation stage were applied after each of the six workshops.

Diagnostic Stage

During this stage, data were collected in an anonymous and confidential way. Three data collection instruments were designed and implemented to obtain information about the perception of the teaching-learning process that the students, teachers, and researcher had. At the beginning of the analysis, class observation helped the researcher to fill out a journal that revealed the students' interest in writing and in practicing their English. In addition to that, a questionnaire was carried out to explore the student's perception of the English language context and the L2 practice. Finally, a checklist filled by the teachers who work at the institution provided a more solid resource of analysis for the study.

The distribution of the categories and the corresponding percentages are shown in Figure 2. As it can be seen, the categories were enlisted according to the percentage, the first category having the highest percentage.

As it can be observed in Figure 2, the students' lack of writing practice and low grammar structure in written production were combined with their interest and concern in improving



Note. The categories shown above represent the results obtained after applying selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Figure 2. Percentages of the Categories Found in the Diagnostic Stage

that productive skill. Moreover, the diagnostic stage revealed lack of online tools. As a result, the researcher arrived at a conclusion that the writing skills and the use of technology were the two main issues of concern.

To examine the consistency of what the students expressed in the questionnaire, a diagnostic test was implemented and graded according to the students' results. The test followed the structure of the ELAT (Oxford English Literature Admission Test) exam that the institution implements in certain levels to check students' progress in the L2. Reading and writing sections of the diagnostic test were administered on Socrative platform, whereas speaking and listening took place during a synchronous session in Zoom. The purpose of this test was to establish the students' current English language proficiency level. The following graph demonstrates the results of the test:

Given the fact that the participants belonged to Course 13 (out of 16) and according to the material used at the institution, their English language proficiency level should have been B1-B2. However, it can be noticed in Figure 3 that most of the students demonstrated that their level was from A2 to B1.

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained in the diagnostic stage, the implementation stage was planned and carried out. It is described in the next section.

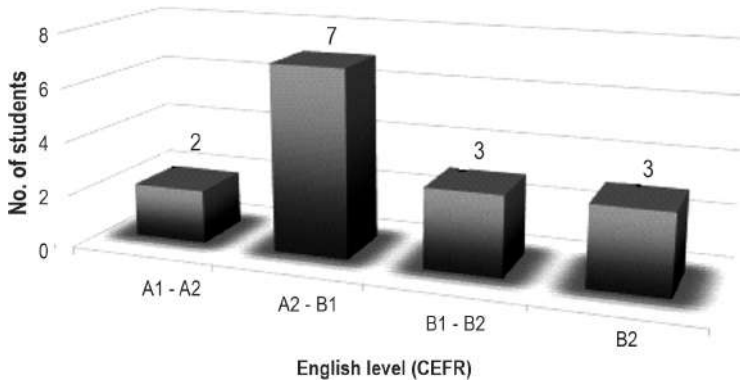


Figure 3. English Language Proficiency Level of the Students according to the Diagnostic Test

Action Stage

The action stage consisted of the implementation of six workshops that followed the TBI approach. After the tasks were defined, six workshops were organized and implemented, each of them with a writing strategy to develop. The order of the workshops was chosen considering the needs analysis, by contemplating the topics presented in the material that the institution provides to students and by adapting this to an online situation with a TBI focus. As seen in the following table, the workshops with the tasks and writing strategies were arranged as follows:

Table 3. Workshop’s Sequence and Organization

Workshops	Tasks	Writing Strategy
Workshop 1 My personal blog	Task description N-1: Writing a blog	Webbing
Workshop 2 My pen pal friend	Task description N-2: Writing an email	Peer editing
Workshop 3 What’s on the news?	Task description N-3: Writing news for a newspaper	Asking questions to revise writing
Workshop 4 Requesting information	Task description N-4: Writing a formal letter	Revising and editing

Workshops	Tasks	Writing Strategy
Workshop 5 Apply to a job	Task description N-5: Writing a CV	Using templates
Workshop 6 In my opinion	Task description N-6: Writing an essay	Reorganizing ideas

Note. Each workshop was planned for approximately three hours of direct instruction.

There have been several task-based models for designing lessons, but there was one that seemed to be relevant for this study. Ellis (2003) and his TBI design presented a more refreshing idea on how lessons can be conducted, especially on the English language development and what he mentioned as “real-world activities”. The following table illustrates the structure followed by Ellis’s design:

Table 3. A Framework for Designing Task-Based Lessons (Ellis, 2003)

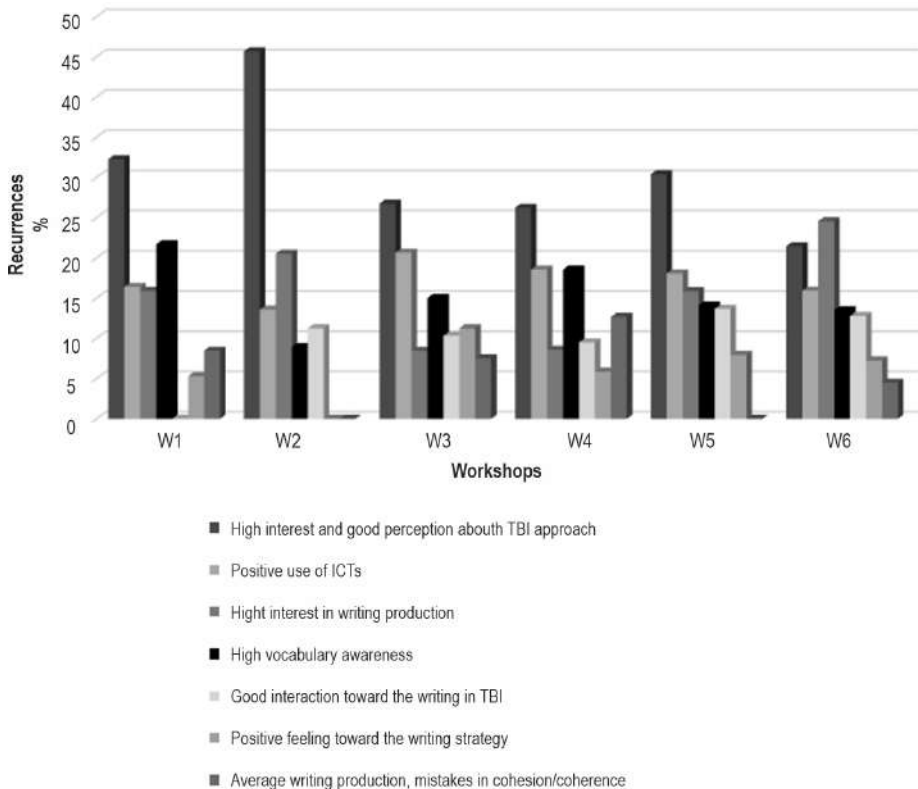
Pre-task (Consciousness-raising activities)	Framing the activity (e.g, establishing the outcome of the task) Regulating planning time Doing similar task
During task	Time pressure Regulating topic
Post-task (Focused communication activities)	Number of participants Learner report Repeat task Reflection

Note. The framework shown in Table 3 is based on the approach suggested by Ellis (2003).

As it can be seen, this model suggests that the English language development demands enough time to plan and complete a task. The pre-task led students to get prepared by having enough vocabulary, grammar, and clear instructions that guided the whole process. During task was mainly focused on the process by monitoring and constantly following their performance and the time spent on it. Here the writing strategy was presented as a way to guide the process to the final task. Finally, the post-task intended to analyze the result by following the process of what was done during the task.

Evaluation Stage

Once the information was gathered and revised in the action stage, it was organized into seven categories starting with the most frequent. The graph below shows the categories and their frequencies in each workshop.



Note. The categories shown in Figure 4 were identified after analyzing the three instruments of the action-evaluation stage: journal, questionnaires and observation checklist.

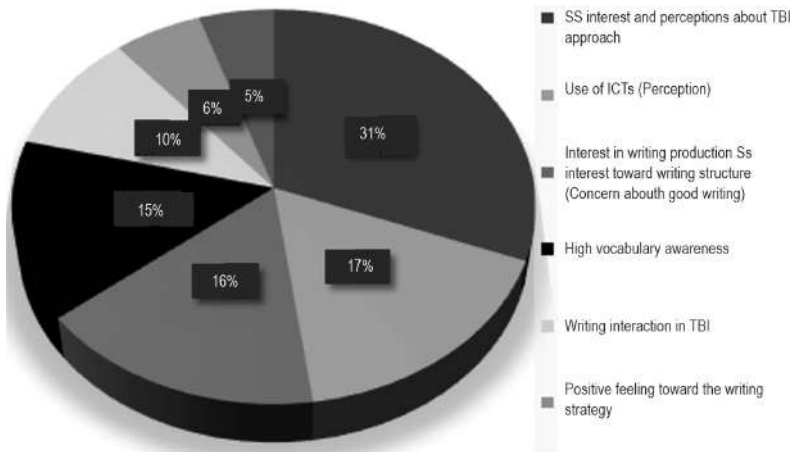
54 **Figure 4.** Frequencies found per workshop

As it can be observed, all the categories appeared in each of the six workshops. Nevertheless, the recurrences differed in each of them. There were general tendencies – for example, the students showed high interest and good perception toward the TBI approach in all the workshops. However, others differed greatly – for instance, the category related to mistakes in cohesion/coherence varied a lot.

Findings

This section aims to present in detail the results and interpretation of the study based on the data analysis considering the implementation of the workshops. This section also shows the evaluation of the impact of the study by presenting the final results.

After observing the recurrences found in the workshops, six codes emerged as follows:



Note. The categories shown above represent the results obtained after applying selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

Figure 6. Emerging codes and percentages found in total

The findings were organized in three categories: TBI approach, Language, and ICTs. The data obtained here showed learners' feelings toward the strategy, the writing skills, and the online resources.

The Impact of Task-Based Instruction on the Students' Writing Skills

One of the students' concerns was having authentic experiences when learning. Therefore, doing each of the tasks in the action stage made it more meaningful for them. The students proved to have a positive perception of TBI because it allowed them to convey messages in everyday situations. Furthermore, they had the opportunity to write and interact with people through various types of communication, such as emails, letters, and comments, among others. They reported having a positive perception in real tasks and writing skills:

Questionnaire-Workshop 1: Question 5: Student 3: “[...] I love it, because you can see the image of the movie they talked about, you can like it, you can comment on someone else’s blog. Super excellent.”

Questionnaire-W2: Q 2: Student 1: “I feel so good because I love to write, and I like too much because I can improve my writing.”

It could be noticed that the more authentic the activity was, the more motivated the students were, which indicated that motivation played an important role when doing a task with a purpose for communication. Due to that positive interest and motivation, the students could complete the tasks, demonstrating improvement in their writing skills in the workshops in which tasks were more interesting for them and more useful in their everyday life. It was a meaningful experience in which the TBI approach proved to be an excellent strategy to implement in online classes.

Positive Use of ICTs

Since the whole lessons were online due to the lockdown, online tools that could help check the writing skills were considered for this study. This category obtained the second position due to the number of recurrences that gave evidence of a positive impact on their use, which facilitated the students’ writing and teacher’s feedback toward writing production. The Zoom platform helped a lot to plan classes thanks to all the tools it provides such as breakout rooms, whiteboard, screen sharing, and one of the most important, annotation.

Questionnaire-W3: Q5: Student 9: “All these platforms and learning methods are very useful and I find them significant, and they all contribute to my learning.”

In addition, the use of Padlet indicated a high interest in writing production where the students could personalize their posters by adding images and colors. Furthermore, most of the students were surprised about the use of Google Drive where they wrote most of their papers, allowing corrections and feedback from the teacher. It was noticed how the students learned to use these tools, and how the latter proved to be useful and meaningful in the online classes.

High Interest in Writing Production, Vocabulary, Interaction, and Writing Strategy

This part summarized everything regarding the language skill and what was found in terms of the writing production. First, it was found that there was an increased interest in writing production, indicating that the students were more motivated and confident when writing in the last workshop. According to the results, most of the students showed more

interest while performing authentic tasks, such as writing an email (workshop 2), sending a letter (workshop 5), and writing an essay as part of an academic application (workshop 6).

Questionnaire-W6: Q 8: Student 3: “My knowledge was clear and now I know how to write an excellent email, letters and essay, This topics are very important for our life. [sic]”

Another aspect that was noticed in most of the workshops was a high interest in vocabulary. Throughout the implementation of the workshops, the students learned new vocabulary related to the topic presented in each workshop, which allowed them to complete the final task. The results indicated that these workshops were meaningful and useful for them since they learned new words and kept on practicing them thanks to the online tools.

Questionnaire-W6: Q 4: Student 1: “[...] excited, because every day I know new words and I'm fill my vocabulary every day without problem.”

Results Showing the Need for Further Improvement

Even though the results of this study were mainly positive, it was also observed that a number of the students still struggled with writing production at the end of workshop 6. The results also indicated a fluctuation in grammar mistakes, cohesion, coherence, and average grammar production, especially in workshop 4. Nevertheless, it was interesting to discover that there were no negative recurrences in those workshops in which the students obtained higher motivation in the TBI approach. This indicated that the students were more careful when sending emails to foreigners and writing a CV to get a job, demonstrating that their writing proficiency depended on how motivated they were by the task.

Conclusions

TBI proves to have a positive impact on students' writing skills in online classes, allowing teachers and learners to improve their experience of the learning process. Good planning and use of online tools also help in the effectiveness of this approach that seems to be appropriate for the educational need of teaching languages online. The writing strategies demonstrate to be useful, but the results also indicate that when students need to write fast, they do not use them. Furthermore, the data collected indicate three main categories to highlight. The first one is about TBI, the second one is about language (writing, vocabulary, writing strategies), and the third one is focused on students' use of ICTs.

These categories allow drawing the following conclusions:

- TBI is an excellent option for online classes and writing production since it helps students to be motivated through authentic situations and encourages them to write. In addition, developing TBI lessons increases their linguistic and pragmatical knowl-

edge to develop real-life tasks. In this sense, students engage in more significant tasks that allow them to foster their communicative skills to deal with the different settings in which they may use an L2. Thus, teachers may opt for this approach as an alternative to the explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

- The use of ICTs increases students' motivation and engagement in online classes. Students become more conscious about what a task is and its use in real-life situations. The use of Zoom, its whiteboard, the online markers, and even sharing the screen in breakout rooms proves to have an extraordinary impact on online lessons.
- The third category refers to the writing process, vocabulary, attitude toward writing, and the writing strategies. Due to the exposure to authentic tasks and the learning of new vocabulary, students can write with confidence and use the writing strategies to revise their work.

Pedagogical Implications

According to Uglow (2022), English language teachers must learn many lessons from the experiences that the pandemic brought about. English language students and teachers have had to face new challenges due to the global situation, and as Romero (2022) stated, both cannot continue doing things the same way they did before the pandemic. That being the case, this study is an excellent opportunity to analyze and learn more about online classes and teaching writing online, considering writing strategies to impact students' learning. This study significantly affects English language students using authentic writing where TBI lessons are to motivate them and have high possibilities to learn more vocabulary. This approach could help teachers whose needs are in online classes to teach writing and motivate students to engage in the lessons. In addition, the strategies and the tools that were used in this study can be replicated not only in an online environment, but also in face-to-face classes.

Limitations and Considerations for Further Research

During the study, a number of limitations were found in the implementation of the workshops. One of the customary limitations was regarding the use of ICTs; it was frustrating for several students due to the completion of certain activities with devices that did not work well. Some of them have a cellphone and not a computer to take online classes. In addition to this, various online tools are paid and have specific limitations, such as monetization that does not allow teachers and learners to take advantage of all the resources they offer. Another aspect was connectivity, in which a small number of students could not participate during the class due to bad internet connection.

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Appendix A

Diagnostic Stage – Instrument – Journal

Researcher

Author: Researchers

Research project

The impact of TBI in online classes on intermediate students' writing skills at a private institute in Cartagena de Indias

Journal N- 1

Observers:			
Date:		Course:	
Activity			
Description: (The context, the learning process, describe everything that was observed) Interpretation: (My perception, what I saw in the classroom in terms of learning, how did they learn? Slow? Fast?)			
Reflection: (My position, according to what I was observing, my viewpoint)			

Appendix B

Diagnostic Stage – Instrument - Questionnaire for students

Exploring writing skills of Colombo’s students in English lessons.

This is a survey for students that are taking the regular 36 hours English course. They study 2 hours per day, 5 days a week. It consists of a set of questions that will take into considerations the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

Objective: Collect useful information in order to identify the students’ perceptions, opinions, needs and weaknesses in their online classes and make decisions about the English lessons.

Date: _____ Age: _____

This first section of this survey intends to identify your perception of the different skills, exploring your feeling for each of them.

- I. Mark with an “X” the option that best indicates your feeling about the questions or statement. (Just one option allowed)

4. In your opinion, what is your level of English?
 Bad Average Good Excellent
5. Your writing skills in English is:
 Bad Average Good Excellent
6. Your reading skill in English is:
 Bad Average Good Excellent
7. Your speaking skill in English is:
 Bad Average Good Excellent
8. Your listening skill in English is:
 Bad Average Good Excellent
9. How often do you work on the following skills in your English classes? Circle the one option for each skill.

Speaking	Not very often	Sometimes	Very often
Listening	Not very often	Sometimes	Very often
Writing (essays, emails, paragraphs etc)	Not very often	Sometimes	Very often
Reading	Not very often	Sometimes	Very often

In this section you will express your opinion on the strategy to implement and the skill that will be considered for this study.

- II. Mark the option that best reflects your opinion about the given statement, explain your choices.
10. Learning writing strategies can help you increase your English level.
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Why? _____
11. What kind of opportunities can you get from a course in English? (More than one answer allowed)
- a) To get a better job
 - b) To get a meaningful learning
 - c) To get more English knowledge
 - d) To improve my skills
 - e) To do better in exams
 - f) Other. Which one? _____

In this section you will write your opinion or expectation on the English course and its implementation in the online class.

12. What is your feeling about taking a course in English to improve your writing?

13. What suggestions or expectations do you have about the course?

Appendix C

Diagnostic Stage – Instrument - Checklists for observers

The impact of TBI in online classes on intermediate students’ writing skills at a private institute in Cartagena de Indias

Classroom Observation Checklist

Observer: _____

Time		Course	
-------------	--	---------------	--

Check “X” the options that best indicates your perception.

L: Listening **S:** Speaking **R:** Reading **W:** Writing **A/T:** All of them **N/T:** None of them

No.	ITEM	L	S	R	W	A/T	N/T
1	The skill I develop more in my Online English lessons						
2	The skill I develop less in my Online English lessons						
3	I use a wide number of online tools in this skill						
4	I use low number of online tools in this skill						
5	I provide feedback on this skill						
6	I don't provide too much feedback on this skill						
7	I assign more homework on this skill						
8	I assign less homework on this skill						
9	I do real/ authentic tasks with students						
1	The skill students make more mistakes						

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Comments:

Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize in the English Class and their Impact on Motivation

Kahoot, Quizizz y Quizalize en la Clase de Inglés y su Impacto en la Motivación

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the way education was being taught. Due to school closures to prevent the spread of the disease, the education system resorted to distance learning to grant students' learning process. This research article reports a mixed-method study on technological resources and their impact on motivation during online lessons. The study seeks to explore the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of some game-based learning platforms (Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize) during their EFL virtual classes and to determine the impact of these platforms on students' motivation toward language learning. A convergent parallel design was implemented to gather quantitative and qualitative data from the twenty-seven participants of the study simultaneously. A four-point Likert scale questionnaire and a focus group were the instruments employed to collect this statistical and descriptive information. The results show that the students perceived Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize as useful, entertaining, fun, and engaging tools. As a conclusion, the enjoyment factor of these tools increases learner motivation and level of attainment.

Keywords: EFL, game-based learning platforms, language learning, motivation, perceptions

Resumen

La pandemia del COVID-19 cambió la forma en que se impartía la educación. Debido al cierre de escuelas para evitar la propagación del virus, el sistema educativo recurrió a la enseñanza a distancia

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como una forma de garantizar la educación de los estudiantes. Este artículo de investigación da cuenta de un estudio de método mixto sobre recursos tecnológicos y su impacto en la motivación durante las clases en línea. El estudio busca explorar las percepciones de los estudiantes con respecto a la implementación de algunas plataformas de aprendizaje basadas en juegos (Kahoot, Quizizz y Quizalize) durante sus clases virtuales de inglés como lengua extranjera y determinar el impacto de estas herramientas en la motivación de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje de un idioma. Se implementó un diseño paralelo convergente para recopilar datos cuantitativos y cualitativos de los veintisiete participantes del estudio simultáneamente. Un cuestionario de escala Likert de cuatro puntos y un grupo focal fueron los instrumentos empleados para recolectar esta información estadística y descriptiva. Los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes percibieron Kahoot, Quizizz y Quizalize como herramientas útiles, entretenidas, divertidas y atractivas. Como conclusión, el factor de disfrute de estas herramientas aumenta la motivación y el nivel de logro de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: inglés como lengua extranjera, plataformas de aprendizaje, aprendizaje de idiomas, motivación, percepciones

Introduction

Transitioning from a face-to-face environment to a virtual setting due to Covid-19 exhibited a series of educational disparities and challenges among learning contexts (Erduran, 2020; United Nations, 2020). Karademir et al. (2020) and Neuwirth et al. (2020) pinpointed that students and their families faced challenges such as a decrease in income, loss of employment, anxiety, lack of technological access or reliable wireless connectivity, and unfavorable learning conditions. As for teachers and stakeholders, the Covid-19 pandemic forced them to implement distance education programs under enormous pressure without enough training in this field (Bubb & Jones, 2020; Neuwirth et al., 2020). These conditions hampered equitable access to educational opportunities, widening learners' knowledge and economic gap.

During online classes, EFL students dealt with communication issues given the limited opportunities to interact with teachers and classmates (Fuentes-Hernández & Silva-Flórez, 2020), engagement difficulties (Ngo, 2021), and technical problems that prevented them from accessing the class material or the synchronous lessons (Mahyoob, 2020). On the other hand, EFL educators dealt with limited supervision of students during exams and synchronous lessons (Efriana, 2021) and a lack of training on language teaching approaches supported by the integration of ICTs (Castañeda-Trujillo & Jaime-Osorio, 2021; Oraif & Elyas, 2021).

This sudden shift from in-person to distance learning significantly impacted teachers' and students' use of technology (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020; Tarkar, 2020). Interestingly, since the start of Covid-19, digital literacy development and adaptation to the features of virtual platforms and web-based learning resources were made. Game-based learning platforms

available on the internet, such as Kahoot, Baamboozle, Quizlet, Quizizz, and Quizalize became part of the virtual lessons (Ahmed et al., 2022; Zuhriyah & Widi Pratolo, 2020).

Studies assessing the implementation of game-based platforms in the educational context have explored the impact of these platforms on students' motivation and engagement, classroom dynamics, vocabulary acquisition, and reading performance (Degirmenci, 2021; Ju & Adam, 2018; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021; Llerena Medina & Rodríguez Hurtado, 2017; Wang & Tahir, 2020). In Colombia, studies like the ones conducted by Ortega and Vásquez (2021) and Rojas Huertas (2021) have explored the integration of ICTs and game-based learning platforms in the EFL classroom, concluding that these tools increase students' participation and engagement, and enable educators to analyze students' learning achievements and provide feedback. Nevertheless, the literature exploring game-based learning platforms is still scarce. Thus, students' perceptions of using these platforms and their effect on EFL learners' motivation are somewhat unknown.

Bearing the previous arguments in mind, it seemed necessary to evaluate the impact of implementing game-based platforms within a group of sixth-grade students who were part of a private school in Neiva-Colombia and whose English language classes during the pandemic were supported using Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize. Establishing students' perceptions regarding the implementation of these resources could lead to new understandings of language learners' motivators during online lessons and inform educators and stakeholders about how to integrate these resources to keep students engaged and motivated during their learning process. Consequently, this research aimed to determine students' perceptions about the implementation of these tools and to establish to what extent each platform influenced learners' motivation toward the English language learning process.

Conceptual Framework

Foreign Language Learning

Language learning has been a subject of interest over the years resulting in the development of several theories that stress factors such as age, intelligence, aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality, and context as determinants of language learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2001; VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Similarly, individual differences in monitor use, types of modified input, and affective variables have also been pinpointed as factors that play a significant role in the learning process (Krashen, 1982).

Interestingly, when it comes to language learning in a foreign country, the particularities are different, given that the target language is not widely practiced and does not play an essential role in national or social life (Broughton et al., 2002). In Colombia, foreign language

learning has become a priority for the government, leading to national language policies and the establishment of several projects (González, 2010). Nevertheless, as addressed by Le Gal (2018), in the Colombian context, institutions and agents have been relying on “imported technical knowledge, methodologies, and skills in order to achieve local processes” (p. 157). Therefore, an open and constructive dialogue is fundamental to recognize the demands of the modern world while valuing local communities and knowledges.

As it is known, integrating ICTs in education is one of the demands of the modern world since technological advancement can influence learning processes. ICTs support language competence development since they provide many opportunities for language teachers and learners to benefit from (Tafazoli & Golshan, 2014). According to Walker & White (2013), the roles of technology can be divided into three categories: tutor, in which the knowledge resides in the machine; tutee, in which the learner constructs knowledge by teaching the machine; and tool, in which technology is the means to achieve a task. Likewise, Brown (2003) suggests that language learning education could benefit from integrating ICTs and distance learning since they grant access from any place and time. Interestingly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the implementation of distance learning, many EFL teachers developed a favorable perspective regarding technological resources in language learning (Armanda & Indriani, 2022).

Gamification

Gamification is the integration of game elements and game thinking in non-game environments (Deterding et al., 2011). As stated by Dicheva et al. (2015), using games as educational tools is a promising approach because they teach and reinforce knowledge and essential skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and communication. Additionally, gamification increases learners’ motivation and engagement in the learning process by using multiple elements like points, trophies, badges, and leaderboards (Huang & Soman, 2013), which can trigger feelings of self-rewarding, competition, or collaboration among students.

The effective integration of games in the classroom must be well-thought-out to enhance and involve students in the learning process. Huang and Soman (2013) proposed a five-step process to apply gamification in education effectively: (1) Understanding the target audience and the context, (2) Defining learning objectives, (3) Structuring the experience, (4) Identifying resources, and (5) Applying gamification elements. The appropriate implementation of gamification allows educators to find the balance between achieving the learning objectives and catering to students’ evolving needs by making the learning process more captivating and motivating. Evidently, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the integration of game-based platforms during synchronous and asynchronous lessons increased since they provided

learners with more flexible, accessible, and engaging activities in their distance education learning processes (Çınar et al., 2022).

Motivation

Motivation is one of the critical elements in the language learning process. Nevertheless, there is no consensus on a clear definition of this concept since scholars have constantly tried to determine and limit what this term refers to. The lack of consensus as stated by Dörnyei (1998) is not surprising since “motivation theories, in general, seek to explain no less than the fundamental question of why humans behave as they do, and therefore it would be naive to assume any simple and straightforward answer” (p. 1-2). Moreover, motivation toward language learning presents an even more complex situation due to the multifaceted nature and roles of languages.

Despite the lack of consensus regarding the concept of motivation, research has shown that motivation is positively related to foreign language learning, and it correlates to other variables that determine language achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Dörnyei (1990) highlights that learners’ motivation to learn a foreign language varies and is related to the mastery level to be achieved. Thus, the author pinpoints that learners can be instrumentally or integratively motivated. Interestingly, integrating technology in the EFL classroom has proven to be a meaningful motivator in language learning since it increases autonomy, identity, and information technology (IT) skills development, interculturality, engagement, and classroom dynamics (Lamb, 2017; Panagiotidis et al., 2018).

Perception

Perception can be defined in diverse ways based on the area of study. From the psychological perspective, perception refers to the process of interpreting and organizing stimuli into something meaningful to the person on the basis of previous experiences (Pickens, 2005). Interestingly, Pickens (2005) highlights that perception is influenced by beliefs, attitudes, and personality, given that these elements filter stimuli that satisfy the individual’s immediate needs. Thus, perception is not limited to what one sees but is also related to the adaptations the perceptual system goes through to fit our higher-level cognitive needs (Goldstone et al., 2010).

In the linguistic field, students’ perceptions of their learning process have been considered central to effective language learning (Brown, 2009) and have played a meaningful role in pedagogical and curricular design (Tse, 2000). According to Wesely (2012), studies on students’ perceptions can be grouped into: trait or learner studies, state or environmental studies, and dynamic or complexity studies. The first category refers to studies that determine how each learner’s beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes relate to their individual characteristics

or identity traits. The second one deepens into how the learning situation affects learners' perceptions and beliefs. The last one delves into the interaction between the learner and the environment.

Furthermore, with the development and integration of ICTs in the EFL classroom, scholars have also focused on determining how learners perceive using technological tools during their language learning process. Studies have unveiled that EFL learners have an overall positive attitude towards integrating technology in their classes since they find these resources beneficial in developing their language skills (García Botero et al., 2018; Hsu, 2013; Gamlo, 2019; Taskiran et al., 2018). ICTs in EFL are perceived as convenient and practical (Sung & Yeh, 2012), autonomy enhancers (Santikarn & Wichadee, 2018), and language learning motivators (Webb & Doman, 2020).

Methodology

This section presents the research questions that guided the study, the research design in which the study was framed, and the setting and participants. Furthermore, the data collection instruments and the method for data analysis will be also described.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions regarding the integration of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize in the English language virtual classes and to determine to what extent resources influenced students' motivation towards the learning process. The following research questions (RQs) guided the study:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions regarding the implementation of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize in the English language class?

RQ2: To what extent do Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize influence students' motivation toward foreign language learning?

Research Design

This research study was framed within the mixed-method approach because, as pinpointed by Creswell (2012), it enables the researchers to gain a better understanding of the research problem since the quantitative data yields specific numbers that can be statistically analyzed in order to assess the frequency and magnitude of trends, and the qualitative information deepens into the perspectives on the study topic and provides a complex picture of the situation.

Considering that this research focused on determining students' perceptions regarding the implementation of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize during their virtual English language lessons and on establishing whether these resources influenced their motivation towards English language learning; the research designed undertaken to do so was a convergent parallel design.

This type of research study allowed the researcher to gather quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, merge the data, and use the results to understand a research problem. Creswell (2012) highlighted that the strength of this design is that one data collection form supplies strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form; therefore, a complete understanding of the research problem results from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a private school in Neiva – Colombia, with a group of sixth-grade students who have been taking synchronous English language lessons through Google Meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample consisted of 8 female and 19 male students whose ages ranged from 11 to 13 years.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments selected in this research were a questionnaire and one focus group. The former was a four-point Likert scale questionnaire (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree), which was useful to determine the learners' general opinion of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize, and to establish their perspectives on the impact of these resources in their motivation towards the language learning process. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions related to the participants' names, ages, grades, etc. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 14 items that inquired about their perceptions of each platform's usefulness, accessibility, entertainment level, and ability to foster language learning. To assess the instrument's reliability, the researcher measured the Alpha Cronbach using the statistical software package SPSS. Values over 0.70 for the Alpha Cronbach are regarded as adequate in terms of the reliability of the test (Cervantes, 2005), and the Alpha Cronbach of this instrument was measured at 0,914, which means that the instrument implemented in this research study was reliable.

As for the latter, the participants were randomly selected, which provided for interaction and collection of extensive data to deepen into the participants' perspectives regarding the implementation of the abovementioned resources. Ten students participated in the focus group (five female and five male students) that was held through Google Meet due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The discussion was based on five questions concerning each

platform’s strengths and weaknesses; the way they were implemented in class; their impact on motivation, engagement, and language learning; and their recommendations for future lessons assisted by the use of these game-based learning platforms.

It is important to highlight that both instruments were implemented in the students’ native language to gather more valid and well-grounded information that could have been lost if they were asked to respond in the target language. Therefore, the information regarding the students’ responses that will be presented in the following sections is the result of my translation.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data from the questionnaires, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). First, the frequency of each set of questions was determined to establish the students’ level of agreement for each item (see Table 1 below). Additionally, to determine the efficiency of each tool, the researcher scored each item on the scale as follows: *Strongly disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Agree* (3), and *Strongly agree* (4). After scoring each item, the score range was determined following this criterion: the number of questions multiplied by the score given to each item on the scale; being 56 the maximum score and 14 the minimum; thus, the score range was 42. Once the score range was obtained, it was divided by four to establish the effectiveness of each tool like this: *very ineffective* (14 – 24.5), *ineffective* (24,6 – 35), *effective* (35,1 – 45,5), and *very effective* (45,5 – 56).

Regarding the qualitative information gathered through the focus group, a thematic analysis was conducted to identify the underlying ideas, topics, and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2012) that shaped or informed the students’ perceptions. Their answers during the focus group were recorded and later transcribed to be analyzed using Atlas.ti., a software employed to analyze qualitative data. As a result, the students’ responses were organized into clusters based on their favorability and unfavorability towards these three game-based platforms.

Table 1. The students’ perspectives on the use of Kahoot, Quizizz and Quizalize

Item	Tool	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Item 1: _____ is a useful tool in the development of the English classes.	Kahoot	1	3	14	9
	Quizizz	0	2	6	19
	Quizalize	5	4	6	12

Item	Tool	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Item 2: _____ is a tool that is easy to access and use in the English classes.	Kahoot	1	6	4	16
	Quizizz	1	1	7	18
	Quizalize	3	6	7	11
Item 3: _____ is an entertaining tool in English classes.	Kahoot	1	4	7	15
	Quizizz	1	0	4	22
	Quizalize	3	3	14	7
Item 4: _____ allows me to learn and practice the topics studied in class.	Kahoot	0	1	12	14
	Quizizz	1	1	8	17
	Quizalize	3	4	12	8
Item 5: _____ increases my participation and engagement towards the English classes.	Kahoot	1	6	8	12
	Quizizz	1	1	8	17
	Quizalize	5	4	10	8
Item 6: _____ increases my interest in the English classes.	Kahoot	1	3	9	14
	Quizizz	0	3	2	22
	Quizalize	2	7	7	11
Item 7: _____ fosters fun in the English classes.	Kahoot	2	4	9	12
	Quizizz	0	0	3	24
	Quizalize	5	4	8	10
Item 8: _____ motivates me to learn English.	Kahoot	2	3	5	17
	Quizizz	0	1	3	23
	Quizalize	3	7	6	11
Item 9: _____ enhances my English language learning process.	Kahoot	1	5	6	15
	Quizizz	0	2	5	20
	Quizalize	2	3	8	14

Item	Tool	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Item 10: When I play ____ I am more concerned with answering correctly than with time.	Kahoot	4	5	7	11
	Quizizz	2	4	5	16
	Quizalize	4	2	9	12
Item 11: The feedback provided by _____ after each exercise contributes to improving my performance in the English classes.	Kahoot	2	6	8	11
	Quizizz	0	3	6	18
	Quizalize	1	7	9	10
Item 12: The results obtained when playing _____ allows me to self-assess my knowledge regarding the topics studied in class.	Kahoot	2	3	7	15
	Quizizz	0	1	9	17
	Quizalize	2	3	13	9
Item 13: The final result obtained when playing _____ makes me feel anxious about my English language learning process.	Kahoot	4	1	9	13
	Quizizz	3	1	4	19
	Quizalize	3	5	5	14
Item 14: My attitude towards the use of _____ in the English classes is positive.	Kahoot	2	3	7	15
	Quizizz	0	0	5	22
	Quizalize	2	3	12	10

Findings

The data collected through the questionnaire allowed the researcher to determine that the students perceived Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize as valuable tools during the development of the English language lessons with favoritism towards Quizizz. The students regarded Quizizz as the most practical (see Table 1 above, item 2), motivating and engaging (items 3, 5, 6, and 8), and the best language learning booster (items 4, 9, and 12). Conversely, Quizalize was the participants' least favorite. The results indicated that some learners found the platform challenging to use (item 2) and not very motivating and engaging as the other two (items 5, 6, and 7).

Figure 1 below shows the students' level of agreement with the statements posited in items 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The results show that the students prefer Quizizz because it fosters

fun and offers an entertainment factor which increases their participation, interest, and engagement in the English language lessons.

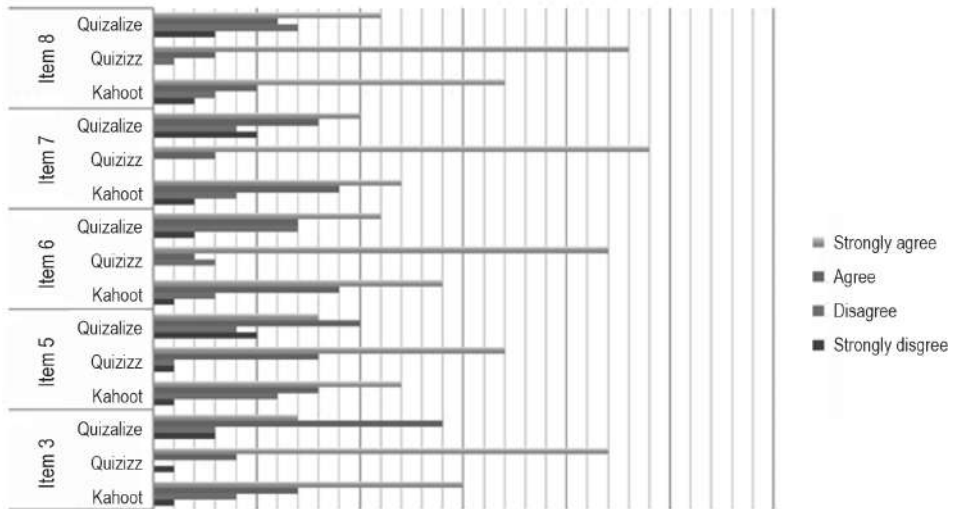


Figure 1. Frequency regarding the motivational aspect for Kahoot, Quizizz and Quizalize

The highest level of agreement regarding these five items was related to the fun factor, followed by the motivational factor, to which 24 and 23 students marked “strongly agree” to items 7 and 8 concerning Quizizz. In addition, Quizizz was the only platform with zero strongly disagree answers in three statements (items 6, 7, and 8) which suggests that the level of acceptance towards this platform is significantly high.

On the other hand, the most prominent finding from the focus group suggested that Quizizz was the favored platform because it offered the students the opportunity to practice the foreign language in a fun way, especially because of its features that granted the player a power to earn more points or affect other players, as it is evident in this excerpt:

S10: Teacher, I love Quizizz. I like that there are powers that freeze the time, that give you another chance to answer the wrong questions. Quizizz is fine with me. Yes, it’s cool, I find it very fun, I don’t see anything wrong with the powers or anything.

The students agreed that using powers which granted them a certain advantage over their classmates was the most engaging part. They claimed that the entertainment factor of this tool resided in using these powers; hence, not being able to use them would make the

platform less exciting. However, a few students pointed out that using these powers is unfair because some double up the points per correct answer, which implies that the number one student on the leaderboard does not necessarily need to have answered all the questions correctly. The students referenced both standpoints as follows:

S6: The powers do motivate us a lot because we get a power to catch up with a classmate or we don't get a power to do it, so without powers it doesn't motivate us much.

S7: Quizizz is a cool game for me in which we can learn, but one of the weaknesses would be the powers because sometimes I have all the questions right, but the powers keep me from being among the top positions.

Additionally, their answers during the focus group also revealed that their anxiety levels increased due to the timer, especially when they were informed that the activity was going to be graded. All the participants highlighted that indistinctively of the game-based platform being used, the timer made them feel nervous about not being able to mark the correct answer.

S7: I do not like when the countdown is on. I feel pressure because sometimes I think I will not be able to choose the right answer. The timer makes me feel I must rush to choose one answer to get a better score.

Nonetheless, even though in the questionnaire, some participants indicated feeling anxious about the activity results (see Table 1 above, item 13), during the focus group, none of the participants corroborated this finding. The only issue regarding the activity results and their impact on the participants' anxiety levels was finding their position on the leaderboard. As for the accuracy over time issue, the discussion held in the focus group unveiled that some students neglected efficiency over response speed. One of the participants admitted that he sometimes cared more about the points the powers gave him than about answering the questions accurately.

Evidently, the statistical information gathered by means of the questionnaire was corroborated through the discussion held in the focus group. For instance, the students showed a favorable perception of Quizizz in the questionnaire and the focus group since it was more engaging, fun, and appealing because of its competitive aspect and easy navigability. The following excerpts of the focus group validate those quantitative results gathered through the questionnaire in which the students regarded Quizizz as the most accessible platform, followed by Kahoot, then by Quizalize:

S6: I think Quizizz is more motivating because you don't need to be worried about internal problems or anything on the platform. Because one does not have to be worried about changing (the tab) or that the internet crashed. Because it is very easy for the internet to fail in Kahoot. On the other hand, in Quizizz or, at least me, I have never presented any issues, so it feels more comfortable.

The students agreed that the Live mode of Kahoot was the most challenging to use because they had to check the tab where the English language class was being developed in order to read each prompt or question and then check the tab where the options for them to select were being displayed. It is necessary to address that by the time this research was conducted, Kahoot did not have a feature that enabled the students to see the questions and answers on their screens; nevertheless, recent updates granted this option. The following excerpt details the students' perceptions regarding this feature that was not available at that time:

S4: I don't know if this only happens to me. When we play Kahoot, I access through my cellphone and to see the question, I have to join the meeting and then leave to submit my answer. That takes up some time.

This issue was even more problematic for those students who only used their cellphones for the synchronous English language lessons because the time allotted for each exercise sometimes was not enough. Therefore, they did not manage to submit their answer on time. Evidently, Kahoot and Quizalize were regarded as motivating, but not to the same extent as Quizizz, as evident in the number of students who answered either "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to the different items related to these two platforms in the questionnaire and the information obtained from the focus group. Some of the reasons that the students provided to justify these perceptions were:

S6: From 1% to 100%, it would be a 50% motivation (Kahoot), because there are times when I worry more about the connection and going from tab to tab, so that doesn't motivate me as much.

S1: The truth is that it (Quizalize) is like a Quizizz and a Kahoot. Why? Because although you cannot use powers, the questions are in the same tab, and we do not have to wait for the others. And as for the weaknesses, honestly, the redemption question. That thing would also be missing in Quizalize.

In general, the students perceived these platforms as motivating during the English language lessons but each one to a different extent. This situation was because these game-based platforms had been designed with different features, some more appealing than others. Factors such as time, powers, redemption questions, leaderboards, and scoring systems made these resources more appealing to the learners. As for the impact of these tools on the students' learning process, a significant number of students coincided that these technological resources enhanced their learning process as the answers obtained in items 4, 9, and 11 showed, and the answers provided during the focus group when the topic of not implementing them during the English language lessons was brought up:

S6: I think Quizizz kind of helps us a little more than Kahoot because like he said... uh, I think it was S3, it's cool because it's an interactive part and one can learn faster. Well, I think you can learn

faster when you enjoy it. If you like to play soccer, you learn to play soccer fast because you want to. So Quizizz kind of helps us to learn more because we like playing it.

S1: Well, teacher I agree with S6, because when you don't assign a Kahoot or something, one sometimes neglects or forgets something. And if you assign a Kahoot, we will reinforce it and if we forget something, we will remember it. And with the new topics that you sometimes assign too because that is how we also learn because they provide us with the answers immediately and you don't have to wait. So, teacher, it would feel really weird if you didn't assign a Kahoot or a Quizizz.

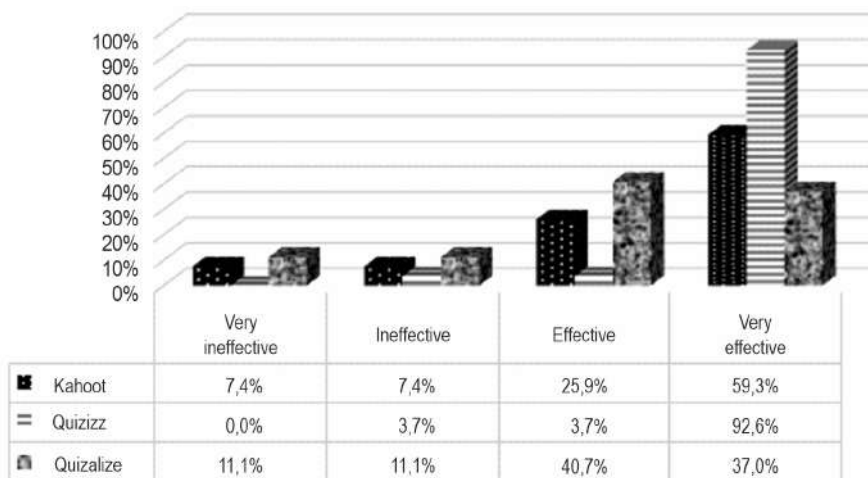


Figure 2. Effectiveness of Kahoot, Quizizz and Quizalize.

Both instruments showed that the students found these resources helpful in their language learning process because they were engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, as S1 mentioned, the immediate feedback provided by the tools allowed them to self-assess their learning process and reinforced those topics studied in class. Finally, Figure 2 below shows the effectiveness of each tool based on the answers gathered with the two instruments.

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As seen in Figure 2, 92,6% of the students found Quizizz a very effective tool, and only 3,7% perceived it as ineffective in their learning process. As for Kahoot, 59,3% and 25,9% of the students found this tool as very effective and effective, and a total of 7,4% of the students assessed it as very ineffective and ineffective. Lastly, Quizalize was regarded as the least effective tool, with 11,1% of the students considering it as very ineffective and ineffective and an estimate of 37% and 40,7% for the very effective and effective category.

Discussion and Conclusions

As revealed in the previous lines, implementing game-based platforms in English language lessons makes the classes and the learning process more appealing because it meets students' needs and generates interest and engagement. As concluded by Chaiyo and Nokham (2017) in their study assessing the impact of Kahoot, Quizizz, and Google forms, these resources "support the learning and increase the student concentration, engagement, enjoyment and motivation" (p. 182). Furthermore, game-based resources foster competition, which leads to engagement and a self-reward feeling when participants reach the first positions on the leaderboards. Basuki and Hidayati (2019) suggest that if the goal is active classroom engagement, Kahoot! 's team mode enables students to collaborate and compete among groups in an energetic classroom atmosphere. Nonetheless, collaboration is hampered during online lessons since students cannot exchange ideas while playing.

The results of this research study concurred with the findings of previous national and international studies that assessed and highlighted the importance of using game-based learning platforms to foster EFL education (Guaqueta & Castro-Gárces, 2018; Laura et al., 2021; Rodríguez Pardo, 2022; Sabandar et al., 2018). As the results suggest, platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizalize foster fun, which compels students and leads to "vocabulary and grammar management that provides new knowledge to put into practice" (Cumbe & Leonardo, 2021, p. 56). Thus, the enjoyment factor increases learner motivation and level of attainment while having fun playing (Göksün & Gürsoy, 2019).

Concerning the first research question, I can conclude that the students perceive these three game-based platforms as useful, entertaining, fun, and engaging resources, being Quizizz the favorite because of its different features like powers, leaderboard, memes, and music. As for the second question, the students feel highly motivated by the integration of these tools during their online classes since they enable them to practice what has been studied in class in a fun, entertaining, and engaging way. However, internet connection and navigability issues affect the students' motivation regarding the implementation of these resources. For instance, using platforms that compel them to switch from one tab to another makes the platform less entertaining and appealing to them, an issue that was also pinpointed in Suharsono's (2020) research. Finally, educators should also be careful when implementing these game-based platforms to grade students because the scoring system depends on the points which can be doubled up with the powers and not on the number of correct answers strictly.

Currently, it seems necessary to conduct further research that seeks to establish commonalities and differences between students' perceptions regarding the use of these resources during in-person learning and distance learning. In addition, studies that seek to

determine how these platforms continue to be used in the EFL class after the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted seem necessary.

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Remote Learning in Times of COVID-19 in Colombia

Aprendizaje Remoto en Tiempos del COVID-19 en Colombia

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Abstract

Remote learning replaced for almost a year the traditional face-to-face education to maintain and ensure the continuity of the teaching-learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. This article reports the results of an exploratory and descriptive-transversal study that exposes primary and secondary school students' perceptions about their experience with remote learning during 2020. Though the research study was also aimed at finding out potential teaching and learning issues inherent to remote education, we only focus on reporting the main findings on the determining factors that hindered or enhanced students' learning during their remote education experience. Data were collected through two different surveys addressed to 101 secondary and primary school students from Neiva and Pitalito, the two most populated towns in the state of Huila, Colombia. The findings showed that the

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students' learning was both positively and negatively influenced by several factors affecting interaction inside and outside of the classroom setting.

Keywords: Emergency remote education, COVID-19, learning factors, remote learning strategies

Resumen

El aprendizaje remoto sustituyó durante casi un año a la enseñanza presencial tradicional para mantener y garantizar la continuidad del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje durante la pandemia del Covid-19. Este artículo reporta los hallazgos de un estudio exploratorio y descriptivo-transversal que expone las percepciones de los estudiantes de primaria y secundaria sobre su experiencia con el aprendizaje remoto durante el año 2020. Aunque el estudio también pretendía explorar los posibles problemas de enseñanza y aprendizaje inherentes a la educación remota, sólo nos enfocamos en reportar los principales hallazgos sobre los factores determinantes que dificultan o mejoran el aprendizaje de los estudiantes durante su experiencia de educación remota. Los datos se recogieron por medio de dos encuestas diferentes dirigidas a 101 estudiantes de secundaria y primaria de Neiva y Pitalito, las dos ciudades más pobladas del departamento del Huila, Colombia. Los resultados mostraron que varios factores que afectan la interacción dentro y fuera del aula influyen tanto positiva como negativamente en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Educación remota de emergencia, COVID-19, factores de aprendizaje, estrategias de aprendizaje a distancia

Introduction

Colombia was under preventive isolation for about a year and a half after confirming the first case of COVID-19 in the country on March 6th, 2020. Since then, the Ministry of Education in Colombia (MEN) asked and allowed schools, through Decreto N° 660, to take three weeks to plan a new academic calendar that was adapted to the circumstances. This new reality made schools and teachers come up with new strategies to deliver the lessons by employing what is known as Emergency Remote Education (ERE). This unique learning approach became the only alternative for most students to continue their learning process without putting their safety and health conditions at risk. Nonetheless, this was not an alternative that would easily adjust to students' realities due to a myriad of factors that could conditionate their learning. Despite teachers' efforts to create learning opportunities for students in this new scenario and students' efforts to adapt and follow instructions, several implications and issues arose when assessing their learning progress. Considering this, the present research study focuses on finding out the strategies that students implemented in 2020 to process and adapt to ERE as well as the factors that hindered or strengthened their learning.

No previous local studies had been conducted to learn about student perceptions regarding their experience with remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore,

we centered our attention on the students from Neiva and Pitalito to get to know their experiences in regard to this phenomenon. Both Neiva and Pitalito deliver formal education to more than 106.928 students at primary and secondary school levels in public and private institutions.

Literature Review

To achieve a better understanding of the terminology addressed in the research study, theories and approaches from different authors were considered.

Education

Considering that education is a fundamental human right (UN, 1948), we view this process from a social constructivist perspective in which the culture and context are relevant for the construction of knowledge and understanding (Vygotsky, 1980). As clearly simplified by Dagar et al. (2017), “It is the task of education to ensure harmonious and balanced development of the innate power of an individual by providing a nurturing and conducive environment for their growth and development” (p. 8). When the required setting is not present, education, which is viewed as an active cognitive construction through social interaction, can present challenges, difficulties, and conflicts among the educational community. One of those recurring and evidently complex issues in education has been the shift from traditional face-to-face education to remote education because of the sanitary emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Emergency Remote Education (ERE)

According to Bozkurt et al. (2020), ERE refers to using all resources available, online, and off-line, in a time of crisis for education to endure regardless of the current outlook. To understand the implications of ERE, we explain Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and Remote Learning (RL) separately as follows:

On the one hand, Castañeda-Trujillo & Jaime Osorio (2021) “...ERT should be understood as the first attempt to do online teaching without adequate time and preparation due to the unexpected and drastic changes in the circumstances of the educational modality.” (p.600). ERT has been facilitated through technology in several ways such as video conferencing, webinars, learning management systems, mobile and radio learning, among others; it can also be implemented in two ways: synchronously or asynchronously (Perveen, 2016). On the other hand, as proposed by UNESCO (2020), RL is a way to ensure continued learning for students when a situation is delaying them from coming back to their normal education environment.

Nevertheless, due to the ongoing educational and economic inequality in Colombia, there were 14.000 schools that had a challenging period trying to adapt to this new way of instruction delivery method (Peñafort & Pereira, 2022). Ray (2020) highlights that even though RL provides the opportunity to continue developing the educational content through technology, its effectiveness depends on “preparedness, technology tools, and overall student support infrastructure” (p. 4). In this regard, a study conducted by Acevedo-Tarazona et al. (2021) points out that the government implemented alternatives to enhance the ERE such as the broadcasting of educational programs on radio and television, the distribution of pedagogical and technological supporting materials in hard-to-reach areas, the possibility of counseling and training support for parents and teachers, among other initiatives. Nevertheless, these authors also suggest that despite all these efforts, the pandemic unveiled several limitations in terms of digital infrastructure, socioeconomic conditions, and social and emotional conflicts among teachers and students that continue to fail in ensuring the quality of education. These limitations go hand in hand with the learning factors faced by students during the pandemic that either hindered or enhanced their learning process.

Learning Factors

Different factors such as social interaction, family support and guidance, socio-economic context, and age might affect the learning process. As suggested by Slameto (2010, as cited in Munawaroh, 2017) the learning outcome and success are determined by several factors, which are divided into *internal factors* that are the ones that prevail in learners including physical and psychological factors, and *external factors* that go beyond the learning including “family factors, school factors, and community factors” (p. 667). Those internal and external learning factors, and research studies suggested in this theoretical framework (e.g., Munawaroh, 2017; Ray, 2020; Khlaif et al., 2021) helped us understand remote learning from the perception of students, especially concerning the factors that affected their learning. Regardless of all these challenges and difficulties faced during the pandemic, students managed to develop and implement learning strategies that helped them cope with ERE and its implications.

Learning Strategies

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Ortega (2014) defined learning strategies as those cognitive procedures that individuals have to gain domain of their learning process. In the same line of thought, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) refer to learning strategies as those behaviors and thoughts that learners develop during the learning process. These strategies aim at influencing the learning process while affecting learner’s motivation and “...the way the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge” (p. 315). Likewise, every student can develop learning strategies that vary according to their learning styles. Regarding the current situation, learning strategies related to the use of technology have become more suitable for learners since the pandemic

started. As implied by UNESCO (2020), students should have a balance on using what they have access to immediately, which means embracing remote learning solutions or strategies based on the current technology available.

Methodology

This study took place between July 2020 to July 2021. It was conducted under the parameters of a mixed method approach, and it followed a transversal exploratory and descriptive research design (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014). This research design intertwined the variables that appropriately allowed exploring, formulating, and describing a new phenomenon that had limited scope in the literature.

Participants

The participants were 101 students. 73 were enrolled in secondary education and 28 in primary education. 87 out of the 101 students were from Neiva and 23 from Pitalito. Approximately 70 students were part of the private sector. The average age of primary school students was 8 years old; the average age for secondary school students was 15 years old. Likewise, 59% of the participants indicated that their socioeconomic strata was 2, . Finally, 53% of the participants were women, and 47% were men. The survey was openly distributed to students from Neiva and Pitalito and since all the participants were underaged, the survey contained a form that allowed them and their legal guardians to know about the purpose of the study and the ethical considerations before consenting their participation.

Data Collection

We collected data by means of two online surveys; one applied to secondary school students, and the other to primary school ones. The differences between the instruments relied on language and reduction of three items in the primary school survey. The instrument for secondary school level had fifty-one items, while the one for primary school level had 46. Both open and closed questions were included. Each instrument contained an informed consent, and seven areas of study as follows: Demographic data, network connectivity data, students' knowledge of the use of digital media for the development of remote classes, schedule and academic area, strategies for the development of remote classes, welfare area, and students' suggestions for the improvement of remote classes. These areas were selected because of their strong relationship to the research objectives. Each of the items was revised and validated by a panel of experts. Students whose parents consented participation, answered the survey while being at home due to the national confinement at that time.

Data Analysis and Findings

We followed the strategy proposed by Creswell (2009) of the concurrent triangulation design to analyze the information. We considered three main sources of information: document review, quantitative, and qualitative data. We also followed an inductive-interpretative process to create codes and groups (Creswell, 2012). After gathering the data through SurveyMonkey, we exported the results to an Excel spreadsheet and separated quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and qualitative data were grouped into themes according to the research categories derived from our research objectives. This was a strategy to label the perceptions that better answered the purpose of this study in connection with theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

On that account, the information is presented with its corresponding findings and relevant comments from the participants that support the missing gaps such as the unequal learning opportunities, school necessities, and the creation and implementation of educational policies that acknowledge the challenges that prevail in Colombia due to lack of governmental context sensitivity and action. This information contributes to the more profound understanding of a current educational phenomenon: remote education. Subsequently, two categories were organized according to our main objective.

Research Categories

The following categories presented in Figure 1 below provide an answer to the main objective of the research study presented in this article. Each category portrays the data gathered from the participants regarding the factors that affected their learning in a remote learning environment.

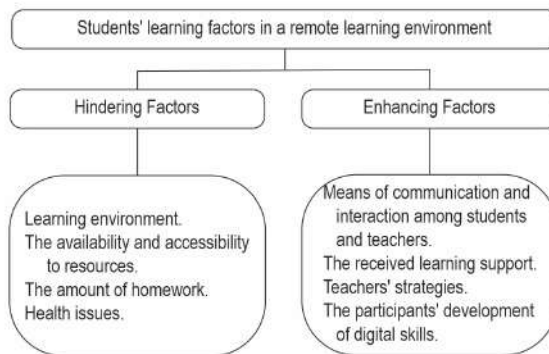


Figure 1. Research Categories

Students' Learning Factors in a Remote Learning Environment

As previously stated in the theoretical framework, several factors may affect students' learning outcome and performance specially when there have been abrupt changes and adaptations in the educational field. Findings in this study indicate that specific scenarios either obstruct students' performance and academic achievement (*hindering factors*) or facilitate it (*enhancing factors*) to attain remote learning requirements.

Factors that hinder students' learning. In this subcategory, we discuss how the participants experienced remote education while focusing on the internal and external factors that hindered their learning. Factors that hinder students' learning process were analyzed and associated with the implications of having more than one person taking remote classes at home, the amount of homework, and students' health issues as a result of the extended class hours and schedules during remote education.

As presented in the literature, several factors can affect students' learning negatively. UNESCO (2020) pointed out that the most common hindering factors regarding students' learning have to do with the use of platforms, learners skills, health issues, and accessibility and availability of resources. In addition, for this study, we found that 85,8% of the participants were having remote classes with more than one person being part of remote scenarios as well at their houses.

In that sense, we believe that there are implications regarding the number of people taking remote classes at the same time at home. One of them involves internet use. According to Adnyani et al. (2020), Wi-Fi speed for educational platforms is rather slow, and sometimes it demands students to use their own internet data. This implies that students may have to participate in the remote lesson at another time or use a different connection to have better accessibility, assuming that this could be a viable option for them. In this regard, Khlaif et al. (2021) conducted a study that reports the importance of a stable and reliable internet connection for remote learning to take place. These authors also highlight that infrastructure in regards to availability of devices, internet and technical support is necessary to engage students and teachers in remote settings. In the case of our study, if learners do not have another choice but to use the same network as the other people they live with, their learning might be compromised as they are not able to be fully engaged with the lessons because of poor connection and interference.

Additionally, another implication is that students' learning environment is also affected by the number of people taking remote classes in the same living place. Matrapendidikan (2013, as cited in Munawaroh, 2017) suggests that providing a quiet and comfortable learning environment is essential for learners to focus on the lessons and understand them thoroughly. Due to the reality of the time, taking classes from home implied that students had to deal

with a variety of distractions. Therefore, students felt disconnected from their class and their capacity of engagement was more likely to be disrupted, as it was expressed by one of the participants in our study:

“At home there are many distractions; the computer, chats, social networks and that is something that should not happen, at school we are always focused and attentive to everything.” (P43RS40)

Equally relevant, since a stable learning environment, motivation, and tolerance are necessary features for students to adapt to RE, establishing the relationship between being technologically prepared to attend remote classes and being cognitively ready to do so is pertinent. Students may have the required tools and resources to attend the classes, but they might not be under the adequate conditions to fully engage with the classes due to the lack of the above-mentioned features.

Moreover, for 87.2% of the participants, the number of available devices at home to attend the remote sessions was enough. Furthermore, as suggested by Ullah and Ali (2021), private schools make every effort to guarantee students' learning and its continuity during remote education whilst the public sector takes longer to ensure this for students. Like this, Yasmeeen et al. (2015) highlighted that “it is evident that the private institutions are better equipped with respect to the availability of equipment” (p. 6). Having said that, highlighting the likelihood of students from private schools to develop a better performance and knowledge than the students from public schools, who lack the resources to perform adequately, is essential.

Conversely, 12,8% of the participants stated that the number of devices was not enough to attend remote classes. The participants were expected to perform and deliver an outstanding performance even though their ability to complete tasks and engage with classes was compromised by external factors such as availability of technological devices. We can agree that it represents a more challenging scenario for students to be part of remote classes when the required devices and tools are not available at home. Even though we highlight the importance of that before, we acknowledge that all those who do not have these resources continue to pursue education either way. The outcome of these students that are not equipped according to the standards (e.g, good connectivity, computer, and technological devices) manifests in the low performance and capacity to attain the set of requirements established in the remote classroom.

To add further analysis to the rigorous responsibility that remote education requires on students, 73,3% of the participants who answered the survey believe they are required to complete more academic assignments than in the past, which leads them to devote more time and abilities to accomplish the goals established. On the other hand, only 26,7% of students believe that the number of workshops and homework have not changed as a result of remote education.

The amount of homework that a student should do to achieve the goals in school depends on the age and grade in which the student is. According to Hardy and Boaz (1997, as cited in Valentine, 2002), when it comes to remote learning environments, students are required to be more engaged, organized, and independent, compared to a face-to-face learning environment. Nonetheless, these characteristics are rarely found in students from primary and secondary school. Consistently, students in secondary school might manage the time devoted to performing and developing their homework more effectively in comparison to the primary level. However, the fact that they perceive that the amount of homework is constantly increasing for them, might result in a triggering factor linked to stress and anxiety.

Another hindering factor presented in our findings is related to health issues in students. One of the most relevant and worrying issues is the constant physical pain and discomfort that students may have experienced during remote classes. In fact, 56% of the participants stated that because of remote education, they have presented health issues such as headache or backache. The most common health issues among students as a result of spending too much time on the screen are headache: 33%, eyes fatigue: 30%, backache: 27%, among others such as fever, tiredness, constipation: 10%, which may negatively impact the learning process of the student and their wellbeing. Here we present two students' excerpts that better illustrate this hindering factor:

“Headache, stress, burning eyes, back pain, tiredness, body aches, fever. (All this from being on the computer for so long), before I was only at the computer for one or two hours, but now I have to be at least 6 and those are only during class hours.” (P38RS40)

“Sometimes burning eyes from spending too much time at the computer and also headaches due to accumulated stress because there were times when I had too much homework for the same day or the same subject.” (P28RS18)

According to Mangis (2016), spending an extended time on the computer presents a major risk to a person's physical and mental health, resulting in the lack of active leisure pursuits and recreational sports which lead us towards sedentary activities such as watching television, playing video games, and spending time on computers. Since children used to be told to stay at home and to attend their classes remotely, what Mangis (2016) describes as a sedentary life was a reality for children from Neiva and Pitalito.

As already presented in the literature, the health condition plays an important role in students. Oliveira et al. (2021) suggest that as students continue learning from home, they are more sensitive to suffer from negative reactions and deficiencies in mental health such as “anxiety and depression as a result of missing friends and isolation” (p. 4). Nonetheless, the possibility of suffering from physical problems is not being left behind due to the discomfort caused by spending hours online or looking at a screen. Now, physical symptoms are not the only one present in students' lives; the pandemic has also brought other implications on

students' mental health such as the lack of motivation and high stress levels. When there is lack of motivation in students, apart from facing difficulties finding the sense of the meaning of life, they also find it difficult to remain focused, organized, or dedicated to what they do daily. The pandemic increased the need for social isolation and a switch to the way most people used to live. Additionally, Deci and Ryan (2008) pointed out that motivation can be affected by social constraints and interaction. In other words, when the need for social interaction is not met, the motivation of people is significantly affected, being this one an essential factor for learning outcome and performance.

Factors that Enhanced Students' Learning. Even though the transition from face-to-face classes to remote ones has brought negative consequences on student's learning, this subcategory is aimed to highlight aspects, strategies, and factors that improve and reinforce the students' performance in the remote learning scenarios. The implementation of strategies and sources such as channels of communication, the received learning support, teachers' strategies, and the participants' development of digital skills have also contributed to student's learning. This is why, to amplify the exploration of this subcategory, we present the subsequent analysis supporting the responses of the participants and the views of other researchers that contribute to this finding.

Due to the need to secure effective communication for the development and interaction of a class, a set of platforms and applications were chosen and developed. This contributed to a more profound understanding of a subject and allowed students and teachers to remain in permanent contact from home so that the learning processes could continue. According to the responses from the participants, due to its accessibility and efficacy, the most popular way of asynchronous communication between teachers and students was WhatsApp, (53,2%, as it is presented in Figure 2 below). It has shown to prevail among students and teachers as a powerful digital tool when communicating and interacting as it is the one of the most used apps for instant messaging in Colombia. Followed by this was email with 32.9% and YouTube with 13.9%, being these three the most used platforms for communication among teachers and students.

As interaction in the classroom was changed and reevaluated, teachers had to come up with different resources and ideas to overcome the screen distance. It was a matter of concern for teachers to decide which type of app or platform to use because it would determine the accessibility and capability for students to join and understand the material. As stated by Kholis (2020), teachers need to choose an appropriate app in accordance with the students' needs and consider different accessibility aspects such as "virtual meetings, delivered materials, tasks and assignments, learning facilities, and evaluation" (p. 27). To do so, teachers created and implemented different strategies that had contributed to the development of students' interactions and performance, while motivating them to participate throughout different activities. The implementation of videos in the classes was reported to be one of the best strategies to cope with attention and motivation in times of remote education

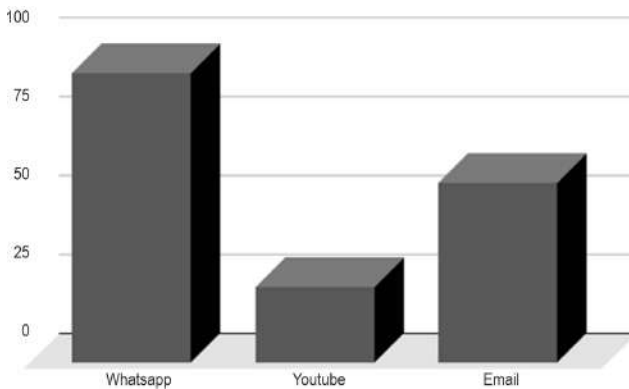


Figure 2. Means of communication and interaction used by the participants with their teachers and peers.

according to 74.26% of the participants. Based on the previous information, here we present three students' excerpts:

"They play videos and then ask us about the video." (P26/RP20)

"Educational games making a review of the topic seen, video tutorials and tests." (P28/RS02)

"They (teachers) explain to us virtually through applications such as YouTube or through videos that they record themselves." (P28/RS12)

Furthermore, as stated by Bevan (2017), "studies evidenced that the use of videos, permit for more efficient processing and memory recall. This type of material helps the student to get and process the information in a way that's natural to them. In a nutshell, videos are good teachers" (para. 4). As we are living in a digital era, it is noticeable that the strategies involved with the use of technology and digital resources are more effective and efficient in the current generations.

Moreover, as another enhancing factor, parent support played a crucial role in the participants' learning process. In the case of primary school students, 74,3% of the students stated that help was needed to cope with the instructions given by teachers or technological issues in remote sessions. Secondary school students, 45,3%, also agreed with parent support during remote classes; however, almost half of the participants showed that they did not need help from adults, especially students from the secondary level since they showed an interest in overcoming situations on their own without any support. According to students in secondary school:

"I would not like it because I believe that we can solve our doubts." (P35/RS4)

“No, the truth is that I’ve already been raised like this and I don’t need help from someone else.” (P35/RS19)

Due to the pandemic, parents must take on new and unfamiliar roles and responsibilities as their children participate in remote education while experiencing increasing instructional responsibility for their child’s learning (Liu et al., 2010). Through her study, Boulton (2008) found out that children enjoyed having parent support, but at the same time, parents did not really know what role they should play in online learning.

Finally, regarding the development of digital skills, Figure 3 shows that before the pandemic, a few participants had previous knowledge about the use of technological devices such as computers, cell phones, or even tablets. 48% of students knew how to use a computer with all its characteristics, nonetheless, 20% said that they poorly knew how to use the computer correctly.

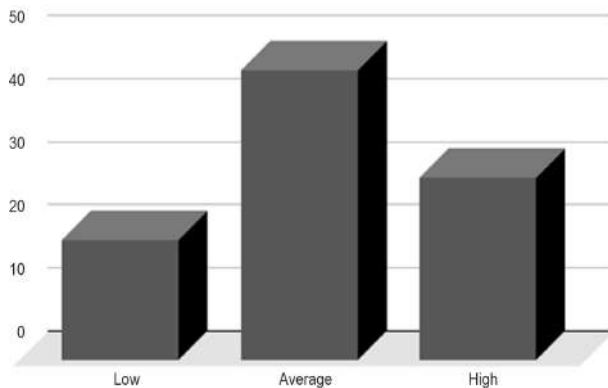


Figure 3. The level of participants’ digital skills in using the computer before remote classes.

Consequently, as presented in Figure 4 below, since most students were required to attend classes at home throughout the use of an electronic device, 71% of them stated that after having experienced eight months of remote classes, they have an outstanding use of the computer. This shows how participants’ development of digital skills have also contributed to their learning process.

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Conclusions

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 brought challenges to the teaching and learning in many schools around the world, one of them being the shift from traditional face-to-face

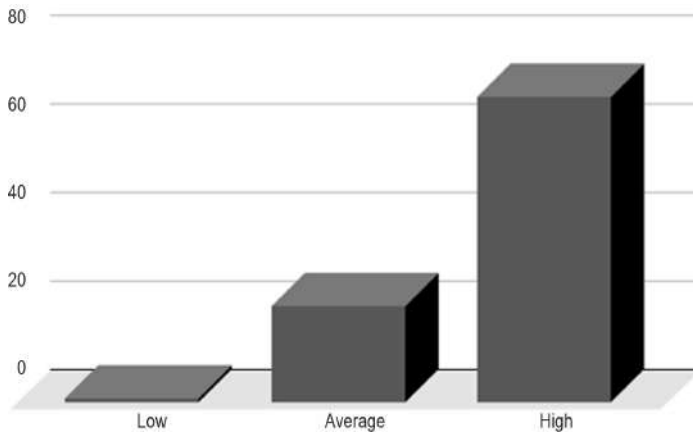


Figure 4. The level of participants’ digital skills in using the computer after having experienced eight months of remote classes.

to remote classes. This transition was not easy, especially for those in countries like Colombia in which there was no previous preparation or awareness on remote education practices, and in which the student population with no computer at home was around 67% in 2018 (De Zubiria, 2020). Our main aim with this study was to explore Neiva and Pitalito students’ perceptions regarding their experience with remote learning to have a better understanding of the experience, challenges, and difficulties faced after this sudden transition to a remote environment.

Among the factors that hinder students’ learning, we found that their learning environment, the quality of the internet connection, and accessibility of resources affected them both positively and negatively; depending on the side of the gap they stand on: public or private education. First, if the accurate setting and resources are not provided, it triggers students’ performance to be low or poor, hence students who have enough resources and internet connection to attend lessons are perceived as better candidates to achieve learning in remote times. The students’ environment also affects their motivation, level of attention, and concentration since they do not only need one ability, strategy, resource, or tool to accomplish the learning goals at remote education; it is the correlation between them that would make it possible to have a successful learning outcome and performance. Nevertheless, teachers’ capacities to guide students in remote scenarios is also a crucial aspect to move forward in achieving learning targets.

In regard to the learning environment, findings reported that students’ learning might be affected negatively due to disengagement, internet connection issues and poor accessibility

and exposure to digital tools. Additionally, results revealed how the number of assignments was negatively perceived among the students since the majority of them (73,3%) manifested an increase on what they had to do after class. Although secondary school students demonstrated to cope better with the assignments, it was found that the primary school students required an adult's supervision or help to complete them. Thus, it is relevant to highlight the importance of parents and legal guardians' support since it becomes another factor that may hinder or enhance learning when it comes to remote education. On this matter, teachers should consider and reflect on the idea that being flexible with the amount of homework and supporting students in the learning process is not related to a decrease in the level of efficiency and demand of the lessons, but it is more aligned with ensuring that students become aware of their adaptation process so that they can accurately reflect on their performance in a remote education environment.

Moreover, another concern in regard to remote education has to do with health issues. Findings showed that spending so much time in front of a screen can result in a variety of physical and psychological issues, such as headache, eye strain, backache, fever, tiredness, constipation, and lack of motivation. The abrupt shift from face-to-face education to ERE compromises aspects that force student's bodies and emotional health to drift, producing the negative effects that have been mentioned. We also highlight that the required levels of social interaction to enhance cognitive development in students were not encountered due to the pandemic restrictions; consequently, the level of motivation on students decreased, creating a higher likelihood of suffering from high-stress levels and mental issues.

These findings triggered motivation and health issues that compromised students' learning during the pandemic. Nonetheless, this study also revealed positive results such as the impact of the channels of communications and platforms used by students and teachers such as WhatsApp, E-mail, and YouTube, since they helped students develop digital skills and knowledge on the matter.

Finally, as researchers, we want to extend an invitation to educators and teachers to reevaluate their practices and to innovate in every possible way so that the teaching and learning practices can be transformed in the future. Veletsianos and Houlden (2020) suggests that there is a need for radical flexibility education that leads us to think about the issues that the pandemic makes distinct. In other words, we must learn from what we are currently experiencing for improvement purposes.

The findings and conclusions from this study cannot be taken as the overall situation in Huila, Colombia, or other regions and countries around the world. Then, it is essential for other institutions, communities, towns, regions, and ethnicities to be considered for further research that can lead to a more complete exploration of the students' perceptions on remote learning. We conclude this research study by reaffirming how important it is to conduct

research on such phenomenon presented in education around the world as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which can lead teachers, students, policy makers, and stakeholders in general to have a broader perspective and idea of the aspects to be improved and solved for the current and future situations.

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The Impact of the iPad on Mexican English Language Teachers' Cognition

El Impacto del iPad en la Cognición de los Profesores de Inglés en México

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Abstract

This article reports the results of a study that was part of a master's thesis. The research focused on a private primary school in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. It aimed to explore English language teachers' cognition, specifically into the teaching practice and emotional responses reported when implementing the use of the iPad in their lessons. Four female English language teachers were selected to be part of the project. A grounded theory method was selected to carry out the study, and two instruments were chosen to collect and triangulate the data obtained. Those instruments were guided teachers' narratives and individual interviews. Results show that teachers' practices and emotional responses evolve during the process of the iPad implementation by following four main stages: initial reactions, sense of realization, change, and adaptation. Furthermore, similar emotional reactions and teaching practices were found in the four participants.

Keywords: cognition, emotional responses, iPad, Mexican English teachers, technology, teaching practice

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Resumen

Este artículo informa sobre los resultados de un estudio que fue parte de una tesis de maestría. El contexto del estudio fue en una escuela primaria privada en Pachuca, Hidalgo, México. El estudio buscaba explorar la cognición de los profesores, específicamente en la práctica docente y las respuestas emocionales que los profesores de inglés en el nivel elemental informan a la hora de implementar el iPad en sus clases. Se seleccionaron cuatro profesoras de inglés para formar parte del proyecto. Se seleccionó el método de teoría fundamentada para llevar a cabo el estudio; se eligieron dos instrumentos para recolectar y triangular los datos obtenidos, dichos instrumentos son narrativas guiadas y entrevistas individuales con cada una de las profesoras. Los resultados muestran que las prácticas y las respuestas emocionales de las profesoras evolucionan durante el proceso de implementación del iPad siguiendo cuatro etapas principales: reacciones iniciales, sentido de realización, cambio y adaptación. Además, se encontraron reacciones emocionales y prácticas de enseñanza similares en las cuatro participantes.

Palabras clave: cognición, iPad, tecnología, profesores mexicanos de inglés

Introduction

The current study aims to explore teachers' cognition regarding the effects that the implementation of the iPad has had on elementary English language teachers' teaching practice as well as to explore their emotional responses to this innovation. According to Galván-Malagón and López-Pérez (2017), one of the biggest problems when trying to implement new technologies in education is the attitudes that teachers have toward them. In addition, one of the biggest obstacles found in this field is teachers' fear of expressing opinions about the new technologies or acknowledging how they really use them in the classroom. As Galván-Malagón and López-Pérez (2017) point out, several teachers do not report their truthful practices when using technology because, in many cases, acknowledging that they do not use them or possess the necessary training may be politically incorrect. As such, this situation could lead to a conflict between what teachers believe about new technologies and what they believe society demands (McGinty, 2002, as cited in Galván-Malagón & López-Pérez, 2017).

iPads have been widely adopted worldwide in the educational setting, making them one of the most popular devices implemented in schools (Zhang & Nouri, 2018). Mexico is not the exception. Private schools in the country are starting to utilize the iPad. The iPad is a tablet that combines smartphone features like a computer, providing access to information and applications. The useful gadget has a comfortable size and weight and opens the door to more than 65,000 educational apps (Lezama, 2014). Nevertheless, the new technologies implemented may not have a real impact on the teaching-learning process until there are significant changes among all the members of the educational organization, from a micro level (pedagogical) to a macro level (structure of the current educative system) (Galván-Malagón & López-Pérez, 2017).

The study looks for defining what the culture of teaching was before teachers worked with iPads versus what the new culture of teaching might be after implementing its use in English language lessons. It provides insights into teachers' cognition, specifically into the teaching practices and emotional responses that English language teachers, all in elementary level, report when implementing the use of the iPad in their lessons. Teachers' cognition involves what teachers think, know, and believe (Borg, 2006); New concepts include the emotional dimension of teachers' lives (Borg, 2016). The insights of the study may be helpful to approach problems that have arisen, for instance, the study of the possible reasons for the lack of impact of ICT in improving educational results (Somekh, 2004), the self-efficiency of teachers' own computer skills (Paraskeva et al., 2008), or the emotions as an essential role when accepting the implementation of computers (Veen & Slegers, 2006).

Electronic resources such as iPads may offer benefits when implemented in the educational context. They may change the way teachers develop their lessons. Considering the ubiquity of such tools in modern society, investigating how teachers respond to the implementation of iPads is an essential step in ensuring their optimal use. The study fits into this general area of innovation that various authors claim as essential (Galván-Malagón & López-Pérez, 2017; Lezama, 2014; McGinity, 2002). Other studies have been done in this area (as in Cai, 2012; Kayapınar et al., 2019; Öztürk, 2018; Zhang & Nouri, 2018) but never in a private school in central Mexico. The study may then contribute to previous work because it mainly focuses on the use of a specific tablet, the iPad.

The study also combines the teachers' practices and emotional responses. Prior research, for instance, the work of Öztürk (2018), studied Turkish Language Teachers' anxiety about tablet PC-assisted teaching. It was found that Turkish female teachers' anxiety level arises when teaching with a tablet PC. In addition, that work suggests that teachers should be provided with adequate training in using tablet PCs. Therefore, the study attempts to be significant for both novice teachers and in-service teachers, as well as higher administrations that regulate the English language teaching in Mexico, since, by exploring the culture of the classroom, awareness can arise on the need to have a better understanding of what happens in the local language classroom (Herrera, 2014).

All in all, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How has the implementation of iPads in an English as a Foreign Language Class influenced the teaching practice of teachers at the elementary level of a private elementary school in Pachuca, Hidalgo?
2. What changes have been provoked regarding teachers' emotional responses because of the implementation of iPads in the previously mentioned context?

3. How has the implementation of the iPad influenced English language teachers' cognition?

Method

Research Design

Creswell (2008) has highlighted the importance of using qualitative research to collect and analyze data with unique characteristics which rely on text and image data as well as diverse strategies of inquiry. Therefore, designing a qualitative study appropriate for this diverse situation, which is classroom culture and teachers' cognition, is primarily determined by the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the sources available. Due to the aim of the research project being to explore processes, activities, and events of classroom culture and teacher's cognition, a grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2008) to data collection and analysis was adopted. Two instruments were chosen to collect and triangulate the data: guided teachers' narratives and individual interviews.

Research Context and Participants

This study was developed with the help of four female English language teachers from a private primary school in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. They were between 30 and 50 years old. Each participant oversees one or two grades; however, all of them have taught from first to sixth grade due to the school policy, which changes English language teachers to other grades every year. Therefore, the participants possess experience with young and pre-adolescent learners. Moreover, each participant teaches two groups in one day with no more than 25 students each. The four participants were chosen due to their expertise in the use of the iPad, so that the culture of the classroom, which five experienced teachers had before and after the implementation of the iPad in their lessons, can be explored.

The school policy demands the incorporation of the iPad device in the English language lessons, in which the participants integrate it at least one day per week. The school provides each teacher with one personal iPad mini, and each student is also provided with one when teachers require them. Thus, students do not need to share the devices.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure took place as a task for the four teachers. They were asked to write a guided narrative of no more than two pages about teachers' experience and process regarding their transition from not teaching with iPads to teaching with them (see appendix A). The following was the procedure:

- Write in a narrative way in no more than 2 pages about the next topic: *My process of transitioning from “not teaching with iPads” to “teaching with iPads” was ...*
- In your narrative try to involve as many details as you can such as emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge.

Moreover, eight questions were given as a guide so that teachers’ narratives can follow a pattern (see appendix A). Four reports were collected in total where they described how the process of transitioning from teaching without iPads to teaching with them was, including emotional aspects and their teaching practice. The narrative could be written in any format that the participants felt comfortable with. The narratives were then emailed so they can be saved and analyzed.

The second step in data collection was formulating individual interviews to get more in-depth information. First, preliminary questions were designed according to the purpose of the current study, and then new questions were formulated according to the data obtained in the teachers’ narratives. Teachers were contacted to book their interview. Due to the pandemic situation, interviews were via zoom. Each participant was asked to expand and explain their answers that were previously reported in their narratives.

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, the data collection and the data analysis procedure utilize a grounded theory approach. This study followed a standard format for the data analysis process in grounded theory provided by Creswell (1998, p. 57). The format follows four phases (as in Castineira et al. 2010, pp. 2-3). These include:

1. Open coding: The researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information (see Table 1 below).
2. Axial coding: The researcher assembles the data in new ways after open coding in which the researcher identifies central categories that influence the phenomenon, specifies actions or interactions that result from the central phenomenon, identifies the contexts that influence, and delineates the outcomes for the phenomenon.
3. Selective coding: The researcher identifies a ‘storyline’ and writes a story that integrates the categories in the axial coding model. This phase typically includes the presentation of conditional hypotheses (see Table 2 below).
4. Conditional matrix: Although rarely found in grounded theory studies, this phase consists of developing a visual portrayal that elucidates the social, historical, and economic conditions influencing the central phenomenon.

Table 1. Open coding: Initial Categories

Phase number	Category name
1	Initial preparation
2	Emotional aspects
3	Change
4	Conflict
5	Advantages

Table 2. Axial coding: Central Categories

Phase number	Category name
1	Initial reactions
2	Sense of realization
3	Changes
4	Adaptation

This analysis strategy was primarily chosen because teachers' guided-narrative data fit the systematic process described above. Moreover, this strategy might provide a more ethnographic, emic, and holistic view creating a whole picture of the event under study from the participants' point of view (Castineira et al., 2010).

Results

Initial Reactions

During the data analysis, initial reactions were categorized as the first coding that the four participants reported. Those reactions are presented in Table 3, which is divided into two categories: beliefs and quotes.

Table 3. Teachers' beliefs at initial reactions step

Beliefs	Quote
Technological devices in daily life	"I think that technological devices are the most used in our daily life" (narrative, participant A).

Beliefs	Quote
Myself towards the use of technology	“I thought I was not as good in technology as I supposed to be” (narrative, participant B).
Myself towards students	“I know the kids would know how to use the iPads” (narrative, participant c). “I could not know less than my students or allow them to know more than me, because that would cause me low morale” (narrative, participant D).

Table 3 shows the teachers’ most common beliefs reported in the guided narratives during the first stage. The third question explored by the guided narrative was about the level of difficulty that the teachers perceived when integrating the iPad into their lessons for the first time. The first belief that arose was about using technological devices in daily life, which according to participant A, is widely used in most people’s activities. Such a belief might suggest that they use mobile devices daily in their personal life activities, and that they likely incorporate those gadgets in their teaching. Currently, many people are attached to these tools, and more institutions offer courses on how to include technological devices in education, which is why not only young but also more experienced teachers are familiar with technological items.

The fourth question analyzed how the participants felt at the beginning of this process. Therefore, the second belief found at this stage in the guided narratives was about how they perceived themselves toward the use of technology. Participant B claimed that their abilities regarding the use of technology could have been better. This may be perceived as a need for more experience in this specific field of technology in education. Participant B’s notion may propose that experienced teachers do not consider themselves technological literates. This might be due to the lack of courses focused on using technology in previous and not updated curriculums of university programs.

The last belief was about how the participants felt themselves towards their students at the beginning of this stage which was analyzed by the fourth question of the guided narratives. Participants D and C mentioned that they believed they knew that their students would be better at using iPads than them and that fact might cause them authority issues inside of the classroom. People tend to believe that children and teenagers are better at using technological devices just because they are young and use them all the time. Participants D and C prove this belief when claiming the aforementioned. Although such an affirmation may be true, most adolescents and kids cannot use iPads or tablets for academic purposes.

The following table illustrates the most common emotions that the participants reported in the first stage of this process. It is divided into emotions, classification of the emotion (positive or negative), and the emoji representation for more visual analysis.

Table 3.1. Participants' emotions in initial reactions

Emotion	Classification
Fear (narrative, participant A)	Negative
Overthinking (interview, participant C)	Negative
Depressed (interview, Participant D)	Negative
Peace (interview, participant B)	Positive

Table 3.1 shows the participants' emotions in their initial reactions. The fourth question of the guided narrative explored how participants felt at the beginning of implementing the iPad in their classes. During the interview, these ideas were explored more in-depth. Participants A, C, and D shared similar emotions when reporting only negative ones. For instance, participant A confirms that the teachers think about everything that could go wrong when trying new strategies, such as new tools. Therefore, all those thoughts made them feel anxious towards the situation. As an example, participant D reported feeling obsolete, gray, and depressed. She expressed the following in their narrative:

“I felt that as a teacher I would not shine anymore and that if I was light, now, due to my lack of use of technology, I was a dull, dull star, and I became depressed.”

Participant C claimed the following in the narrative, and then it was reaffirmed during the interview:

“My biggest fear was that they would use the iPad for not so good uses.”

The beliefs and feelings might be because the participants needed to be exposed to previous training where they could get used to these kinds of technologies. These ideas also suggest that novice teachers must be prepared to face the integration of new tools so that the stated negative emotions would not have a significant impact on teachers' professional and personal lives. Most participants reported what Mertala (2019) claims in her study that teachers share similar hopes and anxieties towards integrating technology in the classroom. Furthermore, Hembre and Warth (2019) claim that the integration of the iPad might be perceived by teachers as an overwhelming task because pedagogy changes very slowly; in addition, they remark that “new tools do not enter into a vacuum; rather, they interact with

the teachers, the pupils, and the classroom environment” (p. 206). Those issues might be arising since most schools around the world and Mexico are demanding the integration of technology in a hasty way, which leads teachers not to listen to the students’ technological demands and decide not to incorporate technology in their lessons. That decision may come from the fact that, in the past, technology was not compulsory and little innovations regarding technology were integrated in teachers’ lessons. Therefore, current teachers tend to believe that they are less capable than their students when it comes to using technology which provokes negative emotions towards educational and technological innovations (Marek & Wu, 2019).

Sense of Realization

A sense of realization was set as the second coding of the storyline of this evolution. The sense of realization refers to becoming fully aware of something as a fact. In this section, the teachers noticed the advantages and disadvantages of using the iPad in their classes. Table 4 demonstrates the teachers’ cognition regarding such a step, while Table 4.1 shows evidence of the four participants regarding their emotional status in this step.

Table 4. Teachers’ beliefs at the sense of realization step

Beliefs	Quote
Need to take action	“I need to design; I need to know how to use the device in an appropriate way” (interview, participant A).
The advantages	“You realize that your methodologies, your strategies can get much better if you have these technological devices because is a tool for you as a teacher” (narrative, participant A). “What I have realized that my students become more autonomous because they use this technology more than I do. I learn from them and I’m trying to implementing what they teach me” (narrative, participant B).
Not difficult	“At first I thought that using technology required great and deep knowledge, but I realized that by clicking, and clicking, I would advance” (narrative, participant D).

Table 4 shows the three most common beliefs found with quotes from the participants’ guided narratives and interviews. The participants reported the need to act, the advantages that they found, and the realization that using the iPads was easier than what they used to believe. The first question of the narrative explored whether the teachers have received training before the implementation of the technological devices. This information was

supported by questions 1 and 2 of the interview. Participant A claims that to be prepared for this challenge, it was needed to do something about it. Moreover, it might be perceived that the participants wanted to be ready by learning how to use such an electronic tool so they could design a proper class.

In this stage, the participants realized the advantages that the implementation of the iPad brought to their classes. Question 7 of the guided narrative (see Appendix A) analyzed those beliefs. On the one hand, participant B considers that these specific gadgets improve their teaching style by modifying the methodologies and strategies used. That opinion might suggest that technological devices help teachers to give more dynamic, varied, and exciting classes. Guan et al. (2018) and Gönen (2019) state that the integration of digital devices makes a class more exciting and fun. It creates a motivating learning atmosphere, fosters active participation, and helps teachers create more individualized learning for the different students' needs and interests. On the other hand, participant C puts herself into a more autonomous class due to iPads integration which may propose that technological devices open the door for teachers to orient students into a more self-study culture where they are responsible for their own learning. Cai (2012) states that implementing one-on-one technologies, such as the iPad, might foster student-centered pedagogies. Participant D reported that, at the beginning, thinking about using technology in the class was something impossible, and it was very likely that implementing technology would require specific skills. However, that participant noticed that it was all the contrary, that by being patient and practicing, implementing technological devices was not as complex as they thought. That idea encourages the belief that teachers must be surrounded by the new tools or devices that they will use; in this way, they feel comfortable when it is the time to use them in their lessons.

Table 4.1. Teachers' emotions in the realization stage

Emotion	Classification
Stress (narrative, participant D)	Negative
Happiness (narrative, participant A)	Positive
Disappointment (narrative, participant C)	Negative
Sadness (narrative, participant A)	Negative

Table 4.1 illustrates the most common emotions that the teachers reported during the stage of realization. Question 6 of the narrative examines the participants' most common problems in this process. Participants A and C highlighted the common issues that make teachers wonder if it is worth or not to adopt the iPad in their classes. Both participants

claimed that the students' use of the iPad was not appropriately utilized. Participant C stated that students were found on web pages that were not appropriate for their age and used to enter video games webpages. Due to all these factors, participants A and C expressed feeling stressed, disappointed, and sad. These two participants restricted the use of the iPad in their classes as a punishment for their students. As a result, both felt unconfident to use the iPad again. Nevertheless, the teachers reported started feeling confident one more time because their students asked for the devices, and they knew that if they were correctly implemented, iPads would be a tremendous help. Afterward, the participants must transform their classroom management to supervise their students' activities during iPads time. Participant C reported the following in the interview:

"I knew the iPad was a good resource and the kids were asking for them. so, I was like, yeah it is technology, I think they learn better in this way. The attitude of my students helped, and I am trying to be more aware of these things. Some conditions were made to use the iPad."

Participants A and C expressed negative feelings toward the issues that arose during their teaching practice. They affirm that implementing new technologies with young students could be problematic when they are not well regulated. Participants A and C said in their narrative:

"For every perfect situation may be an issue."

"Some bad experiences that I had is that they visited sites that were not protected for children."

These opinions suggest that the use of technologies in the classroom should be considered a serious matter and that strategies to regulate their usage and monitor students should be applied so that this type of problem can be avoided or reduced.

On the other hand, participants B and D reported feeling happy in this stage. Both participants found the benefits of using the iPad in their classroom, and they took advantage of it. They suggest that using technological tools should be an enriching and enjoyable experience if they are implemented correctly. Moreover, participants agree that potential problems can be avoided if they monitor what their students are doing on their devices. These opinions may recommend that students should be watched all the time when working with tools that can give them access to many places.

Changes

This section addresses the changes that the teachers experienced regarding their traditional teaching practice and the transition to using the iPad in their classes. Furthermore, the emotional responses are pointed out so that a clear idea can be perceived of how teachers react to specific changes. Table 5 represents the teachers' cognition in this stage, and table 5.1 shows the evidence of those changes and emotions in each participant.

Table 5. Teachers' beliefs in the stage of changes

Beliefs	Quote
A different vision	"I think it is a different vision of how you can teach something, any topic. It could be math, science, grammar, any topic. It is amazing how a device can transform your class". (Narrative, participant A).
Changing the dynamic	"I think that you are able to change the dynamic of your lessons, it is not always the traditional form, you can implement something else". (Narrative, participant C). "You realized that your teaching, your methodology has changed". (Narrative, participant B)
Change is a must	"If the world has changed, one must change along with it, otherwise, one would be out of reality". (Narrative, participant D).

Three central beliefs reported by the teachers in their narratives during the stage of change are shown in Table 5. Question number 5 of the narrative explored if the teachers got used to using the iPad and how that process was. Participants B and C claimed that, in this process, they could modify their teaching practice making it more up to date. Furthermore, participant A complements these ideas because she mentioned that now she sees her classes differently with a more astounding vision. Participant D affirms that transforming the traditional way of thinking is required in every teacher's mind since times are constantly changing. If teachers are not open to improving their teaching practices, they likely become rusty and unemployed.

Table 5.1 shows participants' emotions regarding the stage of changes analyzed by question 5 of the narrative by asking them if participants got used to this device and how that process was.

Table 5.1. Teachers' emotions in the changes stage

Emotion	Classification
Amazed (narrative, participant A)	Positive
Fascinated (narrative, participant B)	Positive
Confident (narrative, participant C)	Positive
Strong (narrative, participant D)	Positive

Table 5.1 demonstrates that all participants claimed that, by using the iPad, their vision, dynamism, and teaching had changed. All of them agreed that they needed to change to improve their teaching practices. The teachers reflect what Abassi (2020) suggests, the use of technology in the classroom influences teachers' dynamic of delivering a class, and it has a direct effect on students. Learners will receive almost unlimited resources and tools which enhance cooperative learning (ibid). Additionally, Cai (2012) claims that the use of technology might provoke a shift in teachers' pedagogies, making them more student-centered rather than teacher-directed so that students can master the English language as soon as possible.

Stage number three, "changes", addresses positive emotions in all the participants. Those emotions include feeling amazed, fascinated, confident, strong, and highly technological. Participant D moved from feeling depressed to highly technological because she realized that the changes implemented in their class had been well-received by the students. The participants claim that receiving training from the school was a critical factor that let them feel more secure about their technological practices. Participant D mentioned the following:

"They started training me for my job. The coordinator of the technology department was very patient, and I asked many questions because she had to train me well to be able to answer all the questions of my students. I could not know less than them or allow them to know more than me, because that would cause me low morale, so I strived to learn and learn well to always be the one who knows the most and thus raise my image as a teacher."

Participant C stated in the interview:

"I was happy and excited because something new was going to happen. I like learning a lot, so I took all the training and tried to implement it right away."

Participant A stated the next in the narrative:

"It was after using the iPad with my own knowledge and after taking the course that I felt more secure of what I was doing in my classes with the iPad. I learnt many things."

These participants' emotions and ideas might suggest that teachers can modify their state of mind when they have more experience using technological devices. They become more confident and happier with the integration of those devices. Furthermore, based on the participants' ideas stated above, training teachers in the technological field might provide them with not only sufficient knowledge to properly implement the resources but also with sufficient confidence to face the transitioning process.

Adaptation

The aim of this section is to present the last point of the storyline which is the adaptation process. This last coding refers to the process of adaptation that the participants underwent while the implementation of the iPad in their classes. Table 6 provides the teachers' beliefs,

and table 6.1 includes the emotional response, the evidence as participants' quotes, and their emoji interpretation.

Table 6. Teachers' beliefs in the adaptation process

Beliefs	Quote
Knowing the benefits	<p>"I really know that these kinds of devices in a class can be wonderful so if you study or learn a little bit more about this, you can create a teaching and learning experience that is very interesting for your students." (Narrative, participant A)</p> <p>"It's an interesting and marvelous process that helps you improve the dynamic of your lesson and also that can help you to make it more attractive to students and also to adjust yourself to younger generations." (Narrative, participant B)</p>
Autonomous learning	<p>"With the class with technology, they study on their own devices by themselves. For me it represents autonomous learning." (Narrative, participant C)</p>
You don't exist	<p>"You don't exist if you cannot work with technology, as a person and as a professional." (Narrative, participant D)</p>

Table 6.1 demonstrates that all the teachers expressed positive emotions and are more than happy to use the iPad in their classes. Happiness, fascination, and comfort are some of the emotions that teachers reported.

Table 6.1. Teachers' emotions in the adaptation process

Emotion	Classification
Happiness (narrative, participant A)	Positive
Comfort (narrative, participant B)	Positive
Fascination (narrative, participant C)	Positive
Flowing (narrative, participant D)	Positive

Table 6.1 shows that, in this last point, the four teachers adapted positively to using the iPad in their lessons. Moreover, they reported only positive characteristics when using the iPad for educational purposes. They agreed that using those devices makes students more

interested in their lessons because, currently, students and teachers have a highly technological lifestyle. The four participants moved from an old to a new culture of teaching in which textbooks, tests, the amount of knowledge, competencies, values, and teacher-centered approaches were no longer prioritized (Posch, 1994). Instead, by using new technology, the teachers reconsidered their beliefs, values, and habits in developing and performing their lessons, which shows that they modify their current teaching culture (Geer et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the four participants have found that working with iPads is a fantastic process because they have learned and redesigned everything that they used to believe. Previous research has shown that those reactions are seen in other contexts. For instance, Soleimani et al. (2014) showed that teachers react positively to integrating new technologies, in this case, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Moreover, Lawrence (2016) and Alzaidiyeen (2017) demonstrated the positive acceptance of the iPad by both students and teachers in the language classroom. Finally, Auquilla and Urgilés (2017) state that “it is evident that the use of the Apple’s iPad device and educational apps may have a crucial role in today’s classroom instruction because they both can greatly enrich the teaching-learning process in English language lessons” (p. 714). Therefore, the reactions of the teachers were not surprising due to the previous findings in non-Mexican contexts. However, the current results demonstrate that this group of participants was able to appropriately adapt and change their teaching practices just as well as European or Asian teachers.

Discussion and Conclusions

The current study demonstrated that teachers’ cognition is correlated to events that they deal with in their everyday practice and that such practice will eventually influence the way teachers perceive learning and act in their classrooms. Borg (2006) claims that teachers’ cognition is worthy of being studied because “understanding teachers requires an understanding of teachers’ mental lives rather than an exclusive focus on observable behaviors” (p. 6). As a result, teachers’ practices might be better understood. Borg (2006) claims that a study about teachers’ behavior may be incomplete if teachers’ cognition was not considered. Secondly, he states that “research linking intentions and behavior can inform teacher education and the implementation of educational innovation” (pp. 10-11). The links would be the ones to give better connections between teacher cognition, research, and education which would emerge strongly later.

Teachers’ cognition in the current study appears to be highly influenced by previous events in their professional and personal life. The resulting cognition is not static, it is, as Borg (2006) claims, “a cycle shape” where cognition is a crucial factor in shaping classroom events and vice versa. Furthermore, teachers’ cognition was also influenced by knowing students’ abilities and classroom behavior, which impacted teachers’ judgments and decisions.

A preliminary finding from this study was the storyline drawn which considers the stages that the teachers got through when implementing the iPad in their classes. That storyline might be considered a theory about how English language teachers might live processes when higher administrators implement new technologies to be integrated into the language classroom. That theory is not new, it might fit in “theories of change.” Fullan (2006) claims that “if teachers are going to help students to develop the skills and competencies of knowledge-creation, teachers need experience themselves in building professional knowledge” (p. 4). Additionally, Fullan (2006) suggest that these theories should be flexible so that teachers can do new things in the setting in which they work. The current theory found four stages that teachers face during their process of doing something new, they were: initial reactions, sense of realization, change, and adaptation. In the four stages, teachers reported how their classes and their emotional state were evolving. In the initial reactions, there was a tendency for negative emotions, whereas, in the cognition part, most teachers claimed to think that their students could not know more than they do about technology.

In the second stage, “sense of realization”, it was found that teachers believed that the use of the iPad was becoming more and more beneficial for their classes and that their students asked them to use it more frequently. The emotional part was divided into positive and negative feelings. The positive part reported feeling happy, while the negative part reported stress and disappointment due to issues that both teachers faced regarding students entering to not allowed websites. In the third stage, “changes,” teachers stated to have a different vision of their culture of teaching and that they realized that their teaching and methodology had changed. This stage was filled with only positive emotions, for instance, fascination, amusement, and confidence were the most reported. In the fourth and final stage, “adaptation,” teachers showed a complete adaptation to the new technology; they reported only positive characteristics when using the iPad for educational purposes by stating that those devices diversify and dynamize their teaching practices besides to be appealing to younger generations. Teachers expressed strong positive emotions in this stage which make them want to keep working with such a device.

The results of the present study have confirmed that the correct implementation of the iPad in an English language classroom is a factor that must be recognized as necessary not only in the second language teaching field but also in all the educational sector that attempts to integrate new technologies in their curriculum. According to Abassi (2020), the use of technology in the language classroom has a direct influence on learners regarding the facilitation of almost unlimited resources and tools which enhance cooperative learning. Those resources involve developing language skills through experimentation and helping students raise awareness about what can be considered formal or informal language. Likewise, Cai (2012) states that implementing technology in education might turn the pedagogical strategies from teacher-directed to a more student-centered pedagogy by

focusing on “fostering linguistic sensitivity and improving listening comprehension and ability of expression so as to enable students to master English as soon as possible” (p. 843). Furthermore, the purpose of creating a pedagogy based on technology is that language acquisition is not only about grammar and invalid exercises, but on the constant practice of the students (Cai, 2012).

Clearly, increased knowledge of new technologies, in this case, the iPad, provides teachers with uncertainty at the beginning, but as the process evolves, a sense of confidence and high self-esteem is achieved. These characteristics benefit not only teachers but also students and the entire school. Saglam and Sert (2012) demonstrate positive teachers’ attitude towards the role of educational technology for enriching language instruction. Teachers also believe that their students maintain a positive attitude towards using technology in learning. On the other hand, challenges are acknowledged by teachers who claim the lack and need of training for both teachers and students. Finally, Saglam and Sert (2012) concluded that the use of technology in ELT encourages students to construct their own knowledge and helps create a motivational environment by 1) exposing them to lifelong learning skills and strategies and 2) providing materials for different students with different learning styles. These characteristics might benefit not only teachers but also students and therefore the entire school. Prior experience and knowledge of how to properly implement the iPad in the classroom can assist a teacher in becoming more effective, resilient, and happy as a person and educator.

Teachers could adapt and create materials that ensure that the second language is learned and enjoyed by the students. Teachers should be constantly trained in these fields due to the speed that technology changes so that they can be updated regarding the use of applications or websites, besides the use of the hardware and software of the iPad, which is also constantly changing and updating. Results from different studies (Guan et al., 2018; Gönen, 2019) have revealed that the integration of computer media in English language teaching makes classroom more interesting and fun as well as it creates a motivating learning atmosphere, foster active participation, and help teachers create more individualized learning for the different students’ needs and interests. Furthermore, students’ language skills might be improved when developing ideas in English thanks to the wide range of materials that are provided by the addition of ICT in the English language teaching classroom.

Furthermore, it is suggested that teachers’ mental health regarding their negative emotions can be considered to help them smooth the impact of the changes and therefore ease the process of adaptation. Galván-Malagón and López-Pérez (2017) claim that “one of the principal obstacles for the production of normalization of ICT in English teaching is teachers’ attitudes towards them” and that in many cases this is due to “teachers fear of expressing opinions about ICT or admitting that they do not possess the necessary training to integrate them in their teaching practice” (p. 269).

The results have provided further evidence confirming that the implementation of the iPad changes and modifies teachers' traditional practices and that negative emotions might be overcome when gaining experience and knowledge about all the usages that the device can have. Walsh and Farren (2018) provide significant insights and reinforce theory discussed above about the positive attitudes and cognition that teachers report of the use of the iPad in education. Therefore, it can be considered that a new culture of teaching was created when iPads were introduced, adopted, and applied in every lesson. Therefore, it can be suggested that not only teachers' traditional practices were modified but also their perception of the use of technologies in the classroom was transformed into a more positive and effective one. Those practices allow teachers train more autonomous students. Identifying more factors that can make teachers reject the use of such a device, as well as why teachers might want to stop using it, will help to have a better understanding of how teachers perceive the use of the iPad or other types of tablets.

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Appendix A.

Instructions to write the guided narrative

- Write in a narrative way in no more than 2 pages about the next topic: *My process of transitioning from “not teaching with iPads” to “teaching with iPads” was ...*
- In your narrative try to involve as many details as you can such as emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge.
- An example of the narrative is provided for you. This is only an example, feel free to modify the structure so that you don't limit your creative process.
- Write your narrative after the example in Times New Roman format 12.

Try that your narrative answers most or all the next questions:

You can answer the questions either systematically or not.

1. Did you prepare yourself somehow to integrate the iPad in your class?
2. Do you consider the way you teach English to be the same from not using iPads to using them in your class?
3. How did you find the process of implementing the iPads in your lessons?
4. How did you feel at the beginning and during this process?
5. Did you get used to it? How was that process?
6. Did you face problems when implementing the use of iPads? If yes, what kind of problems? How does this make you feel?
7. Did your common teaching strategies, techniques, and/or pedagogies come into conflict when trying to implement the iPad in your lessons? If yes, how did you overcome this situation? If not, why do you think this might happened?
8. Did you find advantages and/or disadvantages regarding the use of the iPad? How does this make you feel?

Intersectional Identity Studies in Colombian ELT: A Profiling Research Study

Estudios de Identidades Interseccionales en el ELT Colombiano: Un Estudio Investigativo de Perfiles

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Abstract

This article aims at sharing the preliminary literature review of the main developments related to Intersectional Identities in Colombian English Language Teaching and general educational contexts worldwide. First, I trace the research work concerning the topic at both national and international levels through a bibliometric analysis in Scopus to see the main developments regarding intersectionality from a decolonial perspective. Then, I show through a complementary bibliometric study, 50 articles that were collected from different databases, and the trends found as representation of intersectional studies. The analysis indicates two core trends: (1) Intersectional studies in general educational contexts and (2) Intersectional studies in ELT contexts. Finally, I present how this profiling research study shows that the topic of Intersectional Identities in Colombia seems scarce within the field of ELT.

Keywords: Colombian ELT, intersectionality, intersectional identity, profiling research study

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como fin compartir la revisión bibliográfica preliminar de los principales desarrollos sobre las Identidades Interseccionales en la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa (ELI) en Colombia

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y en contextos educativos generales alrededor del mundo. Primero, hago un rastreo de trabajos de investigación referentes al tema tanto a nivel nacional como internacional por medio de un análisis bibliométrico en Scopus para ver sus principales desarrollos relacionados con interseccionalidad desde una perspectiva decolonial. Luego, muestro a través de un estudio bibliométrico complementario, 50 artículos que fueron recolectados de diferentes bases de datos, y las tendencias encontradas como representación de estudios interseccionales. El análisis indica dos tendencias principales: 1) Estudios interseccionales en contextos educativos generales y 2) Estudios interseccionales en contextos de ELT. Finalmente, presento cómo este estudio investigativo de elaboración de perfiles muestra que el tema de las Identidades Interseccionales en Colombia parece escaso dentro del campo de ELT.

Palabras clave. ELT colombiano, interseccionalidad, identidades interseccionales, estudio investigativo de elaboración de perfiles.

Introduction

This profiling exercise looks into the intersection of identities (the integration of different identities such as race, gender, social, etc.) which in one way or another can affect students' language learning process. This research interest is based on a concern about the considerable number of students continuously arriving at most Colombian schools and who belong to different nationalities, racial/ethnic and indigenous communities. This concern is related to the fact that they may be suffering from segregation due to their social identities and the intersection of them even though the number of students from other cities/countries is high. Evidence of this appeared at the school where I work, a public institution located in Kennedy neighborhood in Bogota, (Colombia) with a total of 2730 students from which 455 (16%) belong to countries and cities other than Bogota. Some of them come from countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and some others from Colombian indigenous communities.

When I found the previous educational context, I decided to start a research study based on this group of students as they are not always borne in mind for being considered a minority, according to the statistics of the school (only 16%). That is why, not only students from other cities of Colombia but from other countries are going to be considered in the study, as the intersection of their identities including race and ethnicity are included and the possible intersection of these identities may affect their learning processes. At this point, I started to look for information about research studies that included an intersectional perspective. In other words, I started a profiling research study that “aims to augment, nor replace, that literature review, thereby helping to fulfill the purposes of understanding the structure of the subject, important variables, pertinent methods, and key needs” (Porter et al., 2002). All of this, to see the *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* research about intersectional identities in ELT has been done. For this analysis, the information given by the database Scopus was used to trace research, and the bibliometric information was considered as well due to the lack of access to many of the documents.

On the one hand, the search on Scopus in June 2021 (Figure 1) showed that the first study including the term “Intersectionality” was reported in 1998. There was a period of stability with few studies from 1998 to 2005 (between zero and four per year) but in 2006 there was a rise with seven research studies which continued until 2020 with 369. During the last decade, the number of studies increased from 26 to 369 but the year 2021 shows 239 by the month of July. These statistics show a growth in the intersectional research field. In general terms, these studies included aspects as race, gender, class, and culture and the way in which these identities are present when segregation appears. As many of these studies are not from educational contexts, mentioning how discrimination is being evident from different fields is important.

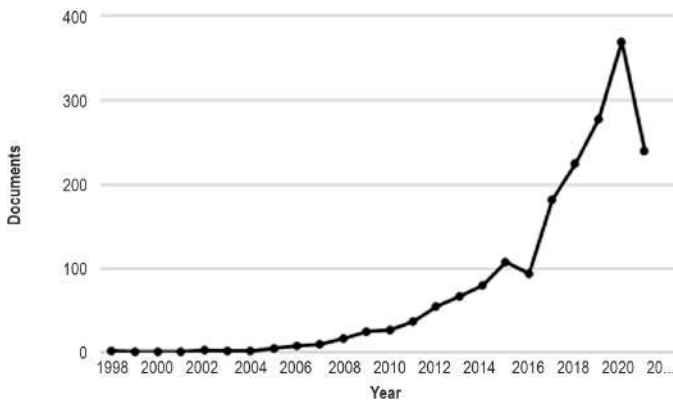
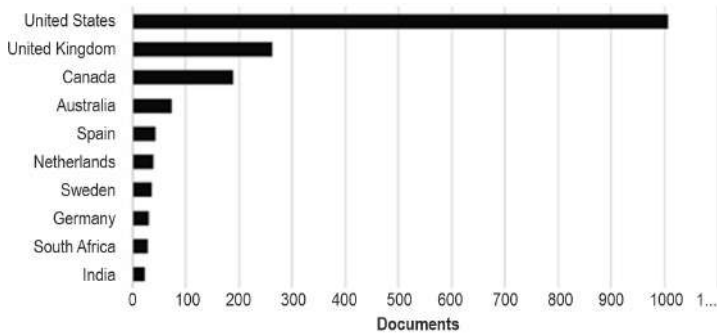


Figure 1. Documents by year

Figure 2 shows the amount of research carried out according to the global territory. It can be said that research related to intersectional studies has been done primarily in the U.S. with more than 1000 articles, the U.K. with almost 300 articles and Canada with nearly 200; Australia, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, South Africa, and India remained with less than 100 publications.

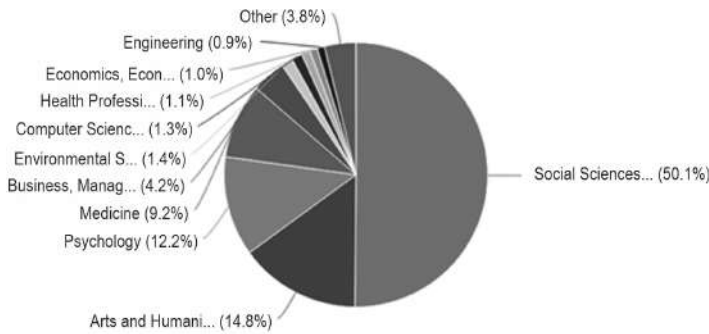
At this point of the search, I say that, according to the Scopus report, there are no reports from Latin American countries about research studies that included an intersectional perspective.

Looking at the different areas in which intersectional studies have been carried out, Figure 3 shows that half of the studies are concentrated in social sciences with 1409 articles. Besides, the areas of Arts and Humanities only represent 14.8% with 417 reports. This also means that there is an apparent lack of studies in areas such as languages, social studies, and arts that include these kinds of research in which social identities and their intersection can



Note. Source: Scopus, retrieved July 1st, 2021

Figure 2. Documents by country



Note. Source: Scopus, retrieved July 1st, 2021

Figure 3. Documents by area

be present. The main reason is to put on the surface that discrimination is not a topic to be developed only in educational contexts but in all areas.

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The bibliometric analysis shows that each time more scholars are getting interested in conducting intersectional studies. The number of articles published on the topic has increased considerably since 2006, which may be happening due to the possible fact that social identities are not seen as separable characteristics of the human being but integrated in recent years. Besides, it could be stated that most of the studies were conducted in the U.S. and mostly in Social Sciences areas. These results support the idea of doing more research studies in Latin American countries, in Colombia for instance, and in the ELT field, as this type of literature seems scarce according to the information gathered by this database.

On the other hand, a complementary bibliometric study was done to explore different databases, as the previous search was focused only on Scopus. The same aspects were considered to compare results in this additional bibliometric search. Figure 4 shows the classification of documents (n=50) per database consulted. Research articles were taken from ProQuest (n=11), ResearchGate (n=10), JStor (n=8), Taylor and Francis (n=8), and there were other databases with less than five research articles each.

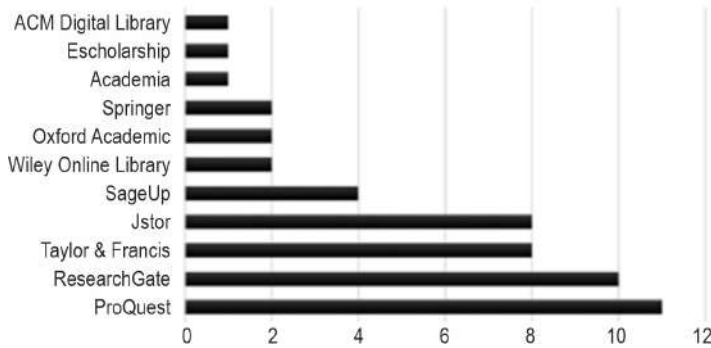


Figure 4. Documents per database

Similar results are displayed in Figure 5 in which the U.S. seems to have most significant number of documents (n=38), followed by Honk Kong and the U.K., each one with only two. The rest of the countries present only one research study. It is imperative to mention that although these are the countries where the research studies were conducted, their research participants belonged to different backgrounds (Latin American and European mainly). This shows that the studies conducted in these countries included people from all over the world which could mean that the same situation of circulation of students from different countries are also happening in other countries.

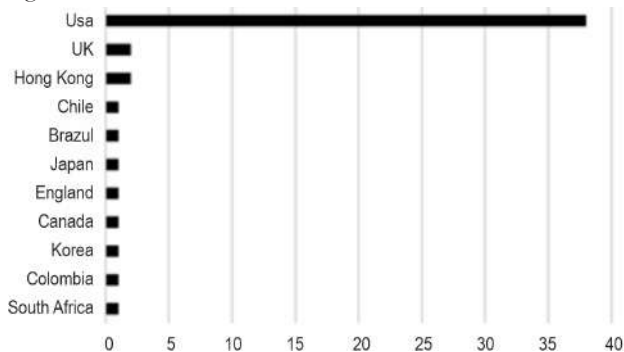


Figure 5. Documents per country

Figure 6 presents publications from 2007 to 2021, in which only one document was found between 2007 and 2011. There are two documents between 2012 and 2013, four from 2014, and six between 2015 and 2018. Then, three studies from 2019 and 14 from 2020. Only three studies were found from 2021 in which the main context mentioned is the pandemic and the way in which social identities were worked in the lessons present a concern for technological issues.

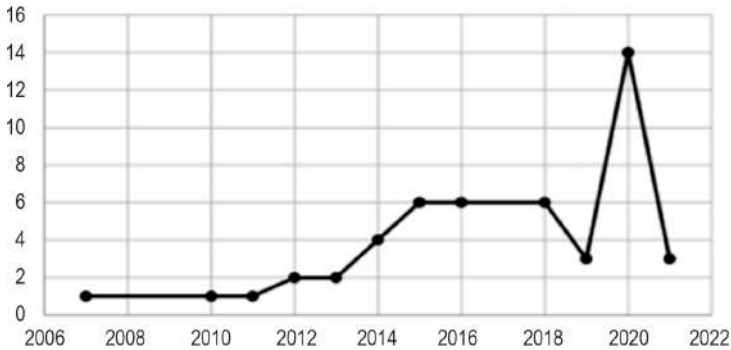


Figure 6. Documents per year

Finally, Figure 7 presents the documents by area according to what was found in the 50 research articles. There are 39 (78%) studies from general contexts including psychology, physics, math, science, and STEM. Only 11 articles (22%) were conducted in ELT fields mentioning the fact that teachers from different backgrounds (African American and Latin-American) are the most interested in working with social identities in the classroom. This low number of studies demonstrates again the necessity to conduct more intersectional research studies in English language teaching.

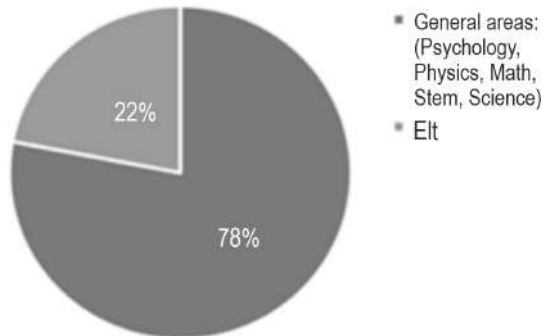


Figure 7. Documents by area

After this complementary bibliometric study was done, the 50 articles that appeared in the 11 databases were submitted to a careful reading in which several important concepts and scholars emerged. Those concepts and scholars are going to be included in the following part as they deserve an analysis to see who have talked about this topic as well as what has been said. To finish, it is imperative to mention that by July 1st, 2021, there were no articles related to intersectionality found in any Colombian journal.

Emerging Concepts and Scholars

Intersectionality

In this section, the definitions and intersected categories given and explained by Crenshaw (1989) *All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave!* (Hull et al. 1982 and Collins (2000) will be included. These authors are important in this profiling research study as most of the documents from the complementary bibliometric study included their definitions. In addition, contributions from Anzaldúa (1987) and Lugones (2005) will be included as they contribute to how intersectionality is perceived and defined from a feminist and decolonial perspective. To finish, other social categories included in the research articles (as religion, age, ethnicity, language, and professional identity) will be mentioned as they were considered in Anzaldúa and Lugones' studies.

Crenshaw (1989) is an African American lawyer who stated that “one way to approach the problem of intersectionality is to examine how courts frame and interpret the stories of Black women plaintiffs” (p. 141). She affirms that social identities as gender, race, and class are categories that need to be overlapped and constitutive rather than isolated. In her work, she emphasizes three legal cases that included racial and sex discrimination against black women. One of the cases was related to General Motors in 1976, in which five black women sued the company for a seniority policy in which they explained that no black women was hired before 1964 and the ones hired after 1970 lost their jobs after a layoff during a recession. With this, Crenshaw wanted to show how black women were exposed to discrimination due to their sex and race and, from her professional expertise, she tried to create legal categories to face these kinds of segregation that included both social aspects.

Later, from a feminist perspective, Collins (2000) defined intersectionality as the “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women” (p. 299). Thus, she argues that these intersectional identities in society influence cultural oppression patterns, producing unjust results. She also proposes that intersectionality can help achieve social change when it is seen as a critical practice. It can be seen here that Collins includes other identities or social aspects

(as sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age) in the intersectional field, not only race and sex, as Crenshaw did in the 80s.

An important aspect to highlight is that most of studies still follow these northern authors who do not work from an educational perspective. However, one crucial aspect to consider is that these authors define themselves as women of color, which according to Lugones (2008) refers to women who were victims of racial domination and include indigenous, mestizo, mulatto, and black women who are victims of *Coloniality of Gender* (gender seen as a binary imposition created in colonial times to dominate, understanding binary as a term that needs a corresponding opposite). This situation shows that they are seen as protagonists of decolonial feminism, and their *locus of enunciation* (their geo-political and body-political location, which according to Grosfoguel (2006), is coherent with their work). However, I considered it important to look at the possible contributions that have been made to the intersectional field in Latin America.

On the one hand, Anzaldúa (1987), a Mexican-American, Chicana, and feminist activist, was the author of the book “Borderlands/La Frontera: The new mestiza”. In this book, she combines autobiography, poetry, and the use of different languages as Spanish, Chicano-English, etc., to show the richness of diversity in terms of multiple identities that a person can have: “The new mestiza”. She was a woman of color, indigenous, lesbian, and marginal who lived in the borderland, a situation that made her struggle with her gender, racial and linguistic origins. In her book, she narrates different experiences she had. She problematizes the heteronormative and patriarchal identities that she was subjugated to because of the role she was supposed to develop in her community: “For a woman of my culture there used to be only three directions she could turn: to the Church as a nun, to the streets as a prostitute, or to the home as a mother” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 17). In cultural terms, she explains that for a Chicano-Mexican, there was no space for sexual deviance, and it was considered condemned by the community, a situation that made women feel like “the stranger, the other” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 17) in her own home.

On the other hand, Lugones (2005), an Argentine feminist philosopher, talks about the intersection of aspects such as gender, class, race, and sex, which give space to domination. In her article, she mentions that “[there] is a shift from a logic of oppression to a logic of resistance” (p. 61). Regarding gender, feminism fights or goes against white men’s subordination; in terms of culture, it refers to the imposition of European cultural knowledge through colonialism. That is why she states the importance of unmasking two different things: social aspects as categories of oppression and intersectionality as a fusion of these inseparable aspects.

What seems important here, is that all these categories were not enough for Lugones because when they are intersected, they do not give space to any extra possibilities. For

instance, the categories “women” and “black” did not include black women as “women” refers to white, bourgeois heterosexual women, “black” includes black heterosexual men, and “man” refers to white bourgeois heterosexual men. These categories did not seem to fit black women, which means they were erased. Consequently, they did not have any human rights because they were not even considered as such. At the same time, these categories could be contributing to inequality and subordination in terms of who has the power and who does not. When talking about fusion, she mentions that aspects such as gender, class, race, and sex should not be separated as she, as a lesbian, Chicana, and Mexican American, never saw it that way. She was always conscious about these aspects as merged characteristics that identified her in every place she was.

Anzaldúa (1987) and Lugones (2005), included two critical aspects: power and fusion, which played an important role in their writings. For Anzaldúa’s culture and family, it was important to obey men, do the chores, become a mother, and receive physical punishment when disobeying. In Lugones’ case, power is presented not only as patriarchal domination, but also as oppression in a particular category (women) that does not include all possible options (e.g., black women). This shows that power is present within minorities too, even if they share a particular identity or social category. Besides, both authors mention the fusion of the multiple identities, as they are not separable, as they are present in a single person; thus, aspects such as gender, race, sexuality, and human being cannot be considered as divided or disconnected.

These inseparable aspects (sex, gender, race, and class) are not the only ones that can be intersected. Figure 8 shows the intersected categories presented in the 50 research articles for this profiling research study, it is essential to say that any social aspect can also be intersected. The problem is that these identities become excuses to dominate, discriminate, or even erase humans in any form in any part of the world.

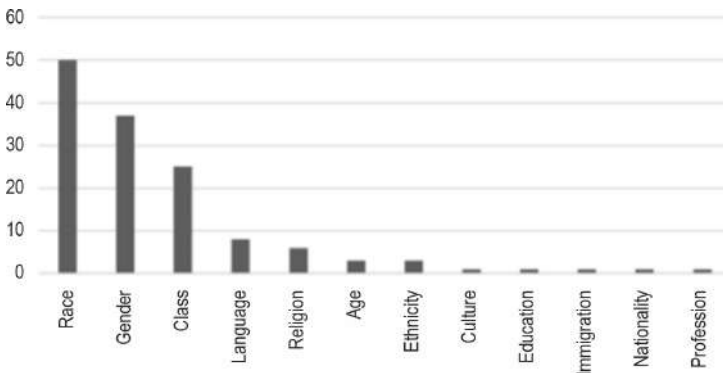


Figure 8. Number of documents intersecting each identity

Main Contributions from the Profiling Research Study

The following section deals with the two main trends that were found in the research articles related to intersectional studies. For a better understanding, Figure 9 shows the 50 articles and the way in which I grouped them according to the main trends and sub-trends. The first trend includes articles that were related to intersectional studies in general education contexts. The second trend refers to studies that specifically included intersectional studies in ELT contexts. At the same time, these main trends present some sub-trends; within them the authors and articles that compose them are also presented.

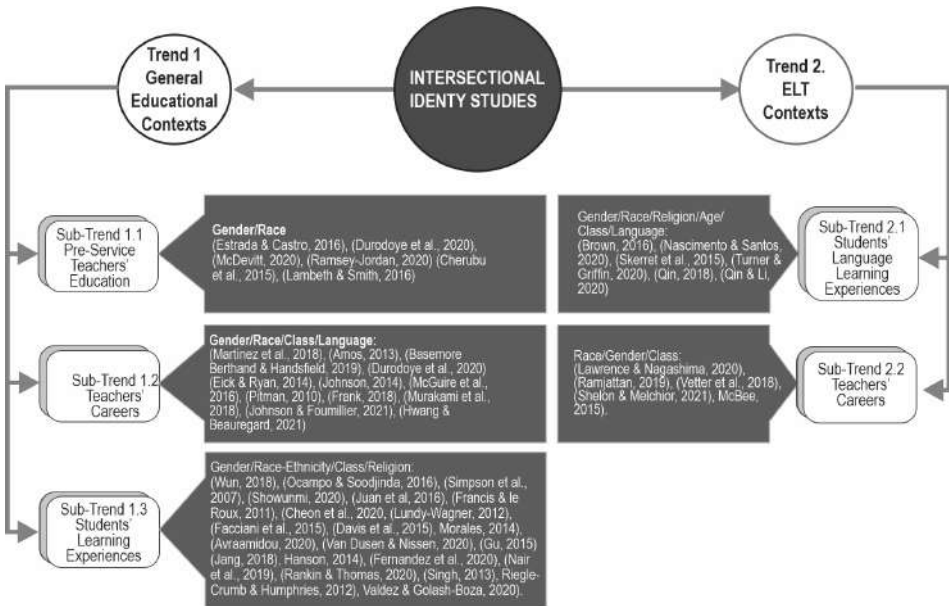


Figure 9. Intersectional Identity Studies. Own elaboration

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Trend 1: Intersectional Studies in General Educational Contexts

Most of the research studies were carried out in different contexts (pre-school, middle-school, high school, college, or university) and fields (psychology, physics, mathematics, science, social studies, or STEAM). Three sub-trends were identified:

Pre-service teachers' education. The way in which pre-service teachers see intersectional identities can help students' learning processes as they can give children the

opportunity to better understand and accept diversity. At the same time, pre-service teachers can improve their teaching practices in the future.

Eick and Ryan (2014) mentioned the necessity of looking at pre-service teachers' experiences while their social identities were intersected. Estrada and Castro (2016) analyzed how race and gender were influencing pre-service teacher students' social imaginaries as some women were not even recognized yet because of their condition non-white. Ramsey-Jordan (2020) suggested that pre-service math teachers should pay more attention to cultural and racial differences to improve students' experiences at school.

Other studies worked on the way in which pre-service teachers' experiences could influence their future pedagogical practices. That is the example of McDevitt (2020) who researched the experiences of low-income African American pre-service teachers. Moreover, Cheruvu et al. (2015) sustained that there is scarce literature examining pre-service teachers of color experiences, needs, and perspectives that contribute to their retention in the program while constructing their own identities. Finally, Lambeth and Smith (2016) also talk about pre-service teachers' limited beliefs about their abilities to teach students from diverse race and social classes (Bazemore-Bertrand & Handsfield, 2019).

Teachers' careers. In-service teachers' experiences are considered important as the way their colleagues treated them; students and superiors will also determine the way they will teach their students to see diversity as a positive aspect.

On the one hand, Martinez et al. (2018) argued for the need to understand how intersectionalities of gender and race influence the unique identity of male teachers of color experiences in the tenure process. Pittman (2010) stated that there is a need to research on the teaching experience of women faculty of color as aspects like race and gender became a harmful tool that affected students of color retention and achievement. There is also a lack of studies on the experiences of black teachers that have been segregated for being part of areas such as science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and STEM (Frank, 2018). Johnson (2014) researched the experiences of LGBTIQ teachers as there was a scarce literature giving voice to racial, sexual, and gender minorities. Johnson and Fournillier (2021) examined the lack of studies on experiences of women in educational leadership. Murakami et al. (2018) explored school administrators' experiences in finding the intersection of professional identity and race, which they find imperative to diminish discrimination at schools. Hwang and Beauregard (2021) we challenge the static and dichotomous assumption of the existing intersectionality framework (e.g. privilege versus disadvantage sustained that it is important to work on teachers' experiences when they are marked by migration, gender, and ethnic stereotyping which led to discriminatory practices.

On the other hand, Amos (2013) affirmed that paraprofessional experiences had not been widely explored. Microaggressions appeared in a higher level when identities as ethnicity,

language, and experience became excuses for the community to discriminate school's general service staff. Durodoye et al. (2020) investigated disparities in career outcomes by discipline, underrepresented minority status, and gender separately, and then they turned their attention to race and gender specifically by stratifying academic discipline. McDevitt (2020) researched the experiences of domination in preschool teachers and how these experiences influenced their pedagogical practices. McGuire et al. (2016) sustained that there is a need to ask for the experiences of people who occupy multiple socially marginalized categories, especially the ones related to aspects such as religion, race, gender, etc. Finally, Francis and Le Roux (2011) concluded that pre-service and in-service teachers need to learn how to be more critical to promote social justice in and outside the classroom.

As shown in the previous studies, the importance of teachers' experiences while developing their jobs is huge. How they feel and how administrators, colleagues, and superiors treat them would define their success during their teaching practices, as well as how they would teach their students to accept and experience diversity in a fruitful way.

Students' learning experiences. Due to the intersection of diverse social aspects, these studies show how students had to face different situations that affected their academic life and their learning process.

To begin with, Wun (2018) affirmed there is a need to attend to the experiences of girls of color as some policies seem to be created to support boys of color who are also affected by harsh school discipline. Lundy-Wagner (2012) stated that more attention needs to be paid to students' experiences at university to analyze their influence on its completion as some decide to drop out due to discriminatory experiences while studying. Showunmi (2020) focused on the importance of researching on leadership and identity among black minority ethnic women physically, morally, and spiritually stigmatized by a dominant culture.

To continue, stereotypes are playing a unique role in students' experiences as through media some specific models are being portrayed to show who they have to look like and be according to their gender, race, social class, etc. Facciani et al. (2015) talked about comic books and how women are hypersexualized and presented with subordinated roles according to their gender or race. Cheon et al. (2020) wanted to identify various social identities that make students vulnerable in order to see that those variables sometimes become a suffering for them. Ocampo and Soodjinda (2016) researched students' educational life as 35 of their participants faced discrimination for being gay and Asian-American. Singh (2013) sustained there is a lack of research on transgender youth of color and concluded that "researchers, practitioners, and advocates may better understand and ultimately serve transgender youth of color from a strength-based perspective" (p. 701). Morales (2014) found that black university students were perceived as poor along with race and gender, which promoted microaggressions. Nair et al. (2019) also studied

microaggressions in different marginalized groups by considering the different social aspects as intersected not separated.

In addition, as teachers, it is seen that most stereotypes are related to the major that students are expected to study in their future affecting their experiences while studying. Avraamidou (2020) in this single case study I explore the barriers, difficulties, and conflicts that Amina, a young Muslim woman, immigrant in Western Europe confronted throughout her trajectory in physics and the ways in which her multiple identities intersected. The main sources of data consisted of three long biographical interviews, which were analyzed through a constant comparative method. The analysis of the data provided insights into how intrapersonal, interpersonal, sociocultural factors, alongside a myriad of experiences nurtured Amina's intersectional identities and what this may mean for Muslim women's participation in physics. The findings are summarized in two main assertions: (a) worked on students' career aspirations in high school as they found that there are no studies about Muslim women life stories, especially the ones who are related to physics. Van Dusen and Nissen (2020) we problematized the measurement of equity by using two competing operationalizations of equity: Equity of Individuality and Equality of Learning. These two models led to conflicting conclusions. The analyses used hierarchical linear models to examine student's conceptual learning as measured by gains in scores on research-based assessments administered as pretests and posttests. The data came from the Learning About STEM Student Outcomes' (LASSO affirm that predictions on test results are always better for white people than for black women. Jang (2018) also worked on math test results and the intention of South Asian female students to continue their higher education in careers related to STEM. Hanson (2014) argues that a lack of attention to diversity limits research on Asians in the U.S. and their experiences in science. Rankin and Thomas (2020) researched on black women experiences and how they negatively impact their recruitment and retention in the field of computing.

Besides, when looking at students with a difficult legal situation, their experiences are not encouraging. "Intersectionality can be useful in understanding the individual and personal experiences of living within and belonging to these [social] systems, particularly as a multiply marginalized individual" (Juan et al., 2016, p. 236). Fernandez et al. (2020) sustained that the experiences of afro Colombian immigrant women have not been studied in Chile. Race and sex are related to stereotypes and are also common aspects that make students vulnerable because getting a job in the future becomes difficult for them. Valdez and Golash-Boza (2020) researched the necessity to reconsider the status of undocumented students as it could reshape their identity and sense of belonging, which would not affect their process of becoming college students.

Furthermore, students are sometimes classified by teachers as good or bad according to their race or social class. Riegle-Crumb and Humphries (2012) explored teachers' biased

perceptions of students in different gender and racial/ethnic groups considering their math ability. Davis et al. (2015) sustained the importance of successful experiences for diverse undergraduate students through the mentoring of teachers with similar diversity characteristics. Simpson et al. (2007) also sustained that instructor support is important for diversity and self-reflexivity as sometimes race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic class, ability, and language are intertwined with discrimination which can affect learning and teaching processes. Gu (2015) studied inequality as Pakistani students had to negotiate their culture, religion, and social stereotypes as not even the teachers understood their culture.

The previous trend related to general educational contexts included 39 research studies in which pre-service teachers' education, careers and students' learning experiences were considered. The following part includes the explanation of the second trend and its sub-trends which are related to ELT contexts specifically.

Trend 2: Intersectional Studies in ELT Contexts

The second trend is composed by only eleven research studies. These studies included the intersection of different identities but this time they were carried out in ELT contexts; interests based on students' language learning experiences and teachers' careers were also found in the following sub-trends.

Students' language learning experiences. Students' experiences when learning a foreign language are also important. The way in which they experience learning will determine success or failure not only with a subject but also with the school in general and it sometimes ends up with a drop out decision.

On the one hand, Brown (2016) affirmed that there is no research on the experiences of homosexual L2 learners when they study abroad and when ages, gender identities, and sexualities intersect. Turner and Griffin (2020) demonstrated that black girls experience a deficit view in written literacies (multimodal spaces) which influence their own future and life possibilities in years to come. Qin (2018) and Qin and Li (2020) found out that immigrant students and their negotiation of identity have not been explored. Their condition affected their performance at school. Besides, the intersection of immigration, race, and gender have not been well explored in the second language acquisition (SLA) field. Aspects as being homosexual or black or immigrant became the clue to discriminate and make students suffer during their school life.

On the other hand, how students perceive themselves based on what is shown in English as a foreign language (EFL) materials and in other media also affect their experiences with the language. Nascimento and Santos (2020) researched on the production of discriminatory meanings related to racialized occupational hierarchies (jobs/professions) through global

EFL textbooks. Skerrett et al. (2015) stated that ELT has been disconnected from students' lives and through some activities as blogging participation, alternative voices and perspectives were given the opportunity to not be marginalized or silenced. What is found in textbooks and general media can affect students' vision of their own future.

Teachers' careers. Teachers are also affected by segregation as their social identities intersect. When EFL teachers are seen as subjects who need to follow a specific stereotype, they are also being judged even more when they are not native speakers of the target language. This situation can also negatively interfere in their teaching practices as they do not feel support from their own community.

To begin with, Lawrence and Nagashima (2020) discussed intersectionality in ELT teachers' identities as they should be an important aspect of teacher development. Racialized teachers' experiences were more significant when telling events related to their own lives. McBee (2015) stated that ideologies related to language and race can contribute to the discrimination of ELT teachers for not being what they were expected to be as non-native speakers of the language. It is important to work on language variations, Ramjattan (2019) researched ELT teachers' experiences of racist nativism microaggressions and also the influence of the way a teacher presents himself/herself to students. Vetter et al. (2018) sustained that most ELT teachers graduate without experiencing critical conversations about social aspects, which impacts the teaching and learning processes. Shelton and Melchior (2021) claimed that it is imperative to research on ELT teachers' agency as an important tool to work on social justice in foreign classrooms.

All in all, ELT teachers' careers are being affected by the stereotypes, microaggressions, and ideologies that do not make them have their own identity. Now, after analyzing the main trends found in the profiling research study, I mention a few considerations.

Considerations about Intersectional Studies in Colombian ELT

First, it is important to consider that our classrooms are becoming more diverse as students from different backgrounds come to our cities and communities. Due to aspects such as displacement or violence, we, as teachers, now have students not only from different parts of Colombia but from different countries. Students from non-Colombian traditional heritage need more attention as their culture or race sometimes become a barrier, and they tend to change their traditions to avoid being discriminated or treated as different. That is one of the reasons why my research focus is important now: the intersection of students' identities and their academic experiences while learning a foreign language deserve to be heard.

Besides, when looking at the definitions of the word “intersectionality”, we have to consider that it has changed a lot since its first postulate. At this moment, new social categories have been included in intersectional studies as they are now seen as integrated rather than added. Categories as language (Lawrence & Nagashima, 2020; Ramjattan, 2019; Amos, 2013; Skerrett et al., 2015; Qin & Li, 2020; Cheruvu et al., 2015; McBee, 2015; Frank, 2018), religion (Avraamidou, 2020; Brown, 2016; Qin & Li, 2020; Eick & Ryan, 2014; McGuire et al., 2016; Nair et al., 2019), age (Turner & Griffin, 2020; Frank, 2018), nationality (McDevitt, 2020), and profession (Murakami et al., 2018) were also found in this profiling research study. They are now fused and can become an excuse to discriminate against others as seen in the above-mentioned studies.

It has been shown with this profiling research study that intersectional research in ELT needs more attention in Colombia. The number of research studies gathered for this study demonstrated that scholars have been investigating on the field but in diverse contexts which shows that intersectionality in ELT needs to be more addressed. The fact that students from different parts of the world still arrive to schools shows the diversity with which teachers deal in their classrooms nowadays; thus, working with intersectionality would be of good help to diminish discrimination not only at school but in any context. It seems that there is a scarce literature related to this field as intersectional studies have been developed in some other areas as science, mathematics, STEM and technology. It seems important to start thinking about conducting intersectional studies in the ELT field, specifically in Colombia as only one study addressing the topic was found.

As ELT field is the base of this profiling research study, and a huge gap was found in Colombian research on the topic, it could be interesting to start thinking about a possible intersectional pedagogy, which could become a possible future research study. This gap is related to the apparent lack of studies in Colombia that include the intersection of diverse social identities and how this intersection can affect students’ English language learning. Diverse social aspects or categories can be worked with the students in the classroom to improve the way they see each other as diverse with multiple identities that intersect but with the same rights. Besides, as it was shown in different research studies (Ramjattan, 2019; Morales, 2014, Amos, 2013; Nair et al., 2019), intersectional microaggressions were present in the academic life of many students who on the one hand, decided to drop out or on the other, decided to stay and finish their studies despite their suffering through the years. Furthermore, the implementation of an intersectional ELT teaching and learning would be necessary as some of the research studies showed that pre-service and in-service teachers sometimes struggle a lot when working with students from different backgrounds and identities (Lawrence & Nagashima, 2020; Ramjattan, 2019; Amos, 2013; Bazemore-Bertrand & Handsfield, 2019; McDevitt, 2020; Ramsey-Jordan, 2020; McGuire et al., 2016). Teachers sometimes do not even know their students’ heritage,

culture, customs, and reality, yet start imposing what the educational system asks them to without noticing these students' suffering, which affects their learning process.

To conclude, after analyzing the data gathered for the present profiling research study, it can be said that the literature based on intersectional identities in ELT shows a particular gap. This, in my consideration, will be the main topic of my future doctoral research study which will probably benefit not only students but also, teachers who decide to research on the intersectional field in Colombia.

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Culture-Related Issues in Teacher Education Programs: The Last Decade in Colombia¹

Temas Relacionados con Cultura en la Formación de Docentes: La Última Década en Colombia

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Abstract

This paper showcases a literature review in 13 Colombian refereed journals, covering the last decade, from 2011 to 2021. Data were collected from the virtual platforms where each journal hosts published issues. A thematic analysis was conducted with the sample of papers. The purpose of the review was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed at establishing the main research concerns of Colombian scholars regarding the place of culture in the context of Foreign Language Teacher Education programs. On the other hand, the review aimed at exploring the implications for curriculum design in Colombia that can be drawn from culture-related literature produced by scholars in the last decade. Results suggest that the treatment of culture-related issues in Foreign Language Teacher Education programs has gained currency, although scholarship in the last decade has mainly focused on a diagnostic stage.

Keywords: culture, foreign language teacher education, foreign language teaching, literature review

¹ This article stems from a larger literature review conducted by the author as part of his Doctoral Dissertation in the Interinstitutional Doctorate Program in Education at Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia.

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Resumen

Este artículo presenta una revisión de literatura en 13 revistas arbitradas en Colombia, en la que se abarca la última década, desde 2011 hasta 2021. Los datos se recogieron de las plataformas virtuales que cada revista usa para publicar sus números. Se llevó a cabo un análisis temático con la muestra de artículos seleccionados. La revisión de literatura tuvo un doble propósito. Por un lado, se buscó establecer los principales intereses investigativos de los académicos colombianos sobre el lugar de la cultura el contexto de programas de formación de docentes en lenguas extranjeras. Por otro lado, se buscó explorar las implicaciones para el desarrollo curricular en Colombia que se puedan desprender de la literatura producida por los académicos en la última década. Los resultados sugieren que el abordaje de temas relacionados con la cultura en programas de formación de docentes ha ganado popularidad, aunque la literatura en la última década se ha enfocado principalmente en una etapa diagnóstica.

Palabras clave: cultura, formación de docentes en lenguas extranjeras, enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, revisión de literatura

Introduction

The daunting task of including culture and an intercultural approach in the Foreign Language curriculum in Colombia has been present since the 1990s. This inclusion, however, has not been a smooth process, as perceptions and definitions of culture by teachers and other stakeholders have been changing - or perhaps evolving - under the shadow of international scholars. A literature review proposed by Álvarez-Valencia (2014) showcases the treatment of culture-related topics in six Colombian journals, covering a time span that goes from the publication of their first issue until 2011. In his results, Álvarez-Valencia (2014) mentions that even though most of the work on culture has been done by language educators, there was a shortage of studies in the areas of teacher education. In other words, up to 2011, studies about culture and the intercultural approach were conducted by professors and researchers who worked for Foreign Languages Teacher Education (FLTE) programs, yet their studies did not address the contexts of the pre-service FLTE as such. This context, however, constitutes the seedbed on which paradigm changes are sown, so that they bear fruit in future generations. Pre-service teachers have a fundamental role in the achievement of preparing critical intercultural citizens for a globalized world. Therefore, it is worthwhile examining the state of the art of culture-related issues and the intercultural approach in the last decade in Colombia, particularly in the context of FLTE.

Against this background, it is convenient to inquire what has happened regarding research on culture-related issues in the context of FLTE. To this end, it is worth exploring the research interests and publishing trends that have moved researchers in recent years, as well as reflecting on how such interest and trends might shape the way culture is being -or will be- treated in the curriculum of FLTE programs. Thus, the purpose of this article is twofold: on the one hand, it intends to show how culture-related issues have unfolded in

the field of FLTE during the last decade taking as evidence the publications in Colombian journals; and on the other hand, the paper sheds light on the curricular implications that stem from the scholarship developed so far. For such a purpose, I have conducted a new literature review in 13 refereed journals, covering the last decade, from 2011 to 2021. This new literature review included the six journals mentioned by Álvarez-Valencia (2014), and in addition, seven other journals that either did not exist at the time the author conducted his work, or that began to publish works related to culture and foreign languages in later years. The following three questions guided the review:

- Has there been an increase in the number of studies about culture in the context of FLTE programs?
- What are the main research concerns of Colombian scholars regarding culture in FLTE programs?
- What implications for curriculum design in Colombia can be drawn from culture-related literature produced by scholars in the last decade?

This article has been structured as follows: First, the method to conduct the search will be presented, aiming at an overview of the criteria and procedures for selecting journals. Next, a section of the chapter will address the answers to the first two guiding questions posed above, by providing an account of the papers found and by categorizing them according to the topics they develop. The third and main section of this chapter provides an analysis of the implications for FLTE curricula in Colombia, as all the reviewed articles make important calls that, if considered, may constitute the cornerstone for the design of an intercultural curriculum.

Method

As stated before, this article seeks to establish a clear picture of research on interculturality and culture-related issues, specifically in the context of FLTE programs in Colombia. To this end, the publications of the last ten years in thirteen Colombian journals were reviewed in a time span beginning in 2011 up to 2021. These journals were chosen given their scope of topics related to applied linguistics, foreign languages, education, interculturality, and foreign language teacher education. Also, an important selection criterion was the fact that all journals were refereed by means of a double-blind review process.

Papers Selection

The main criterion for the search of articles was the inclusion of culture in the teaching of foreign languages, specifically in the context of FLTE programs. Works on pre-service teachers, language teacher educators, and the curriculum of these programs were included.

For the selection of articles, the three-step procedure described by Álvarez-Valencia (2014) was applied, as indicated below:

- First, the tables of contents of 13 Colombian referred journals were reviewed. In total, 251 issues were reviewed in search for titles related to culture and the teaching of foreign languages in the context of teacher education programs.
- Then, the abstracts of the selected titles were read to corroborate their relationship with the search criteria and the target context.
- Finally, 24 papers made the final cut. These papers were thoroughly read and analysed following the thematic analysis steps proposed by Braun and Clark (2006).

Table 1 shows the inventory of journal titles, number of issues reviewed per journal, and the articles selected from each one.

Table 1. Inventory of Journals, Issues and Papers

#	Journal	Number of Issues Revised	Number of articles Selected
1	Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development	22	4
2	<i>Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura</i>	32	4
3	Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal	20	1
4	HOW	19	3
5	Matices en Lengua Extranjera	9	0
6	Folios	21	3
7	Lenguaje	23	0
8	Educación y Educadores	31	0
9	Signo y Pensamiento	20	4
10	Actualidades Pedagógicas	20	1
11	Enletawa Journal	14	3
12	Gist Education and Research Journal	17	0
13	Shimmering Words	3	1
		Total: 251 issues revised	Total: 24 articles selected

Except for the last three journals in the table, all journals were indexed³ in the Colombian system at the moment of the review. The uneven number of issues in each journal has to do with individual criteria of periodicity in publication, or loss of continuity in publication in some journals.

Research on Culture in FLTE Programs: A Snapshot of the Last Decade

Regarding the first question posed at the beginning of this article, the 24 papers selected show that, over the last ten years, studies of culture in the context of FLTE programs have increased significantly in the Colombian context, which contrasts the findings by Álvarez-Valencia's (2014) review, in which "limited studies were found in the areas of teacher education" (p. 230). Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of Colombian journals serving as venues for academic publications about culture and foreign languages⁴; this is, of course, a positive stimulus for researchers in the field. A closer look at the central themes of the 24 selected papers reveals that research on culture-related topics in the context of teacher education during the last decade in Colombia has zeroed in on four main categories. First, nine out of the 24 selected papers (37.5%) focus on pre-service teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), definitions of culture, and attitudes about the inclusion of culture in foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. Second, six papers (25%) showcase pedagogical experiences fostering ICC or including culture in the FL classroom; similarly, five papers (20.8%) present pedagogical experiences in which pre-service teachers are portrayed as intercultural agents. Finally, four more articles (16.7%) correspond to theory-based papers offering pedagogical reflections on the inclusion of culture in FL teaching. Graph 1 shows the distribution of the 24 selected papers into thematic categories:

Colombian Scholars' Main Research Interests around Culture in FLTE

The second question posed in this paper inquiries about the main research concerns of Colombian scholars regarding culture in FLTE programs. Consequently, Figure 1 provides an answer with the four categories of interests around which Colombian scholars have articulated their research on culture and FLTE. Although the number of articles in each of the categories

³ In Colombia, indexation corresponds to the process of classification and inclusion in the national system of scientific research and publications. This process is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, and seeks to recognize, promote, and maintain the high quality of scientific journals in the country.

⁴ While Álvarez-Valencia's (2014) review showcases six journals, the present review comprises a total of thirteen Colombian journals.

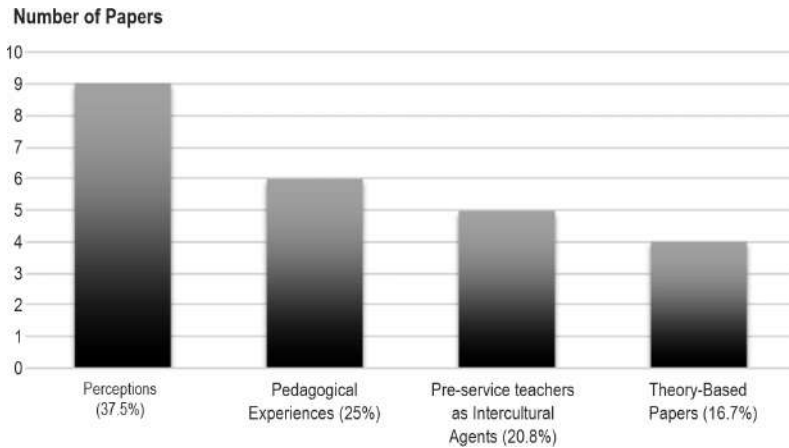


Figure 1. Thematic Categories

is distributed almost evenly, studies on perceptions are significantly more abundant. In what remains of this section, I delve into describing what these four categories reveal about culture-related research in FLTE programs during the last ten years in Colombia. Figure 2 summarizes the structure of the four categories I intend to develop; then, an explanation of each is provided.

Category 1: Teacher Educators' and Pre-service FL teachers' Perceptions, Beliefs and Attitudes towards Culture and ICC

Out of the nine papers in this category, four papers revolve around perceptions of language teacher educators (Quintana, 2012; Ramos-Holguín et al., 2019; Benavides-Jiménez & Mora-Acosta, 2019; Faustino-Ruiz & Patiño-Rojas, 2021), three papers focus on perceptions of pre-service FL teachers (Olaya & Gómez-Rodríguez, 2013; Esteban, 2021; Patiño-Rojas et al., 2021), and two papers integrate the perceptions of both language teacher educators and pre-service FL teachers (Murcia & Martínez-Santa, 2018; Moya-Chaves et al., 2018).

The Case of Language Teacher Educators

A common theme in the perceptions of language teacher educators is their understanding of the concept of culture as a set of superficial aspects that can be taught as contents: festivities, food, religion, and information about countries, just to name a few. For instance, Quintana (2012) conducted an exploratory study with five teacher educators in charge of a Professional Development Program in Boyacá, Colombia. The author inquired about teachers' definitions of culture and their perceptions of the importance of including culture

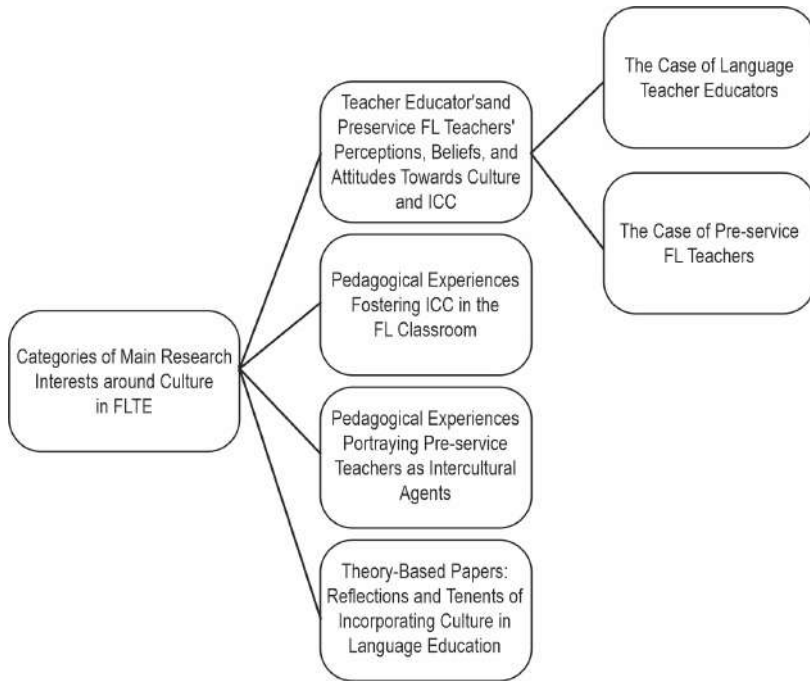


Figure 2. Colombian Scholars' Main Research Interests around Culture in FLTE

in foreign language classes. The excerpts from interviews that the author presents in the paper mainly reveal that these five teacher educators are aware of the importance of culture in language teaching, but their definition of culture remains incomplete, paying attention only to superficial aspects and leaving aside deep aspects of culture. On similar grounds, the study by Faustino-Ruiz and Patiño-Rojas (2021) reveals that their participants' vision of culture oscillates between a conception of high culture (artistic production, literature, and filmography) and a sociological vision of culture that includes the set of beliefs, traditions, and customs of a community. Finally, Benavides-Jiménez and Mora-Acosta (2019) present the perceptions of two groups of bilingual teachers about the concepts of education, bilingualism, and interculturality. One group was composed by indigenous ethno-educators in Puerto Gaitán, Colombia, while participants in the other group were *mestizo* teacher educators from a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. Teacher educators in this study perceive culture as linked to the concept of nation, and they understand interculturality as an instrumentalized process in the FL classroom, while for indigenous ethno-educators it is a way of life that transcends classroom activities.

The previous three studies reinforce the claim by Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) that the concepts of culture and interculturality in language teaching, and more precisely in the field of FLTE, are still in the making. These authors conducted a documentary analysis of the concept of interculturality in Spain, Chile, México, and Colombia. Their findings reveal that the concept of interculturality in relation to FLTE is still emerging and positioning itself as a research niche in Europe and Latin America. Their analysis yield two strong tendencies in relation to the concept of interculturality. On the one hand, interculturality is seen as a pedagogical process, rather than as a situated social construction. On the other hand, interculturality is seen as a concept related to ethnicity rather than to cultural diversity, which might cloud pre-service teachers' understanding of local cultures and subjectivities (Ramos-Holguín et al., 2019).

The Case of Pre-Service FL Teachers

Attitudes about the promotion of ICC in the FL classroom are positive in the participants of the previous studies. These teacher educators stress the importance of cultural awareness, the relevance of exposing learners to otherness, and the tight relationship between language and culture in FL teaching; however, there seems to be a disconnection between teacher educators' perceptions and what they actually do in the classroom. For instance, course syllabi lack explicit objectives and content related to the ICC (Faustino-Ruiz & Patiño-Rojas, 2021), their discourse emphasizes culture teaching as a synonym of including stereotypical generalizations in the FL class (Quintana, 2012), or they envision interculturality as an academic topic that deserves to be academically studied, rather than as a form of living and embracing diversity (Benavides-Jiménez & Mora-Acosta, 2019).

Not surprisingly, the perceptions and definitions -sometimes limited- about culture, as well as the positive attitudes towards the inclusion of an intercultural approach in the teaching of languages by the teacher educators, are inherited by the pre-service teachers who are in their process of preparation. First, in terms of perceptions, for instance, Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013) studied pre-service English teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the way culture and intercultural competence were addressed in their English classes, at three different universities in Bogotá. The authors found that culture is defined by pre-service teachers based on traditional views, as a static phenomenon. Definitions of ICC provided by most part of the population were limited, or even null in some cases, while a small percentage gave general but incomplete definitions. Pre-service teachers seem to be more concerned with communicating effectively in terms of structures and linguistic abilities rather than dealing with cultural differences. This predilection for the linguistic rather than the cultural is also reflected in the study by Patiño-Rojas et al. (2021), in which participants deem ICC as a paramount component of language teaching, yet their initial performances as teachers only focus on linguistic and communicative matters. Although a small percentage in Patiño-Rojas et al.'s study shows an understanding of deep culture issues, the vast majority still hold

onto a static view of the cultural component in the FL classroom. Similarly, while designing lesson plans, participants in the study by Esteban (2021) were found to place more relevance in addressing linguistic skills while cultural aspects were either not present, or merely attached in the form of surface information about other countries. In fact, the author uses the analogy of a salad dressing to explain that pre-service teachers in her study perceive culture as something that can be separated from the usual topics developed in the English language classroom; therefore, culture is approached in isolation as if its implementation were another source to change the mood or the taste of the class, hence the comparison with a meal dressing.

Second, regarding preservice teachers' attitudes towards the cultural component that they have been instructed in, participants in the three studies consider paramount the inclusion of the cultural component in their preparation, although all of them coincide such preparation has not been enough. In Patiño-Rojas et al. (2021), for instance, pre-service teachers assert that the intercultural component in their preparation has changed and reshaped the way they see the world. They say the preparation has opened their eyes to otherness, to the danger of stereotypes, etc., but they ask for a more explicit and steady preparation across the study plan. In the same vein, Patiño-Rojas et al. (2021) claim that there is still a need to integrate teaching strategies that allow students to develop intercultural skills that go beyond declarative knowledge about culture. On a similar token, participants in Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013) state that they want to become critical and competent to analyse cultural aspects. However, they keep on seeing culture as something useful for their travel plans but not for their comprehensive preparation as future teachers. Finally, Esteban (2021) asserts that her participants hold a positive attitude towards the cultural component of their study plan, yet they feel they have not had enough opportunities to become involved in situations that allow them to develop ICC.

The last two studies in this category are those by Murcia and Martínez-Santa (2018) and Moya-Chaves et al. (2018), which integrate the perceptions of both teacher educators and pre-service teachers. Murcia and Martínez-Santa (2018) analysed the discussions of the editorial board of a students' magazine, composed by pre-service English teachers and teacher educators; the study aimed at diagnosing the development of intercultural awareness of the participants by means of the editorial process they conduct in planning and publishing a magazine. Findings reveal that the constant discussion of cultural issues among participants has consolidated a perception of culture as an ever evolving phenomenon and has helped participants to develop intercultural awareness by means of analysing texts, making editorial decisions, and putting together written material that they want to share with other students in the program. As stated by the authors, findings of this study contrast the ones presented by Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013), as aspects of deep culture, intercultural awareness, otherness, and the shaping of a negotiated cultural identity are present in the discourse of participants who make part of the editorial process. The differences between these results could be attributed to the different semesters attended by the sample population of each

study, or to the progress made in understanding interculturality during the five years that separate both studies. The importance of the work by Murcia and Martínez-Santa (2018) relies on two aspects: first, the fact that participants use an extracurricular activity to foster intercultural awareness; second, the fact that pre-service teachers and teacher educators engage in academic discussions on culture-related topics in a ‘neutral’ environment where relationships are horizontal.

Finally, the study by Moya-Chaves et al. (2018) focused on understanding the intercultural perspective fostered in three FLTE programs in Bogotá, Colombia. In this study, perceptions of teacher educators coincide with that of pre-service teachers, revealing that the three programs promote an intercultural perspective that could be defined as relational interculturality (Walsh, 2009). Relational interculturality is understood in the cited study as the process through which people from different cultural groups come into contact and have different types of exchanges. These contacts and exchanges, though, might happen under conditions of equality or inequality, reproducing uneven power relationships. Teacher educators from the three programs have identified this as a challenge, which exhorts them to build a perspective of critical interculturality.

The studies on perceptions are important because they contribute to understanding how scholars and prospective language teachers in Colombia have transitioned into an intercultural approach; both pre-service teachers and teacher educators have been found to hold misconceptions of what ICC entails, rooted in erroneous conceptions of culture, and more generally in “deficient mechanisms inherent in the Colombian foreign language curriculum” (Álvarez-Valencia, 2014, p. 9). Similarly, Rojas-Barreto (2019) reports the results of a study with English language professors⁵ working at eight public universities in Colombia. The author states that there is a marked concern amongst the population about the need for promoting cultural relativism in students, both to recognize their own identity and accept otherness. However, a high number of these educators understand promotion of intercultural competence merely as content transmission, ignoring the development of skills and attitudes. Most of the teacher educators are not satisfied with the training they have received about intercultural communication, which is one of the reasons why a professional development program would benefit the co-construction of an intercultural orientation at any institution.

Category 2: Pedagogical Experiences Fostering ICC in the FL Classroom

Six articles make up this category under which initiatives aimed at promoting and developing the ICC in foreign language classes are gathered. Interestingly, out of these six

⁵ In Colombia, the term professor is used for all educators working in higher education, regardless of their titles or academic backgrounds. Therefore, in this case, the term does not refer to an academic rank or distinction.

articles, four correspond to experiences related to the use of literature. For example, Gómez-Rodríguez (2012) conducted a study to identify how English as a foreign language (EFL) learners develop ICC through the study of literary selections; similarly, Gómez-Rodríguez (2013) explores the inclusion of authentic multicultural literary texts in the classroom of advanced EFL preservice teachers; Gómez-Rodríguez (2014) reports an experience with the inclusion of authentic multicultural short stories to foster critical ICC in pre-service teachers; finally, Ramírez-Espinosa et al. (2019) report an experience of creating subsidiary materials to work with literature in an advanced English language course, and propose a reflection on the elements that can be considered for the promotion and development of ICC in pre-service teachers through the exploration of African visions of the world.

The two remaining articles in this category present pedagogical experiences related to the implementation of specific courses. Arismendi-Gómez (2016) reports the impact that a course called *Introduction to Plurilingualism* has had in the pre-service language teachers that have taken it, in Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. The author asserts that the course has contributed to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence in future language teachers, whose discourses evince their openness towards diversity and pluriculturality in relation to multiple linguistic repertoires. In a similar fashion, Ramos-Holguín (2013) reports an experience about the promotion of an intercultural component in a research and pedagogy course. The novelty in this experience lies on the fact that interculturality is usually promoted in language courses, but not in other classes of a FLTE program. Findings in Ramos-Holguín (2013) reveal that the intercultural component in the course had a positive impact on pre-service teachers, who developed intercultural competence “by developing skills to interpret and contextualize cultural practices and by raising awareness of contextual complexities” (p. 206). It should be noted that all the papers in this category correspond to initiatives of a single scholar, usually in a specific course of the teacher education study plan. In other words, it is striking that the promotion of ICC in pre-service teachers is often the product of individual efforts on the part of some teacher educators, and not the joint work of an entire curriculum.

Category 3: Pedagogical Experiences Portraying Pre-Service Teachers as Intercultural Agents

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Although the previous category brings together different pedagogical experiences, the five papers under this category are characterized by the role assumed by pre-service teachers in situations in which they must act as intercultural subjects. In other words, in the previous category, pedagogical experiences focus on examining how specific experiences may or may not foster and rise intercultural awareness, while the works gathered in this new category focus on active endeavours whereby pre-service teachers could enact their intercultural competence physically and socially.

As a matter of fact, Huertas (2011) reports an experience with pre-service teachers in which they were involved in interactions with several actors from the sociocultural settings where they would eventually conduct their practicum. By means of the contact with their neighbours and actors from the surrounding settings, pre-service teachers experienced the relationship between sociocultural contexts, knowledge construction, and their role as intercultural mediators. Another example of pre-service language teachers interacting with others in intercultural encounters is the one reported by Loaiza-Villalba and Colorado-López (2014). The authors designed and implemented an academic and intercultural exchange project between pre-service teachers from two different programs in Quindío and Medellín, Colombia. Findings indicate that the exchange produced social and cultural bonds that render the learning process more meaningful for participants in terms of linguistic skills and the enhancement of their intercultural competence. It is worth noting that this experience fosters a vision of culture and interculturality that emphasizes the local, and which favours a fresh and dynamic understanding of what a cultural exchange entails. Similarly, Gómez-Rodríguez (2015) shows how pre-service language teachers in his study enacted their critical intercultural competence by discussing topics of deep culture in class. That enactment of ICC was the product of reflecting on controversial issues raised by the reading of literature and on making connections of those issues with their own life experiences. The genuine reactions by pre-service teachers allow them to negotiate different points of view and to respect diversity and otherness.

The last two papers in this category correspond to the work of Viáfara and Ariza (2015, 2016). Although these two articles report experiences that were not properly under the domain of teacher educators or a particular teacher education program, both papers provide an account of how travelling abroad resulted in linguistic and pedagogical learning and development of the ICC in the participating pre-service teachers. Throughout the two papers, the authors assert that the work and study sojourns that pre-service teachers experienced abroad played an important role in how they acquired intercultural awareness and developed strategies for intercultural communication that, eventually, represented also linguistic and pedagogical gains. One of the salient characteristics of the work by Viáfara and Ariza (2015, 2016) is the fact that the authors insist on the importance of formally connecting travel experiences with the curriculum of FLTE programs.

This category exposes an emerging trend that is worth exploring further: The promotion of ICC in pre-service language teachers by means of an active approach. However, as in the previous category, these works are characterized by either being initiatives of a particular language educator, or by being experiences that pre-service teachers have sought on their own, such as it is the case of the sojourns abroad reported in Viáfara and Ariza (2015; 2016).

Category 4: Theory-Based Papers: Reflections and Tenets of Incorporating Culture in Language Education

The four papers in this last category complete the panorama of the research interests and concerns of Colombian scholars regarding culture and its place within the language curriculum. Rico-Troncoso (2018) provides an account of how ICC should be understood and integrated in the different contexts of ELT. The author traces the different stages of ELT in Colombia and provides theoretical tenets as to how communication, language and culture can be understood and interrelated in favour of an intercultural approach. Rico-Troncoso's (2018) work makes a paramount command regarding the inclusion of ICC in the agenda of all FLTE programs. In a similar vein, Díaz's work (2012) revolves around cultural education as the articulating axis of a comprehensive preparation that allows learners to enhance individual and social skills in favour of respect for individualities and pluralities. For Díaz (2012), cultural education is an urgency in a society in which daily conflicts jeopardize singularity, plurality, institutionality, and legality, matters that deserve attention, as well as the preparation of critical subjects around them for the construction of a society respectful of cultural diversity. This visibility of pluralities, and the embrace of subjectivities is also emphasized in Granados-Beltrán's (2016) work. This author reflects on the importance of a pedagogical and epistemological turn in language education in Colombia. In curricular terms, this turn implies that critical interculturality must be the core around which FLTE programs are designed, in order to resist the traces of coloniality in ELT. Similarly, in terms of teacher education, this pedagogical turn implies for pre-service language teachers to be prepared, not only as language experts, but also as subjects who respect and promote respect towards otherness and subjectivity. In a similar vein, Rico-Troncoso (2021) advocates for a critical perspective in the understanding and inclusion of culture in language teaching. This inclusion -argues the author- requires from teachers to broaden their understanding of culture as a complex phenomenon that cannot be simply clipped on to lesson plans. Instead, teachers need to adopt an intercultural approach to foreign language teaching so that they do not "continue to express meaning in a vacuum" (p. 116) but foster the kind of communication that poses cultural challenges and frictions rooted in the individual and social complexities of human beings.

156 *Colombian Scholars' Research over the last Ten Years: Implications for Curriculum Design*

Once the four categories that meet the research interests of Colombian academicians in the last ten years have been exposed, it is necessary to take stock of where we are and where we are going in epistemological and pedagogical terms in Colombia. Looking backwards, it can be seen that the main interest is focused on the study of perceptions and on the documentation of significant experiences around the promotion of ICC; thus, it could be

concluded that the last ten years in Colombia have constituted a mostly diagnostic stage on the inclusion of ICC. There is a good appraisal of what teacher educators and pre-service teachers think (category 1), there is a good balance of replicable successful pedagogical experiences, and proposals have even begun to emerge that place pre-service teachers as intercultural subjects that show cultural agency and enact their competence (categories 2 and 3); but in the same way, a number of scholars, as the abovementioned, raise the alarm for migrating towards a stage of critical interculturality and comprehensive cultural education in FLTE programs (category 4).

With this in mind, this section focuses on collecting the various recommendations, suggestions, and calls for the construction of an intercultural perspective in the curriculum that are scattered throughout the scholarship reviewed in this chapter. Given the apparent polysemy of the term curriculum to refer to either a study plan or a subject plan (Montoya-Vargas, 2013; Kelly, 2004; Stern, 1983), I clarify that, for the purposes of this article, the term curriculum is understood from a comprehensive definition that encompasses the philosophical and ideological assumptions underlying the pedagogical processes, the objectives and contents, as well as the concatenation of forms of instruction and evaluation in a study plan (Stern, 1983; Núñez-París, 2008). In a more concrete perspective, curriculum here encompasses the three levels of planning proposed by Deng (2010): Institutional, programmatic, and classroom level. The remainder of this section correspond to presenting some implications for curriculum design.

The Need for Transversal and Explicit Curricula around Interculturality

The common denominator in the pedagogical experiences promoted by the ICC and the cultural contents in teacher education correspond to individual initiatives of some teachers. Although the efforts of these teachers are applauded, it is necessary for FLTE programs to build cross-cutting proposals and joint efforts around intercultural education. In this regard, Patiño-Rojas and Faustino-Ruiz (2019) recommend the modification of the study plan and the creation of much more precise descriptors of cultural competence that allow the cultural component to be clearly and schematically visible in the different course syllabi comprised in FLTE programs. While evaluation and assessment remain rather controversial issues in the field of interculturality, my take on this is that a series of descriptors could be the first step into the design of gradual frameworks to foster and assess intercultural competences across curricula. In a similar spirit, Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) cite the words of García-Medina et al. (2012) to emphasize that “an intercultural curriculum is not a mere anecdotic addition of cultures at the centre, nor shall it be simply limited to mere activities” (p. 30, author’s translation). Cultural contents and the promotion of ICC cannot be thought of as an ancillary element of the curriculum, but as the explicit core and objective of FLTE programs.

Epistemologically speaking, we cannot fall behind in initiating research that combines curriculum design, intercultural perspectives, and collaborative teaching and learning processes. Those studies would start a new post-diagnostic stage, that is, a stage of implementation and active exploration on the promotion of intercultural curricula in the education of future teachers and their impact on future generations.

Continuous Development of Teacher Educators and Pre-service Teachers through Professional Development Programs

All the reviewed works in Category 1 show that pre-service teachers inherit the conceptions, attitudes, and definitions imparted by their teacher educators. Teacher educators have shown that they consider the inclusion of cultural components in language classes extremely important, and they even use terms related to theoretical postulates that circulate in the bibliography of the field; however, studies on perceptions reveal that there is a lack of clarity and education on cultural theories, intercultural models, and pedagogical perspectives for the approach of culture by teacher educators. This is reflected in the discourse of the pre-service teachers, who also have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of culture in language learning, but in their practices, they place greater emphasis on the teaching of linguistic aspects. In this regard, I consider it important to recognize that positive attitudes on the part of teacher educators and pre-service teachers are fertile ground for proposing continuous preparation and development on cultural issues in FLTE, and I consider Professional Development Programs (PDP) to be the answer.

The great deal of scholarship on beliefs, conceptions, and identities of teachers regarding ICC can be one of the components of PDP. This would allow, on the one hand, an environment in which teachers' voices will be heard and considered, and on the other hand, it would allow for reaching a consensus, negotiating the different perceptions, acknowledging differences and correcting misconceptions. The work by Murcia and Martínez-Santa (2018) provides an interesting insight into how teacher educators and pre-service teachers can work collaboratively for the refining of concepts and the construction of an intercultural perspective.

Next, PDP should cover the theoretical principles of ICC and the ways to foster it across the curriculum and into the course syllabi. This opens room for a frank discussion with other stakeholders such as school principals, pre-service teachers in practicum, and students, which would guarantee that the PDP is rooted in the specificities of every context. In this regard, Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) assert that, "In the training of future language teachers, the curriculum, in order to promote intercultural spaces, will be required to be negotiated with the participants and, thus, to integrate their communities in said processes" (p. 65, author's

translation) as it would not make much sense in promoting policies for otherness without actually taking *the other* into account (Cruz, 2007).

Finally, PDP should serve to encourage and prepare teachers to design their own materials, and to explore the benefits of emerging technologies in the classroom for the promotion of ICC. The works reviewed in Categories 2 and 3 provide interesting replicable experiences that can constitute the cornerstone for methodological development, for material design, for project planning, and for the institutionalized pedagogical proposals before and after travel experiences by pre-service language teachers. In fact, the literature review of the papers in Category 1 hints that pre-service language teachers might consider the cultural component as paramount for their preparation in the role as language learners, but they neglect that component in their role as teachers. About this, Patiño-Rojas et al. (2021) insist that pre-service teachers need to receive preparation in two fields: first, in the analysis of cultural contents, and second, in the methodological aspects to pedagogically work with those contents in their future careers as language teachers. Pre-service language teachers' predilection over the work of linguistic skills in their initial performance might respond to the lack of methodological preparation in cultural matters. Thus, in order to tackle the lack of methodological preparation, Ramos-Holguín (2013) and Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) insist on the importance of exploring the concept of ICC, not only in language courses, but also in other components of the curriculum (e.g., pedagogy and research courses), as well as in other education programs outside ELT, "given that the concept of interculturality is transversal to all fields of knowledge" (Ramos-Holguín et al., 2019, p. 65).

Moving Towards Criticality

An aspect identified in the reviewed articles that represents an implication for curriculum design is the constant call for a critical intercultural perspective. For instance, Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) states that it is necessary to go past a functional interculturality perspective and beget a critical vision of interculturality by means of an emancipatory curriculum. Similarly, Granados-Beltrán (2016) calls for a decolonial option in curriculum design whereby local, historical, social, political, and educational conditions are considered. According to this author, it is by acknowledging subjectivities that a true intercultural and decolonial perspective can be fostered. Those subjectivities are also an interest shown by Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013), who claim that curricula have to foster a broad vision of cultures different from the Anglophone or European ones, so that pre-service teachers understand how to "promote an open environment of inclusion and diversity, since they will surely teach learners from different cultural backgrounds in Colombia" (p. 55). Patiño-Rojas et al. (2021) also say that "students need to receive a more solid preparation that allows them to fully develop [ICC] and consolidate a critical intercultural awareness" (p. 137). Finally, Rico-Troncoso (2021) also holds on to the need of a critical stance in intercultural

language teaching. The author warns that “The great challenge for teachers in Colombia and Latin America is not to fall into the trap of using interculturality only as a touch-up speech to promote inclusion or be aware of the existence of differences” (p.117), as the discourse of interculturality is often used rhetorically to conceal power issues and disparities; instead, teachers and programs need to promote intercultural language teaching in a way that it helps students to uncover longstanding inequalities and forms of segregation that are rooted in those differences. Thus, the field of ELT in relation to the inclusion of cultural matters in the curriculum might be seeing a great deal of changes regarding criticality in the near future.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article three questions were established. The first question inquired whether there had been an increase in the number of studies on culture, specifically in the context of FLTE programs. To this respect, the literature review of the last ten years shows us that the treatment of cultural-related issues in the contexts of FLTE program, has had an interesting increase when compared with the postulates in Álvarez-Valencia (2014). However, the number of papers revised in this study (243 in total) suggests that more work is needed to understand how language teacher education programs in Colombia integrate culture-related issues, research, and knowledge production.

The second question addressed the main research concerns of Colombian scholars regarding culture in FLTE programs. Four categories emerged from the analysis, showing that the scholarship in the last ten years revolves mainly around perceptions and pedagogical experiences, and to a lesser extent around studies that show pre-service teachers as intercultural agents, as well as some studies of theoretical reflection. In general, the four categories that bring together the main interests of the Colombian scholars indicate that the last decade has focused on a diagnostic stage. This brings us to the last questions posed at the beginning of the study, which aimed at drawing some implications for curriculum designed, based on the revised literature. A characteristic that stands out in all the articles reviewed, has to do with the broadly felt need that the inclusion of cultural components in language teaching should transcend the scope of the classroom, and should permeate the entire curriculum in a transversal manner. If an (inter)cultural perspective is expected to be infused in language teaching, then the (inter)cultural components of the curriculum cannot be an ancillary element that may or may not be present in the subjects. Similarly, if an endeavour of this kind is expected to work, curricular and institutional decisions must be made, so that the (inter)cultural approach does not remain up to some teachers. Thus, future studies could focus on the design of curricular proposals in which the integration of cultural elements is infused in a gradient and transversal way, through all the areas and subjects that make up the curriculum of programs, especially those of language teacher education.

Similarly, there is a constant call for professional development around cultural issues and critical perspectives in foreign language teaching, and language teacher education. On the one hand, teacher education programs have the twofold mission of offering pre-service teachers a preparation that gears language teaching, culture, and criticality successfully, as well as empowering them to teach languages (inter)culturally and critically. On the other hand, more work and scholarship is needed depicting team efforts by in-service teachers learning about the integration of culture in language teaching and, hopefully, building collaboratively bottom-up designs that are relevant for their contexts. To sum up, the field deserves to start soon new pedagogical and epistemological proposals for curricular intervention. The call for a critical perspective also appears as an urgency in a country in which inequities and constant conflict shape the interactions of different social groups.

Therefore, it is important that the curricula of all fields of knowledge prepare professionals capable of analysing, respecting, and learning from otherness and diversity based on a vision of social justice that does not perpetuate long-standing uneven power relationships. This does not mean that research on perceptions or classroom experiences that teach us so much about the implementation of the ICC and cultural issues in language classes should cease, but that research should be complemented with a new set of collective, explicit, and transversal curricular proposals.

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Harlow, H. F. (1958). Biological and biochemical basis of behavior. In D. C. Spencer (Ed.), *Symposium on interdisciplinary research* (pp. 239-252). University of Wisconsin Press.

Journal Citations

- Reference in the text
About coloniality, Colombian authors have expressed their voice, “This type of coloniality has been perpetuated until our times and it is perceived in the sociocultural expressions of the modern experience of individuals” (Nuñez Pardo, 2020, p. 115).
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Nuñez Pardo, A. (2020). Inquiring into the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being in EFL textbooks. *HOW*, 27(2), 113-133.

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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 dissertation]. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

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Cabralas Vargas, M., & Cáceres Cabrales, J. A. (2013). La dinámica del currículo y la evolución de la autonomía en el aprendizaje del inglés [The dynamics of curriculum and the evolution of autonomy in learning English as a foreign language]. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 18(1), 45-60.

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