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Editorial 2024-1

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A Colombian Network of Language Journals

Since 1965, the Colombian Association of Teachers of English (known as Asocopi, an acronym in Spanish) has always looked to contribute "[to] the betterment of English Language Teaching [ELT] in Colombia by means of promoting quality educators."[3] Its objectives have mainly aimed at networking opportunities, updating about language teaching matters, and struggling to take part in the decision-making about language teaching national policies. In the last three decades, Asocopi has become stronger by promoting social service, teamwork, quality teacher training, and developing academic and research opportunities among English language teachers nationally and internationally (Lucero & Diaz, 2014). Certainly, for the Colombian ELT community and Asocopi's members, this hard work has strengthened the sense of belonging to an association for academic and innovative work in the country.

In its pursuit of organizing activities to support English language education in both pedagogic and linguistic competencies, Asocopi has strived to create a collaborative culture for collective inquiry into best practices for English language teaching, learning, assessment, and research for the Colombian ELT community. Its well-known annual conference, webinars, special interest groups, newsletter, and journal (HOW) have been open spaces for

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sharing knowledge, dissertations, and workshops. Asocopi keeps on enhancing not only its affiliates, but also English language educators, teachers, researchers, teachers-to-be, and partners, locally and globally, for self-efficacy and autonomy in their practices.

Congruent with these premises, Asocopi and its journal HOW have looked for initiatives that foster collegiality and mentoring for enhancing advances and reflection in English language education and the spread of its knowledge. HOW's biannual publication, meet-and-greet events, and Asocopi's Newsletters are examples of these initiatives. Their mutual purpose is to increase the acknowledgment of situated or innovative teaching practices that strengthen the image of the Colombian ELT community, internally and externally. Indeed, the country demands accountability for its needs, which eventually can lead to the organization of its communities to a clear horizon over English language education practices. Contributions to these initiatives integrate each member's work into Asocopi and HOW. As a result, there is identification with the association and its journal development as its community improves its profiles and practices.

Particularly, HOW has encountered challenges in the editorial process and the accomplishment of the national regulations for specialized journals over the past few years. At the 2022 Asocopi Annual Conference, Miryan Vera, Asocopi's Administrative Manager, talked with Edgar Lucero, HOW's editor, about facing such challenges. Through this dialogue, the apparent lack of communication among the Colombian specialized journals' teams in the field emerged as one of the various challenges. This realization led to the idea of creating a *Colombian Network of Language Journals* initially aimed at fostering collaboration among journals and editors in the field, facilitating the exchange of corresponding information and knowledge, and enabling the strengthening of the journals.

In June 2023, Myrian and Edgar sent the first invitation to 22 Colombian specialized journals in the field. The invitation gathered enthusiastic responses and participation from numerous colleagues for the creation of the network (e.g., Correa, 2023). By this 2024 first semester, there is the active participation of nine journals' editors and assistants: HOW, Folios, Íkala, Colombian Applied Linguistics, GiST, Enletawa, Profile, Avances en Educación y Humanidades, and Enunciación. With six meetings conducted so far, Asocopi and HOW have been the platforms to talk about and disseminate pertinent information about the network creation to active members. During these sessions, all participants have collaborated on various proposals and outlined several ideas for the network consolidation and future development in 2024.

In agreement with Borgatti and Foster (2003), a professional network is an organization that enables access to content, experts, and (local or) global connections with fellow peers. As a *Colombian Network of Language Journals*, we are consolidating how the network can function and how corresponding information can flow in it for the Colombian ELT community.

Thus far, we are sure to be a network putting forward a comprehensive editorial approach, supporting academic publishing processes, and representing the community before (non) governmental entities at local, national, and international levels. For these purposes, we need constant interaction with the community's needs and challenges through permanent sharing activities, continuous mutual learning, and the use of effective communication tools. As Espinoza-Castro et al. (2018) suggest, we, as a network, want to share work and projects with common objectives and purposes, and with solid horizontal communication between the different participants of the community.

The *Colombian Network of Language Journals* looks to hold collaborative structures for continuous improvement and, as Siemens (2008) suggests, 'meeting challenges' requested by the Colombian ELT community regarding the editorial approaches, purposes, and processes. The network's success depends on its capacity to (1) promote and sustain the essence of professional growth (Stoll & Seashore, 2007), and (2) value the knowledge brought to the community (DuFour et al., 2006) on these matters. By holding collective and reflection-oriented purposes, in the future, the network can afront and, why not, reinvent editorial and academic publishing processes enriching the essence of the Colombian ELT community. We hope to expand the *Colombian Network of Language Journals* by engaging in diverse activities that not only benefit the journals and editors but also bring advantages to authors, reviewers, and readers alike.

Articles in this 2024-1 Issue

We have the pleasure of presenting seven research articles and one reflection paper in this HOW's new number. Five of those research articles are by Colombian authors and the other two are from Chile and Saudi Arabia respectively. The reflection paper is from a local scholar.

The first research article, by William Ricardo Ortiz-Garcia and Zulma Carolina Navarrete-Villarraga, reports the results of a qualitative action research study conducted with children from a private Colombian institution. This study gives evidence that the participating children developed different processes simultaneously, considering the revised Bloom's taxonomy. Those processes included performing more flexible cognitive and knowledge pieces while learning, developing cognitive processes with greater emphasis on the levels of 'apply' and 'analyze', and developing procedural and metacognitive knowledge. The second research article, by Ana Gutiérrez-Rojas and Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta, aims to explore listening assessment in a Colombian private language institution and its potential connection to students' underperformance in listening proficiency tests. The study reveals that despite the curriculum's holistic listening development goals, there is a misalignment in

the way listening is approached during the English language course. This situation becomes a factor that contributes to students' underperformance in listening comprehension.

The third research article describes the factors that enhanced students' construction of arguments when participating in culturally infused discussions at an undergraduate English as a foreign language British Culture course. Pablo Vergara-Montes and Luzkarime Calle-Díaz show that the factors facilitating the construction of arguments could potentially be peer scaffolding, previous knowledge, connection to participants' reality, and curiosity and inquiry. The fourth research article explores teaching practices and pedagogical experiences to foster well-being in English language student-teachers. By using a series of narrative events extracted from an action research methodology, Diego Ubaque-Casallas states that the participating student-teachers engage in thought-affective and well-being pedagogies, which coexist with traditional language pedagogy but are not cognitive-oriented. The fifth research article explores six reading strategies to engage students in more dynamic reading with workshops about the cross-curricular approach among ninth graders at a public school. Rubiela Cruz-Roa demonstrates that using reading strategies facilitates the development of critical reading in students and contributes to improving their knowledge of English.

Maria-Jesus Inostroza A. and Leslie Werlinger B., from Universidad de Concepción, Chile, are the sixth research article's authors. They present a study reporting the findings of action research that explored the contribution of board games, memory, and bingo on pre-kindergarten students' oral expression when participating in English lessons. This study shows that students increased their English oral production when such games were implemented in their lessons. Yaseen Ali Azi, Sami Abdullah Hamdi, and Mohammed Ahmad Okasha, from Jazan University, Saudi Arabia, are the seventh research article's authors. This experimental study uses information literacy and discourse analysis to develop English as a foreign language learners' critical reading skills while verifying information on social media. The results show a significant improvement among the experimental group compared to the control group when trained in evaluating a set of false news using information literacy and discourse analysis skills.

The reflection paper is about addressing emotional aspects in the second language learning processes by Luis F. Cisneros. This article addresses elements such as motivation, attitudes, levels of anxiety, acculturation, ethnicity, and personality that can bring up positive outcomes along the language learning stages in ESL/EFL classes.

We hope that the articles in this HOW's new number continue captivating your knowledge and curiosity to explore various current interests of English language researchers. The invitation to join HOW as readers, as well as authors, will always be on.

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Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to Analyze the Scope of CLIL Classes with Children

Taxonomía Revisada de Bloom para Analizar el Alcance de Clases AICLE con Niños

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of a qualitative action research study conducted with children from a private Colombian institution. This study aimed to analyze the learners' cognitive and knowledge outcomes measured according to the revised Bloom's taxonomy once content and language integrated learning was implemented. Data were gathered through an interview with the learners' parents, observation, and video recordings. Results give evidence that learners develop different processes simultaneously, classified by the mentioned taxonomy. This taxonomy is a helpful approach for English learners since it allows them to perform cognitive and knowledge processes without following rigid systematic learning. As a conclusion, this implementation with children allowed participants to develop cognitive processes with greater emphasis in levels 3 and 4 (apply and analyze), whereas level 2 (understand) was developed as part of the process. Meanwhile, the factual and conceptual knowledge

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dimensions were strengthened. Finally, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge is developed through the implementation itself.

Keywords: CLIL, cognitive processes, EFL, knowledge dimensions, revised Bloom's taxonomy

Resumen

Este artículo reporta los resultados de una investigación acción cualitativa con niños en una institución privada colombiana. El objetivo fue analizar los resultados cognitivos y de conocimiento de los estudiantes medidos a través de la taxonomía revisada de Bloom después de implementar el aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas extranjeras. Los datos se recolectaron por medio de entrevistas, observación y videos. Los resultados revelaron el desarrollo de diferentes procesos simultáneamente clasificados por la mencionada taxonomía, lo cual constituye una estrategia significativa para el aprendizaje de inglés, dado que ésta permite ejecutar procesos cognitivos y de conocimiento sin seguir un aprendizaje sistemático y rígido. Como conclusión, esta implementación con niños permitió a los participantes desarrollar procesos cognitivos con mayor énfasis en los niveles 3 y 4 (aplicar y analizar), mientras que el nivel 2 (comprender) se desarrolló como parte del proceso. Mientras tanto, se fortalecieron las dimensiones de conocimiento factual y conceptual. Por último, el conocimiento procedimental y metacognitivo se desarrolla a través de la implementación misma.

Palabras clave: AICLE, dimensiones de conocimiento, inglés como lengua extranjera, procesos cognitivos, taxonomía revisada de Bloom

Introduction

This study arose after several years of experience as English language teachers at different educational levels dealing with learners' difficulties regarding English language communicative skills and intervening not only as teachers but researchers. English is a compulsory subject within the educational curriculum in most of the institutions in Colombia. The Ministry of National Education's (MEN as known in Colombia) guidelines suggest "the acquisition of conversational and reading skills in at least one foreign language" (Ley 115 de 1994, article 21, part c). Nevertheless, English language teaching (ELT) practices in Colombia have experienced changes over the last decades allowing the inclusion of local-global (glocal) methodologies in the curricula (Le Gal, 2018). Furthermore, these methodologies are used by English language teachers to help learners' performance in this target language.

English has placed itself as a very important language for personal and professional development worldwide. However, in Colombia, it has been difficult to see much progress or improvements regarding the learning of this foreign language. This situation has been recognized as a problem, because of the low results obtained in the national exams as well as in the global ranking produced by the EF Academy (English Proficiency Index - EPI), which placed Colombia in the 75th position by 2023 considered as low mastery of this language. As Dikmen (2021) stated, "The fact that English is a common language used for communication

in various fields in the world has increased the importance of examining the factors that affect the performance of EFL learners" (p. 207). Thus, this study arose from the need to integrate methodologies used in the language field, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), as a response to local and national concerns about English language proficiency and use to have better outcomes in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning.

After the analysis of the context, the possibilities, and the proven benefits of the CLIL approach for the learners, the authors decided to carry on this study based on their willingness to use ELT methodologies with children. Therefore, a pedagogical intervention took place from February to December of 2022 at a private institution where students took extra classes to reinforce content and language, hence the reason why CLIL was chosen for this intervention. Besides, this study was conducted with syllabi adapted for the research aims and based on four subjects, namely: literature, mathematics, sciences, and history. These subjects' contents allowed the suitable adaptation for this study. Likewise, during this intervention, the researchers collected data throughout the process at different stages. The instruments were applied at suitable time intervals to verify the data. From the above scenario, the following research question guided this study: How do CLIL classes develop children's cognitive processes and knowledge dimensions considering the revised Bloom's Taxonomy?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on three concepts: the revised Bloom's taxonomy, CLIL, and EFL in Colombia. These concepts are presented in the following paragraphs.

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

This concept has been applied to educational settings by teachers and educators who strive to help their learners develop high-thinking skills with "the idea to create a classification system that could be used to facilitate communication between examiners" (Sobral, 2021, p. 149). Bloom's Taxonomy provided definitions of six main categories in the cognitive domain, ordered from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract: lower-order skills that require less cognitive processing to higher-order skills that require deeper learning and a greater degree of cognitive processing. At first, the taxonomy aimed to provide a classification of educational system goals, especially to help teachers, professional specialists, and researchers discuss curricular and evaluation problems with greater precision (Bloom, 1994, as cited in Amer, 2006; Sobral, 2021). Nowadays, several learning outcomes are measured by the taxonomy in such a way that it might be used to design the scope of curricula, syllabi, or lesson plans.

In the same vein, according to Sobral (2021), several authors have revised Bloom's taxonomy, but Krathwohl (2002) published a revised classification shown below in Figure 1.

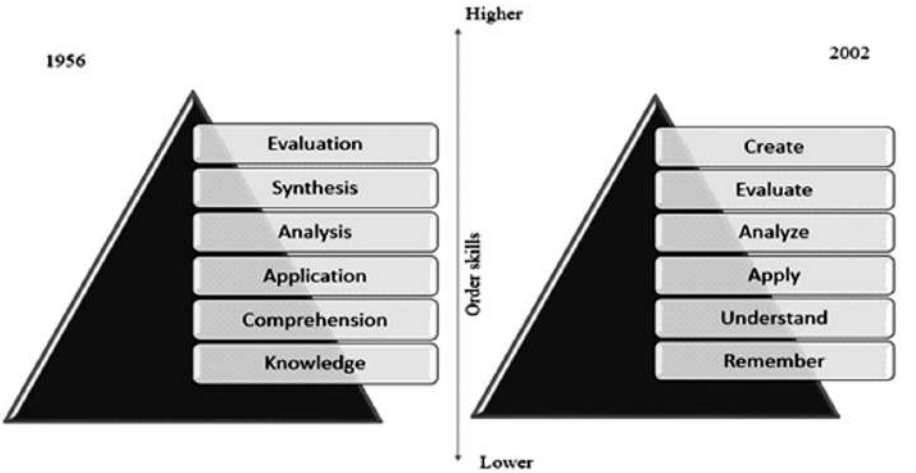

Figure 1. Original and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Regarding the Cognitive Process

Note. Taken and adapted from *Bloom's taxonomy to improve teaching-learning in introduction to programming*, by Sobral, 2021, p. 149.

According to Krathwohl (2002), two dimensions were proposed: knowledge and cognitive processes. This author even extended their categories and their scope. One of the changes that differentiates the new model from that of 1956 is that the *evaluate* level is located under the *create* one. Due to this fact, Krathwohl highlighted the creation stage and its processes at the highest level of the pyramid, while the original stated *evaluation* as the superior one. It should be noted that the most remarkable change is that the original Bloom's taxonomy was a one-dimensional form, and the revised one takes the form of a two-dimensional table. On the one hand, it was identified as the knowledge dimension (or the kind of knowledge to be learned) and, on the other hand, the cognitive process dimension (or the process used to learn) (Forehand, 2005). This understanding is presented in Figure 2 below.

Then, the revised taxonomy shows *knowledge* dimensions. This consists of the following (Anderson et al., 2001, as cited in Wilson, 2016, p. 5):

- Factual knowledge: The basic elements students must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems.

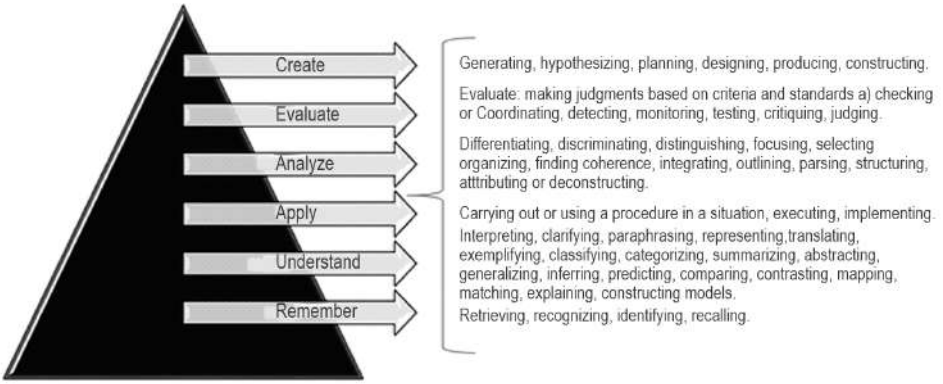

Figure 2. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Regarding the Cognitive Process Dimension Scope

Note. Taken and adapted from *Bloom's taxonomy to improve teaching-learning in introduction to programming*, by Sobral, 2021, p. 149.

- Conceptual knowledge: The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.
- Procedural knowledge: How to do something, methods of inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.
- Metacognitive knowledge: Knowledge of cognition in general, as well as awareness and knowledge of one's cognition.

In connection to the knowledge dimensions and the cognitive process (Figure 2), Krathwohl (2002) proposed a taxonomy chart shared as follows.

Table 1. Taxonomy Table

The Cognitive Processes						
The Knowledge Dimensions	**Remember**	**Understand**	**Apply**	**Analyze**	**Evaluate**	**Create**
Factual knowledge						
Conceptual knowledge						
Procedural knowledge						
Metacognitive knowledge						

Note. Taken from *A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: an overview*, by Krathwohl, 2002, p. 216.

Each concept in Table 1 is related to learners' performance. As part of this study, the researchers completed the previous table to analyze how CLIL contributes to the participants' cognitive and knowledge development. Thus, the study can be replicated in local, national, or international academic scenarios and with learners of different ages.

Content and Language Integrated Learning -CLIL

In this section, CLIL is presented as a response from teachers, educators, and researchers in the language field to apply appealing methodologies that might contribute positively to their context. The author Marsh (2002, as cited in Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010) defined:

> CLIL is an umbrella term that refers to a dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first foreign language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. (p. 368)

CLIL was implemented in this study as part of the methodologies used to help students develop skills for a functional communicative process; then, CLIL can help them acquire more knowledge in a win-win perspective. Even though CLIL is not a new proposal in language classes, implementing it in this study represented the possibility of exposing learners to different EFL learning approaches.

A CLIL class can similarly manage naturalistic learning to that when children learn their first language (Anderson et al., 2015). However, there is a big difference between teaching a subject and being able to learn it experientially. CLIL allows children to engage with conceptual learning through experimentation in different fields of knowledge. In this study, the participants tackle content from classes such as literature, mathematics, sciences, and history; but those are not seen as regular classes, since this methodology is applied through learning activities related to "knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy" (García, 2015, p. 31). In addition to this, games, dramatizations, online practice, music, art, interactive activities, and hands-on experimentation (among others) were used to carry out the classes designed for this study.

Thus, the classes, designed under CLIL principles and experimental learning, were key components the participants were developing in their mother tongue (L1) while studying content in the second language (L2) as part of the curriculum. In the academic process carried out with the participants, elements proposed by Georgiou and Pavlou (2011, as cited in Attard et al., 2016) were considered. These are displayed in the following figure consolidating a CLIL model.

In this study, the classes were designed based on the model in Figure 3 and supported through total immersion courses with a focus on fluency rather than accuracy of the foreign

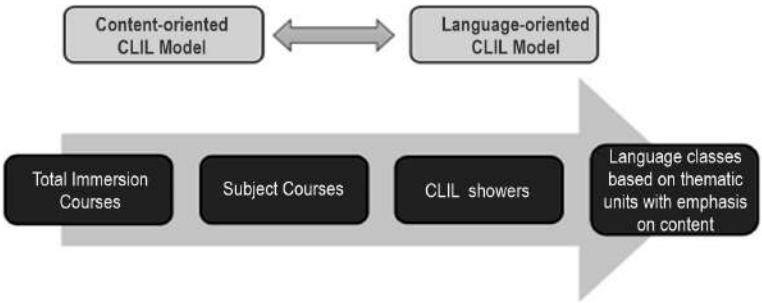

Figure 3. CLIL Model

Note. Taken and adapted from *Guía CLIL*, by Attard et al., 2016, p. 25.

language (Gučec, 2019). This focus was one of the main reasons to use CLIL. Also, CLIL works for this study properly because it goes beyond linguistic competence to impact the conceptualization (how people think), improvement of the understanding, conceptual mapping resources, and associations, for better learning (Marsh, 2020, p. 8). This way, the learning process is reinforced without compromising the development of competences and the curricular content indicators and benefits. This argument is evident in a study carried out in Colombia by Garzon (2022) through the implementation of CLIL with a visual arts class with children. The results proved that CLIL allowed the learners' cultural awareness while they were provided with aesthetic opportunities to appreciate the world, creating connections with their reality and abilities in different fields; these results are aligned with the ones obtained in this study.

English as a Foreign Language in Colombia

This section contextualizes the concept of English as a foreign language (EFL). In Yoko's terms (2011, as cited in Peng, 2019), "EFL refers to those who learn English in non-English speaking countries" (p. 33). This definition implies that the English language is learned in a non-speaking country by people whose first language is not English. According to Quimosing (2022), foreign language learning refers to non-native language learning in formal classrooms since the target language is not commonly used in the local community. It can be understood that a person whose mother tongue is different from English in the previous context, can be an EFL learner.

Having said the above, EFL is the case of Colombian people whose mother language is primordially Spanish; they hardly use English in social spaces or interactions in their communities. EFL in Colombia "has been institutionalized […] on the basis of the nation's

development and insertion into the globalized world" (Macías, 2010, p. 182). The MEN (2006, as cited in Chaves & Hernández, 2013) suggested through the National Bilingual Program (NBP) that "all citizens to communicate in English with internationally comparable standards" (p. 62). As a result, EFL has had pedagogical implications that affect the academic process, the social context, and the cultural awareness in Colombia.

EFL also allows the integration of the learner's context and the culture of the target language. Culture is undoubtedly an integral part of foreign language teaching. The world community considers language fluency as one of the greatest values of education because linguistic diversity is an essential element of cultural diversity (Kostikova et al., 2018). Besides, in the Colombian context, the future for English teachers is getting better, since they are willing to adapt different tendencies in EFL classes to improve their profession (Buendía & Macías, 2019, p. 108).

Moreover, an appealing finding regarding the EFL context is that EFL learners' self-efficacy influences their performance (Naghsh et al., 2017). According to Çelik and Karaca (2014), in South America, "English language education is typically emphasized at the secondary level, although a small number of countries include EFL instruction from the early stages" (p. 6); however, the MEN has implemented the EFL parameters in the elementary education. Based on this argument, we, as researchers, were willing to adapt CLIL in an implementation that contributed to our EFL classes, considering the Colombian policies and documents suggested for EFL in Colombia.

On the other hand, a study carried out by Bailey (2017) reports positive results, such as the fact that Colombian students are raising their awareness in terms of cultural knowledge, intercultural progress, economic interests, and good behavioral changes. EFL processes in Colombia are not unconnected to the changes in the world in this regard, but sometimes the results obtained are not shared with the research community. Therefore, this study shows the educators' and researchers' commitment to contribute to EFL in Colombia through pedagogical interventions and results that prove the results arose in some Colombian language classrooms.

Methodology

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, as cited in Aspers & Corte, 2019, p. 142).

Consequently, the data obtained were properly framed according to the purpose of this study; yet the researchers collected data from a natural setting proposed for different CLIL classes implemented with children in 2022. In this way, qualitative research is suitable since data can be collected from videos, behavioral recordings, interviews, and observation (Haven & van Grootel, 2019). Those were the instruments used in this study to gather the information collected. This study was also developed under the action research (AR) approach. Clark (2020) defined:

> [AR] is an approach to educational research that is commonly used by educational practitioners and professionals to examine, and ultimately improve, their pedagogy and practice. In this way, [AR] represents an extension of the reflection and critical self-reflection that an educator employs on a daily basis in their classroom. (p. 8)

Then, action research was used by the researchers in advance to intervene in the context of CLIL implementation with children when reflecting, planning, designing, and adapting the pedagogical intervention (see Figure 4). In addition, our experience as English teachers guided this implementation to create learning environments intended to be meaningful for the participants.

Pedagogical Intervention

This pedagogical intervention arose from the lack of English language practice and learners' English language proficiency in regular classes (as reported by the participants' parents), as well as observations made by the teachers that showed the participants' difficulties in the target language. Therefore, we decided to design and carry out a pedagogical intervention (Figure 4 below) following the CLIL principles and stages presented in Figure 3. We implemented activities that sought to strengthen EFL while exploring different areas of knowledge, such as literature, mathematics, sciences, and history.

Figure 4 shows the pedagogical intervention process that was conducted from February to December of 2022, attending the classes on Saturdays for three hours. These sessions were developed in two different classes: on the one hand, Literature and Mathematics; on the other hand, Sciences and History. Each class had a duration of one hour and a half. In the same way, attending classes during vacation time was necessary to complete the sessions; these were four times a week, and each class had a duration of three hours. In the end, there were 120 hours of sessions, and these were divided equally between the four mentioned classes.

The teachers' participation was focused on the planning, organization, and application of each activity and assignment in the different subjects selected for this CLIL pedagogical intervention (see Figure 4). Likewise, they cooperated to adapt the syllabi in a way that might contribute to the learners' regular classes. Hence, this approach allowed the researchers

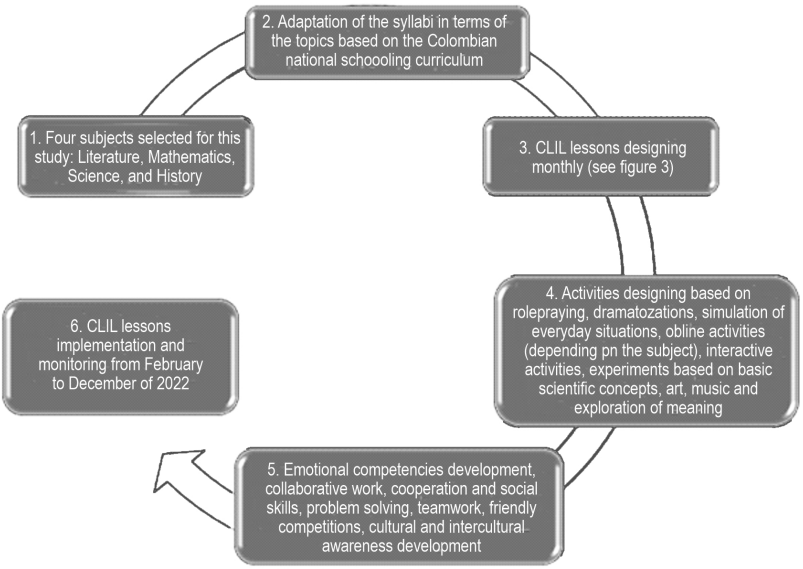

Figure 4. Pedagogical Intervention Cycle

Note. Own elaboration.

to include dynamics and strengthen contact with the language and culture. Similarly, as there were young learners, the classes included interactions, guided assignments based on experimentation, gamification issues, and craft activities. Finally, data were collected at suitable time intervals to verify the reliability of the findings.

Instruments

The instruments applied to gather data were the observation grid (see Appendix A), the interview, and video recordings. Different authors have stated that observation is a good tool to collect data, since "observation is a way of gathering data mostly in qualitative research, by observing the behavior, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting" (Ekka, 2021, p. 17). As stated before, one of the benefits of observation is that people are likely to behave naturally; and the observation can involve actions to determine the scope and design some activities according to the learners' behavior (Fry et al., 2017). In this sense, the classes were observed by one of the researchers, who took field notes during the implementation of this study. Therefore, it was conducted a direct observation. When

the researcher who observed could not attend the sessions, the classes were recorded and analyzed later.

Later, an interview (see Appendix B) was applied to the students' parents to have an external but objective point of view. There was a semi-structured interview that sought to determine the parents' voices as a main source to provide reliable information, since they help their children in the development of various tasks, and support them during their childhood education, so they would be able to report first-hand data.

The collection of data was also done with videos; these were recorded randomly while developing specific activities proposed in classes. Data were taken from videos: students' behaviors, interaction, communication, and performance. Videos are a suitable instrument since the evidence may be categorized naturally or controlled (Wildemuth, 2017). In this study, these data were natural, because they were collected during the participants' daily activities. Finally, the videos were analyzed by the researchers, who took notes from repeated actions and patterns identified.

The researchers focused their observations and analysis of videos on learners' performances, behaviors, and limitations and identified the common patterns, taking as reference the information presented in Figure 2; this analysis was contrasted with the interview information. In short, the purpose of the three instruments was to analyze the learner's most repeated actions fit in the cognitive levels of the taxonomy presented in Figure 2.

Participants

The participants of this study were boys and girls between four and ten years old. The group consisted of seven girls and three boys, who have only had contact with the target language through the classes they receive at school, which is not bilingual, or through classes that were different from that of English, or that were guided in that language. This study took place in a private institution in Cajicá, Colombia; and the learners' parents accepted the implementation of the study with a signed consent form (see Appendix C) that allowed researchers to use the data collected; however, their identity remains as confidential information.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section presents the data analysis procedure and the research categories that emerged from the data collected. The method used to analyze the data was the modified grounded theory, and the researchers followed these steps: data collection, data transcription, constant comparison, open coding divided into axial and selective coding, core category,

and theoretical integration (Glaser & Strauss, as cited in Alnsour, 2022, p. 3). Two categories emerged from the analysis (see Table 2 below). The findings were contrasted with the conceptual foundation to answer the research question.

Table 2. Codification Process

Categories	Themes in data	Data codes
Learners' Cognitive Development Levels according to Bloom's Taxonomy	Learners' actions focused on the development of assignments	• Intuitively learners' language use. • Use of formulaic expressions and commands • Learners' multiple actions to communicate • Focus on assignment development • Learners' performances based on tasks
	New habits, and behaviors based on language use	• What to say vs how to act. • New behaviors and habits related to English use • Learners' actions development and changes
	Overcoming difficulties in English use, gaps in communication, and lack of vocabulary	• Learners' associations with previous knowledge • Miming and drawing to overcome a lack of vocabulary • Effort to steady English communication. • Harder cognitive processes development
Learners' Knowledge Dimensions Development and Communication Empowering	Normalization of English language use in daily activities with communicative purposes for life	• Use of English language beyond the classroom • Integration of language with daily activities • Normalization of English in different scenarios and people • Learning language vs experiencing language
	Leaners' knowledge development gradually and simultaneously because of the classes implemented	• Knowledge dimensions development based on classroom activities and tasks designed under the CLIL methodology • Procedures, awareness, problem-solving, and relationships between language and content. • English language use with real communication purposes

Learners' Cognitive Development Levels according to Bloom's Taxonomy

The results of the implementation revealed that the first cognitive level (*remember*) of Bloom's Taxonomy is overlooked, not because it is not important, but because the language

is used in CLIL as a vehicle to communicate, not a structure to be memorized and repeated, what implies that is done intuitively. In addition, in the ten video recordings, it was found that, instead of just remembering, retrieving, recognizing, identifying, and recalling words or basic information (first-level cognitive processes) when using English, the students were not focused only on the language itself but in communication; their processes showed an outstanding development on levels 2 and 3 (*understand* and *apply*). It was noticeable in actions such as paraphrasing some commands and formulaic expressions used in class. The greatest emphasis was on describing, explaining, interpreting, inferring, applying, illustrating, using, demonstrating, and performing in specific situations. Those are for example board games (in Mathematics); interactive games like additions, subtractions, and multiplications; the development of basic scientific concepts (in Sciences); and explaining the procedures followed to obtain results (in the other classes).

The students were told to develop varied tasks, not only in Mathematics and Sciences but also in Literature and History classes, such as dramatizations to improve their oral skills, jigsaw puzzles, guided readings, crafting activities, online games, and role plays (among others). They learned to solve problems in the real world and daily situations to promote natural interactions. For instance, once they were contextualized in a supermarket role play, they learned how to use didactic bills, exchange money, and pay. These actions were related to levels 2 and 3 (*understand* and *apply*) simultaneously. Along with the content and language, the learners' process does not purely consist of repeating and retrieving vocabulary that represents the first cognitive level; instead, when carrying out a task, they pay less attention to the grammatical accuracy of what they have to say and focused on how to act. Moreover, the "how to act" cognitive process from levels 2 and 3 is where the learners started using the English language more naturally, following a similar process when speaking their mother tongue.

Figure 5 shows some of the cognitive processes that the learners started developing in the English language when facing activities under the CLIL methodology.

Furthermore, the previous learners' cognitive processes (see Figure 5) were developed transversally, and the subject and actions fit in levels 2 and 3 according to Bloom's taxonomy, even though they were studying four different classes. These students' actions go beyond the classroom, as well as the content. CLIL was useful for them to act in specific academic and communicative situations that demand actions of understanding and applying. Those actions depend much on what they were told to do or the tasks to be developed, so the outcomes depend less on the content itself but more on the activities. This argument lies in the fact that CLIL integrates content and language where the language is used as a vehicle to communicate. For that matter, the students' main concern was not the mastery of the language but the development of the activities. As supported by the interview responses, some parents argued in this sense that:

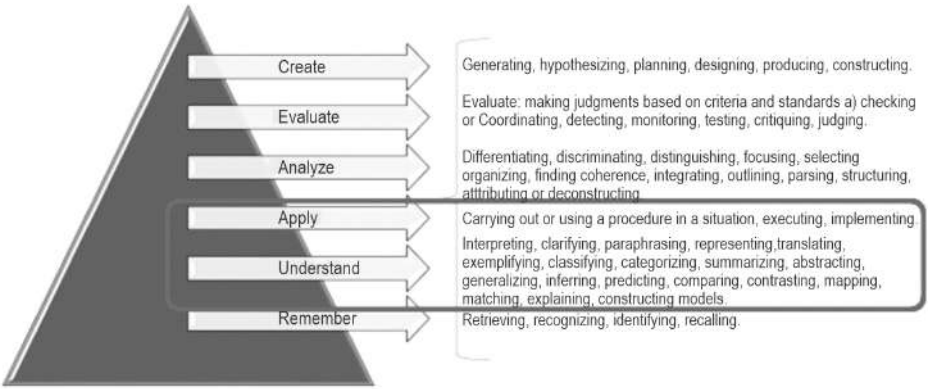

Figure 5. Participants' Cognitive Process First Insights

The English teacher mentions to me the great progress she has made in English vocabulary, and that the process of addition and subtraction is more advanced than her classmates, this did not happen before being in this class. (P1, Int., October 2022)[3]

My son asks me all the time to read different stories that have already been read in class, he corrects my pronunciation and teaches me new words, the truth is that I don't speak English, but the teacher at school tells me that the child is more aware about the language use. (P2, Int., October 2022)

It has been wonderful to see the progress the girls have made not only in English, but in all subjects, listening to them all the time doing regular things in English such as counting, playing hopscotch, and in general communicating with each other using several words in English, and they have improved their grades a lot, the teacher tells me that they have also regulated their behavior in class as now they understand, they enjoy more the classes. (P9, Int., October 2022)

According to these excerpts, the participants now perform several actions that they did not use to do (basic mathematical operations easier, reading in English, incorporating the target language as much as possible in their regular activities such as watching videos, playing games, and listening to music). The parents found changes in the learners when developing the homework as well as with their language use performance; this was because of the extra classes they took. The parents have also noticed changes in their children's behaviors such as paying more attention and participating more actively in classes, asking questions, losing fear

[3] To protect the sample's confidentiality, the participants' parents are identified using the letter P and a number to have control over the responses in a suitable order. For instance, P1 means "parent 1". The parents' quotes were translated into English by the researchers.
Obn., = Observation, Int. = Interview.

of speaking in English, and becoming less absent-minded; in short, they are more willing to learn. This way, the learners not only use the knowledge in class but in any academic setting. Now students show that learning with content is learning for life. Also, thanks to the observations, the researchers were able to reach some significant findings:

> *Some students constantly make some associations in terms of what they learned, and which are directly related to the input in that way; now they can differentiate and integrate concepts and ideas to use the information in new situations. The learners can focus on the commands and ask when necessary to perform and implement procedures, the language is not a problem.* (Obn., June 2022)

> *Several students develop actions to classify, simplify, structuring to use information depending on the communicative purpose or to carry out the interaction act.* (Obn., September 2022)

The previous findings were analyzed in the light of the revised Bloom Taxonomy (see Figure 6) to understand part of the scope of the implementation proposed in this study.

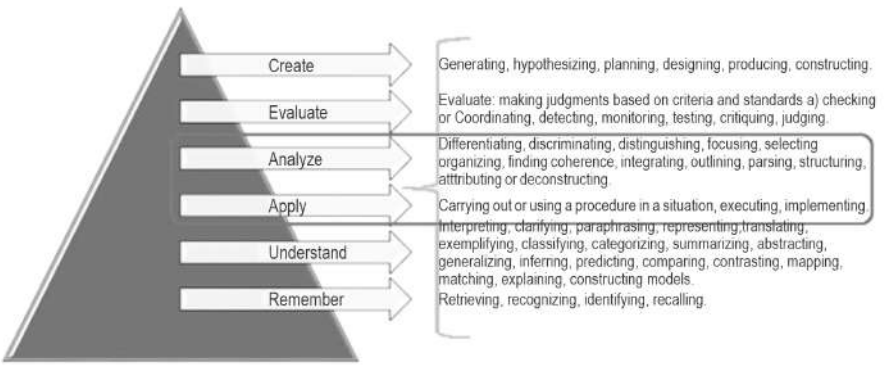

Figure 6. Apply and Analyze Level Cognitive Processes Development During the Implementation

As for the observation, the researchers point out that there is a strong relationship between levels 3 and 4 (*apply* and *analyze*). Consequently, it was observed that most of the cognitive process for each level is developed by the students simultaneously; although each level has some specific actions that can be developed, it does not imply that the participants must develop the cognitive processes levels (*remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create*) in the revised Bloom's taxonomy in ascendant order. That is to say, the participants do not move forward level by level if they already do the actions, but they can manage actions from different levels at the same time, which means that the actions might be settled altogether, and the reason lies on the fact that the tasks under CLIL demand to use different processes. For instance, in the development of the activities, some demand that

the participants select and structure information, make comparisons, organize and integrate ideas to communicate, and carry out and follow procedures focusing on what they have to do. Then, issues such as the learning goals, input used by the teacher, and output produced by the students, among others, make the participants manage actions at different levels.

However, during the observation and the video recordings, it was analyzed that, if children were unable to understand a word or concept, they resorted to body movements or drawings to avoid using the L1 to communicate. We found that, after some sessions, the learners repeated this behavior with their classmates and, instead of translating the word, they preferred to draw it, so as not to speak Spanish. In short, despite the lack of vocabulary or the repetition of basic vocabulary, this helped learners to go from cognitive level 1 (*remember*) to level 4 (*analyze*). Hence, the learning process goes beyond remembering or retrieving words to develop more complex processes, such as drawing connections among their ideas and finding coherence between some actions to communicate. Therefore, the learners preferred to perform harder procedures, such as using the knowledge they already had to make associations or making themselves be understood by using related vocabulary, or by contrasting and experimenting with different ways to express themselves; this, even though it implied a more difficult task for them.

Learners' Knowledge Dimensions Development and Communication Empowering

In the three instruments, it was evident that the participants grew habits that were intended to be steady since they integrated the use of the target language with their daily activities. Along with their academic matters, the participants tried to be in contact with the English language as much as possible, and in scenarios different from the school. This situation gave evidence of the early-stage development of the factual knowledge stated by Anderson et al. (2001, as cited in Wilson, 2016) since the learners integrated the basic elements needed with English in their regular activities.

In the interview responses, it was found that:

> *The girls ask me all the time to speak to them in English, the level I have is not good enough, but I try to speak to them in English during games or in some moments we share during meals.* (P9, Int., October 2022)

> *My son asked me to watch his favorite series in English, the truth is that I don't understand anything, but I see that he enjoys it and strives a lot.* (P6, Int., October 2022)

Moreover, before the whole syllabus was fully implemented, P7 mentioned that he would like to have access to some material used:

> *Would it be possible for you to share with us some activities to do at home or to show us, as parents, how to follow what you do in the classes? My child has improved, and he goes on.* (P7, Int., October 2022)

These answers gave evidence that the relationship developed between the participants and the English language grew so much that their parents were asking for extra material since they noticed their children got into learning as well as experiencing the target language, and they needed to be prepared to help their children. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the students needed to experience the language beyond its study, and it implied living the language and using it constantly. Besides, the observation carried out in the classes reports similar information in this regard, and contributes to these findings:

> *During the visit of a family who wanted to know more about this institution and the way how this works, the children heard one of the teachers speaking in Spanish and they all said together: "Teacher, no Spanish, English, yes". As the learners develop some activities with parents at home to normalize English use.* (Obn., November 2022)

Hence, the children began to normalize communication in English, and they sought to find other ways to make up for the lack of vocabulary to communicate and created strong bonds of companionship and purposeful group work. For this reason, the participants of this study became more demanding regarding the use of the language, even though they found some gaps in the communication. Therefore, the conceptual knowledge stated by Anderson et al. (2001, as cited in Wilson, 2016) was strengthened since the interrelationships between language and content in this study enable them to function together with communication in and out of the classroom. Finally, the identification of basic communication concepts and phrases occurred gradually, but remained stored in their long-term memory, as is evident in the following excerpts from the videos and the classroom observation:

> *A student asked the teacher if he could introduce the activity that day, he argued he could remember all the words and the commands to introduce the activity. It was observed that regular activities were internalized by students and then, used naturally.* (Obn., May 2022)

> *The students tried to keep communication with peers like how this is carried out in the classes. It was observed that the students presented some gaps in terms of vocabulary since they were learning the target language, but those gaps did not represent the limitation to communication. Moreover, the participants interacted naturally, yet one of the principles of CLIL is to use the language as a vehicle to communicate, not to be studied.* (Obn., July 2022)

> *The teacher tells us that now in English classes her classmates often ask her what words they don't know, so now she is the monitor, and she is happy to be the leader in the classroom.* (P7, Int., October 2022)

In this study, the participants showed that they were able to develop with greater emphasis two knowledge dimensions: factual and conceptual; this, according to their needs, interests, age, communicative purposes, and task activities development. This means that the participants started to use the English language and related it to the content progressively. In the beginning, their performance was somehow limited due to the lack of practice, but as the process continued, they started to integrate basic elements with larger structures that represented more completed processes in the classroom. Also, it was found that the

participants could overcome difficulties related to the lack of vocabulary since these did not limit their communication or their assignment development. Instead, the children aimed to make associations with other elements to reach their communication process, proving again the development of the conceptual knowledge that was presented within a larger structure to function together during the implementation proposed for this study. Moreover, the participants reached to make a continuous process of reinforcement and learning with the elements they had to fulfill the learning outcomes proposed in the classes.

During the video analyses and the observations, it was seen that implementing CLIL classes empowers communication, which is not only to express and receive ideas and opinions in specific situations. As Khamidovna (2020) stated, the concept of communication is much broader than the act of speaking; communication is not just about talking, it is also about listening, understanding, starting a conversation, and accepting the other. These learners acquired these skills: they met several material and emotional needs; they expressed their ideas first using individual words and phrases, and then using grammatically correct sentences; and they were able to listen, understand, and answer during the interactions. To sum up, communication is a two-fold process, and the previous aspects were evident as regular behaviors in at least ten of the videos.

This process was done according to the participants' cognitive levels and ages. In that sense, it does not mean that they were able to elaborate formal, complex, or long speeches using a wide range of deep mental processes, but they were able to communicate according to their age, peers, needs, and purposes. For instance, there was an activity based on nutrition and healthy food. The students were immersed in the easy preparation of food like oatmeal cookies. During the baking process, they interacted with the teacher and peers, talked about their personal food likes and dislikes, and, in general, asked questions related to new food vocabulary and the baking procedure *(*e.g., *"Teacher, how do you say "pasas" (raisins) in English?)*. Therefore, their possibilities of interacting are extended, since they do not find the little gaps as limitations, but as opportunities to be in contact with the world; and they understand that language is perceived as a tool to communicate, not a structure to be memorized and repeated. These findings are aligned with the procedural and metacognitive knowledge stated by Anderson et al. (2001, as cited in Wilson, 2016) because the learners looked for ways to fulfill the learning outcomes continuously and tried various procedures when having difficulties.

Ultimately, it was found that procedural and metacognitive knowledge is developed through the entire process since the learners participated and used the knowledge all the time, not just for specific assignments or communicative situations. Thus, the participants faced challenges related to naturally living the language, and for that matter, their cognition and awareness were steady. Therefore, CLIL helped students develop cognitive processes and knowledge dimensions altogether, gradually, and simultaneously.

Conclusions and Implications

In the first place, CLIL methodology allows the students to grow learning habits transversally and simultaneously. Thus, the participants not only developed actions to be performed in class or to carry out some specific actions in concrete situations, since they were not interested in performing according to an assignment, but in regulating their learning outcomes. Also, the learners performed actions depending on "how to act". Due to this, their performances do not follow a set of skills or actions to be completed step by step. In this regard, and according to the revised Bloom's taxonomy, it does not imply that the students first develop some cognitive process that fits in each level and then move forward to the next one in an ascending order, according to said taxonomy.

Moreover, during the learning process, students were focused on reaching some goals, so they did not pay attention to what to say, but to how to act. As a matter of fact, in the "how to act" stage the participants of this study performed cognitive processes from different levels, and most of those actions were in levels 3 and 4 (*apply* and *analyze*); level 2 (*understand*) was also developed during this whole process. Likewise, this study revealed that level 1 (*remember*) is overlooked and that the CLIL implementation could not provide insights for level 5 (*evaluate*) nor level 6 (*create*), at least in this study. Similarly, the learners connected the content and language, proving the factual knowledge; in the same manner, while developing the activities, the students integrated basic with harder procedures to fulfill their duties, while cognition and awareness were presented not only in this implementation but in the way the participants started experiencing and living the target language. So, the learners were able to develop the four knowledge dimensions: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive, as stated by Anderson et al. (2001, as cited in Wilson, 2016). This fact was evident when they participated in the group activities and assignment development since they integrated their knowledge when fulfilling their academic duties as well as their leisure activities.

Finally, based on the design and the complexity processes for the learners' competence, there might be stronger insights into the CLIL scope. These insights are schemed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Insights Based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

	The Cognitive Processes					
The knowledge dimensions	**Remember**	**Understand**	**Apply**	**Analyze**	**Evaluate**	**Create**
Factual knowledge		X	X	X		
Conceptual knowledge		X	X	X		
Procedural knowledge		X	X	X		
Metacognitive knowledge		X	X	X		

Table 2 reports the cognitive process and knowledge dimension axes fulfilled once the CLIL was implemented. So, this study contributed to managing good learning habits that can be used in different learners' scenarios. The management of those habits is increasing, depending on the students' effort and how challenging the proposed activities are. In short, the improvement of the learners' actions that can be measured in the revised Bloom's taxonomy is something that might have increased based on the design and the difficulty of the activities, and that is a process that needs to be continued.

In the same way, this process makes the participants demand more complex scenarios; for instance, the students found some gaps related to the vocabulary to express themselves, but they looked for different ways to keep up with the communication. On the contrary, it was an empowering communication development since they made the use of the language meaningful and applied it in places different from school and the academic context.

A limitation of this study is the small number of participants. However, the sample allowed for a deeper analysis and understanding regarding the cognitive process as well as the development of knowledge dimensions once CLIL was implemented. The findings were examined in detail in such a way that the insights provided were analyzed consciously. This study might be replicated in other scenarios as well as large-scale populations to generalize results and get possible results from levels 5 and 6.

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Appendix A
Class Observation Format

Researcher-observer: _____

This format was filled out during the direct observations**.**

Obs. N.	Date:	Students' performance	Students' behavior	Students' limitations	Common patterns
Other issues identified:					
Obs. N.	**Date:**	**Students' performance**	**Students' behavior**	**Students' limitations**	**Common patterns**
Other issues identified:					
Obs. N.	**Date:**	**Students' performance**	**Students' behavior**	**Students' limitations**	**Common patterns**
Other issues identified:					
Obs. N.	**Date:**	**Students' performance**	**Students' behavior**	**Students' limitations**	**Common patterns**
Other issues identified:					

Appendix B
Entrevista

La presente entrevista se ha elaborado con el objetivo de obtener información sobre el proceso de acompañamiento que usted le hace a su hijo con las tareas y conocer el desempeño de los mismos que usted ha observado con base en las clases que está tomando en esta institución que trabaja bajo la metodología de AICLE.

Le rogamos que responda de la manera más sincera posible.

1. ¿Ha notado cambios en la forma como su hijo desarrolla tareas? Justifique su respuesta.
2. ¿Nota cambios en el acompañamiento que le hace a su hijo? Justifique su respuesta.
3. ¿Qué es lo que más ha evidenciado en el proceso de aprendizaje de su hijo(a) a través de las clases tomadas en Step-up by Kidilea?
4. ¿Ha habido algún tipo de variación en el desempeño de su hijo en el colegio?
5. En el acompañamiento que usted le hace a su hijo ¿qué tipo de comportamientos persisten desde antes de tomar clases en Step-up by Kidilea?
6. ¿Considera usted que las clases que su hijo toma aquí le han ayudado a mejorar? Si / No, justifique su respuesta.
7. ¿El aprendizaje de su hijo/ hija ha cambiado? Si / No. Justifique su respuesta.

Appendix C
Consent Form

Bogotá, Day, Month, Year

Estimado Padre de Familia
Ciudad

Reciba un cordial saludo.

A través del presente nosotros, _____ y _____, solicitamos su autorización en este formato de consentimiento en el que concede su autorización para toma de datos que serán usados en un proyecto de investigación con fines exclusivamente académicos.

Los instrumentos con los que recolectaremos la información son: una entrevista a ustedes en calidad de padres de familia y acompañantes de sus hijos en el proceso de desarrollo de tareas, observación de clase y artefactos de los estudiantes que son videos de las clases que se grabarán aleatoriamente, para posteriormente analizarlos.

Firmando este formato, usted acepta el uso de datos, observación y grabación de videos con fines académicos-investigativos, siendo conscientes de que este documento no genera ningún tipo de beneficio económico a ninguna de los dos partes y permite la reproducción de la información recolectada.

Cordialmente,

Firma y Autorización Padres de Familia

Nombre del Estudiante

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Exploring Listening Assessment in a Colombian EFL Context: A Case Study

Explorar la Evaluación de la Comprensión de Escucha en un Contexto EFL Colombiano: Un Estudio de Caso

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Abstract

Listening comprehension is a crucial skill in English as a Foreign Language education, yet listening assessment still needs to be explored. This study aims to understand how listening is assessed in a Colombian private language institution and its potential connection to students' underperformance in listening proficiency tests. We characterize the listening assessment used in B1-level classes through a descriptive case study. Utilizing a rubric, we analyzed fourteen listening tasks from various sources, including course materials and a mock PET exam. Our analysis had two primary objectives: (a) to uncover the rationale behind test design and its alignment with the curriculum, and (b) to evaluate the knowledge types targeted and the forms of listening assessment employed using categorization. Our findings reveal that despite the curriculum's holistic listening development goals, assessments predominantly focus on phonological knowledge through dictation tests, in which students primarily engage with audio media and recordings. These findings suggest a misalignment in the way listening is approached during the whole course, the examinations used to assess listening during the B1 level, and

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the use of an external standardized test as the exit exam. This study holds potential implications for curriculum alignment and the enhancement of language assessment literacy within our context, shedding light on potential factors contributing to students' underperformance in listening comprehension.

Keywords: listening assessment, listening activities, curricular alignment, language education, EFL context, language proficiency

Resumen

La comprensión de escucha es una destreza crucial en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, sin embargo, la evaluación de la comprensión auditiva aún necesita ser explorada. El objetivo de este estudio es entender cómo se evalúa la comprensión auditiva en una institución privada de idiomas colombiana y su posible relación con el bajo rendimiento de los estudiantes en las pruebas de competencia auditiva. Caracterizamos la evaluación de la comprensión auditiva utilizada en las clases de nivel B1 a través de un estudio de caso descriptivo. Utilizando una rúbrica, analizamos catorce tareas de comprensión auditiva de diversas fuentes, incluidos los materiales del curso y un simulacro de examen PET. Nuestro análisis tenía dos objetivos principales: a) descubrir la justificación del diseño de las pruebas y su alineación con el plan de estudios, y b) evaluar los tipos de conocimiento a los que se dirigen y las formas de evaluación de la comprensión auditiva empleadas utilizando una categorización. Nuestros hallazgos revelan que, a pesar de los objetivos holísticos de desarrollo de la escucha del plan de estudios, las evaluaciones se centran predominantemente en el conocimiento fonológico a través de pruebas de dictado, donde los estudiantes se involucran principalmente con medios de audio y grabaciones. Estos hallazgos sugieren un desajuste en la forma en que se aborda la comprensión oral durante todo el curso, los exámenes utilizados para evaluar la comprensión oral durante el nivel B1 y el uso de una prueba estandarizada externa como examen de salida. Este estudio informa sobre la alineación del currículo y el desarrollo de la competencia en evaluación del lenguaje en nuestro contexto, arrojando luz sobre posibles razones para el bajo rendimiento de los estudiantes en la comprensión auditiva.

Palabras clave: evaluación de escucha, actividades de escucha, alineación curricular, educación en lengua, inglés como lengua extranjera, suficiencia en lengua extranjera

Introduction

Listening comprehension is a cornerstone of second language acquisition, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. However, despite this skill's significance, the listening assessment remains an area with substantial room for exploration and improvement. In the Colombian EFL context, listening assessment practices warrant closer examination, especially considering the persistent underperformance of students in listening proficiency tests.

This study is driven by the need to bridge the gap between the curriculum's intentions, which emphasize a holistic approach to listening development, and the actual outcomes observed in students' performance when facing proficiency tests, such as the B1 Preliminary English Test (PET). Institutional data have shown a notable inconsistency between students'

expected and actual listening proficiency levels. Despite the curriculum's strong emphasis on communicative competence, students often fall short of the expected standards, as reflected in their scores on the Cambridge English Qualifications mock exams.

This study aligns with existing literature that underscores the importance of understanding how listening is assessed in specific educational contexts (Rost, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the study responds to the persistent challenge of students' underperformance in listening proficiency tests, a concern that scholars have addressed in various settings.

Morales and Beltrán's (2006) action research study emphasized the significance of materials selection and systematic lesson plans for improving students' listening comprehension. Similarly, Córdoba-Zúñiga and Rangel-Gutiérrez (2018) emphasized meaningful oral tasks and Task-Based Language Teaching to promote listening fluency and highlight the value of engaging activities. Mayora's (2017) exploration of extensive listening highlighted the potential for self-assessment and self-regulation, reflecting the importance of metacognitive strategies to improve students' listening skills. Moreover, Ballesteros-Muñoz and Tutistar (2014) pointed to the positive impact of teaching specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goal setting on listening comprehension and self-efficacy, reinforcing that assessment methods can influence learner performance and attitudes.

Our focus on understanding the rationale behind test design and its alignment with the curriculum resonates with the literature's emphasis on the need for materials beyond literal comprehension (Cárcamo-Morales, 2018). The analysis of listening tasks' knowledge types and forms of assessment using Rost's (2011) categorization aligns with the broader interest in exploring various dimensions of listening assessment (Hernández-Ocampo & Vargas, 2013; Sevilla-Morales & Chaves-Fernandez, 2019), including teachers' language assessment literacy, which refers to the knowledge, skills, and principles needed for contextualized language assessment (Giraldo et al., 2023). This is an emerging theme in the Colombian EFL field (Giraldo, 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Giraldo & Murcia, 2018, 2019).

This study contributes to the growing body of research on listening assessment practices in EFL contexts, shedding light on the possible reasons behind students' underperformance. Our focus is to delve into the characteristics of listening assessment within a specific educational context: a private language institution in Colombia. This institution aligns its programs with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) and offers CEFR-aligned courses, including the B1 level course where this study was embedded. The course consisted of two modules, each comprising six units based on the Navigate Pre-intermediate B1 coursebook. The assessment framework includes periodic unit-level assessments and a final exit exam, the Preliminary English Test (PET) mock exam.

Concerning students' performance in listening proficiency tests, the study poses the following research question: "What are the characteristics of the listening assessment at the B1-level EFL course at a private language institute in Colombia?"

The subsequent sections of this article provide a framework for understanding the nature of listening and introduce key assessment concepts. The methodology section details the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures to investigate the identified gap. Finally, the findings and discussion section illustrates the characteristics of listening assessment in this EFL context, with potential implications for curriculum alignment and the development of teachers' assessment literacy.

Conceptual References

The conceptual reference section consists of three key elements: Listening, Language Assessment Principles, and Listening Assessment. By incorporating these elements, we hope to provide a clear path for exploring listening assessment practices and their alignment with the complexities of listening in the study context.

Listening

Listening is often related to the faculty of the ears to perceive sounds; therefore, the study of the physiological components has been approached by audiologists (Worthington & Bodie, 2017). In contrast, communication scholars have studied the individual and relational components of listening. For these researchers, listening is "a multidimensional construct that consists of complex (a) affective processes, such as being motivated to attend to others; (b) behavioral processes, such as responding with verbal and nonverbal feedback; and (c) cognitive processes, such as attending to, understanding, receiving, and interpreting content and relational messages" (Worthington & Bodie, 2017, p. 3). This concept of listening includes an extensive set of processes. In a similar line, Rost (2011) provides an ample definition whereby "listening is an integrated ability that requires several overlapping psycholinguistic abilities" (p. 117). These definitions point to listening subprocesses (Rost, 2011; Worthington & Bodie, 2017), as represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 portrays listening as a complex process that encompasses four other processes. So, in the present study, the definition of listening entails that listening is a dynamic and complex process that encompasses four other processes - neurological processing, linguistic processing, semantic processing, and pragmatic processing - in which meaning is co-constructed from the perception of the sounds of a language.

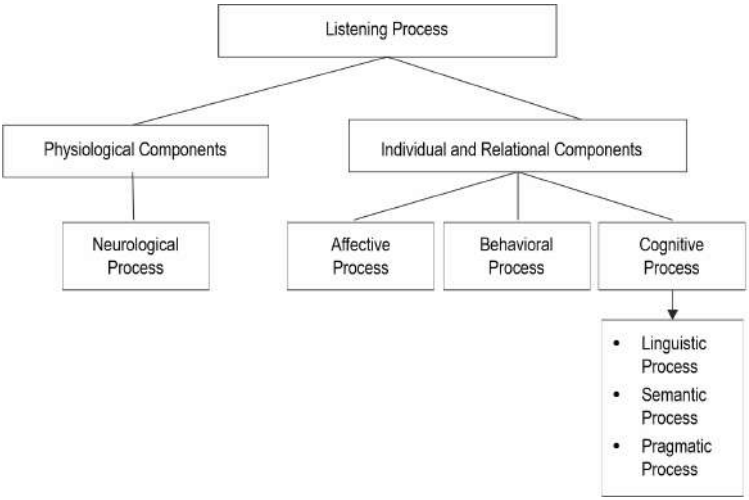

Figure 1. Listening and its Processes

Note. The main components and processes of the listening process. It is adapted from Rost (2011) and Worthington and Bodie (2017).

Language Assessment Principles

In language assessment, foundational principles guide the creation and application of assessment instruments to ensure their effectiveness. These principles include validity, practicality, reliability, authenticity, and washback (Brown, 2004; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Malone, 2011). Similarly, Bachman and Palmer (1996) identify six properties for quality control in test development: reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality, with usefulness as their primary function.

Validity, often deemed the most critical principle, ensures the accurate measurement of the intended construct through content-related, criterion-related, construct, and face validity (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Construct validity, as emphasized by Buck (2001), is often regarded as the most pivotal property, as it ensures that a test accurately measures the intended construct, serving as the foundation for test usefulness. Practicality addresses logistical considerations, encompassing cost, time, ease of administration, scoring, and interpretation (Brown, 2004; Mousavi, 2009). Reliability hinges on the consistency of test results across various factors, requiring clear instructions, uniform rubrics, and unambiguous items or tasks (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Authenticity stresses the importance of assessment tasks mirroring real-world language use (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The washback effect underscores the influence of

assessments on teaching, learning, motivation, materials, and classroom practices (Hughes, 2003; McKinley & Thompson, 2018; Rost, 2011; Alderson & Wall, 1993).

Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) provide comprehensive language assessment frameworks, sharing fundamental principles while differing in some definitions and perspectives. Both prioritize reliability and practicality but vary in their interpretation of validity. Brown and Abeywickrama emphasize various types of validity evidence, while Bachman and Palmer focus on construct validity as the foremost quality. Additionally, they diverge on the definitions of impact and washback, with Brown and Abeywickrama emphasizing the effects of tests on teaching and learning and Bachman and Palmer encompassing broader social consequences, including policy and societal values. Moreover, Brown and Abeywickrama introduce face validity as a principle, emphasizing its role in gaining acceptance and confidence among stakeholders, whereas Bachman and Palmer do not consider it a valid criterion, focusing on test effectiveness (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Listening Assessment

Defining the construct of listening is a fundamental aspect of assessment, as it ensures that the assessment aligns with the intended goals and accurately measures the targeted skills. Green (2019) underscores the need to base the construct on various sources, including the school curriculum, national standards, and CEFR descriptors. This alignment is essential for collecting evidence that validates the definition of the listening construct.

Buck (2001) further emphasizes the central role of construct validity in assessment. He distinguishes between two types of knowledge crucial for language comprehension: linguistic knowledge, which encompasses sounds, words, grammar, semantics, and more; and non-linguistic knowledge, which relates to aspects like context, topic, and cultural elements. Depending on their application in different situations, these knowledge types underpin the bottom-up and top-down listening views.

Rost (2011) contributes to this discourse by presenting a comprehensive map of listening ability, highlighting its overlap with general language ability. This map incorporates five key knowledge domains: general, pragmatic, syntactic, lexical, and phonological. It underscores how these knowledge areas intersect, further emphasizing their importance in the context of listening assessment. Figure 2 below depicts such knowledge.

Additionally, Rost (2011) offers practical guidance for discussions on listening assessment. He categorizes knowledge types (See Appendix A and B and Figure 2 above) and forms of listening assessment, which are the different ways of measuring and evaluating

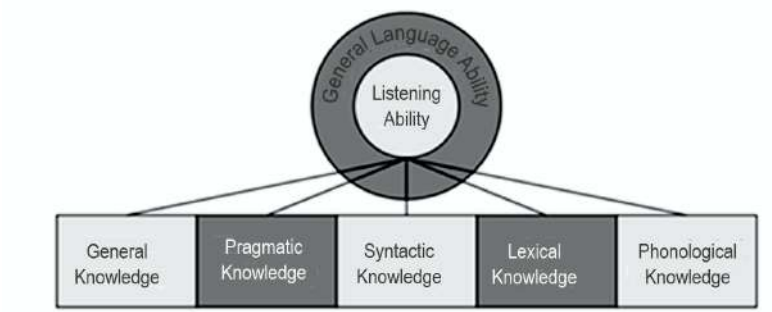

Figure 2. General Language Ability and Listening Ability

Note. From Teaching and Researching Listening (p. 212) by Rost (2011).

the listening ability of language learners. He proposes four primary forms of listening assessment: discrete-point, integrative, communicative, and performance-based.

Discrete-point listening assessment dissects listening into isolated components like phonology, lexis, syntax, and semantics, employing question types such as multiple-choice and true-false. While straightforward to administer and score, it lacks the realism of real-life listening contexts. Secondly, integrative listening assessment acknowledges the interplay between various components and evaluates them about one another, employing methods like cloze exercises and dictation. This approach offers a more authentic assessment but remains constrained by test format and content. Thirdly, communicative listening assessment focuses on the dynamic exchange of meaning and intention in listening, testing the ability to employ listening for diverse purposes in varied contexts through tasks such as role-plays and problem-solving activities. It offers greater realism and interaction but can be challenging to design and score. Finally, performance-based listening assessment emphasizes listening to achieve specific goals or outcomes, evaluating learners' capacity to apply listening in actual or simulated settings using tasks like presentations or projects. This highly valid and meaningful approach demands more complexity and subjectivity in assessment design (see Appendix C and D). These resources serve as valuable tools to design assessments that align with the complexities of listening.

The course syllabus and assessment package are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001); we also used it to analyze the communicative listening activities. They are defined as those involving the reception and processing of oral or audio-visual input for various purposes and functions in different contexts and situations. These activities are categorized into four types: listening as a member of a live audience, listening to media and recordings, listening as a learner, and

listening for professional purposes. Listening as a live audience member entails engaging with live presentations and reacting appropriately to the speaker's message. Listening to media and recordings involves understanding recorded or broadcast input. Listening as a learner focuses on acquiring knowledge and skills from learning materials. Listening for professional purposes involves listening related to one's work or occupation, often requiring specific tasks and goals.

Based on these foundational concepts, we proceed to analyze the tests used to assess students' listening skills, as described in the following section.

Methodology

In this section, we outline the methodology employed in our study, beginning with an introduction to the research design and its contextual background. We then describe the data collection and analysis procedures to meet the study's objectives.

A descriptive study is a type of research that aims to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. It can answer questions such as what, where, when, and how, but not why. A descriptive study can use various methods, such as surveys, observations, and case studies to collect data that can be analyzed for frequencies, averages, patterns, and categories. A descriptive study is helpful when not much is known about the phenomenon to provide a clear and detailed picture of said phenomenon (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). A case study "allows the researcher to examine a case in depth in its real context" (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013). An example can be a person, a community, an event, or a policy for further understanding (Bhattacharya, 2009; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 2005).

The present study utilizes a descriptive case study design to characterize the listening assessment practices employed by EFL teachers in B1-level classes at a private language institution in the Northeastern region of Colombia. The institution offers a CEFR-aligned language program, encompassing A1, A2, B1, and B2. Each course is designed to equip learners with reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, facilitating their progression to the targeted proficiency level. Most students enrolled in these courses are young adults, and the teaching staff holds bachelor's degrees in English education. Several teachers have further validated their teaching competence by completing the Knowledge of Teaching (TKT) certification. Additionally, all instructors possess language proficiency certificates, validating their English proficiency levels at or above B2.

Study Context

The study unfolds within the framework of a B1-level course, structured into two modules, each encompassing six units sourced from the course book "Navigate Pre-

Intermediate B1." Over the course duration, learners are evaluated after each unit, with an additional checkpoint assessment following Unit 6. This checkpoint entails a midterm examination from the curriculum testing package (CCTP). Upon completing all twelve units in the B1-level coursebook, students undergo a mock examination derived from the Cambridge English Main Suite, specifically, the Preliminary English Test (PET), serving as a final exit exam within the context of an external testing package (ETP).

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to characterize the listening assessment methods employed in B1-level classes at the private language institution. This characterization aims to illuminate potential reasons underlying students' consistent underperformance in listening proficiency assessments, notably the PET. Consequently, our study analyzes listening examinations utilized in the B1-level course.

Data Collection and Analysis

The characterization process consists of two fundamental steps. Initially, we gathered established examinations pertinent to the B1 course, with a meticulous review conducted to ascertain the inclusion of listening sections and to quantify the number of tasks within each examination. Subsequently, guided by Buck's (2001) specifications for test validators, we analyzed each type of examination to elucidate the rationale behind its design and its alignment with the instructional curriculum.

The second step involved a granular analysis of individual listening tasks, primarily driven by Rost's (2011) categorization of listening abilities. Given that the program syllabus and course content are rooted in the CEFR framework, we employed the CEFR's descriptions of communicative listening activities to identify the specific types of listening activities integrated into each task. This multifaceted analysis unfolded across three dimensions:

- Characterizing the type of knowledge assessed by each instrument.
- Identifying the forms of listening assessment embedded within each task.
- Categorizing the type of communicative listening activities entailed in each instrument.

Analysis of Listening Tasks

To facilitate our analysis, we designed a checklist aligned with Rost's (2011) categorization of general language abilities and listening-specific attributes. We initially applied this checklist to assess the curriculum-based assessments and subsequently to the four subsections of the mock PET examination (refer to Appendix A and B).

Furthermore, we scrutinized the forms of listening assessment embedded in each task, guided by Rost's (2011) description of assessment formats. Details of this process are presented in Appendix C and D, which encompass the checklists created to identify the various forms of listening assessment evident in the tests and examinations utilized in the B1-level course. To complete our analysis, we meticulously reviewed each task to determine the associated communicative listening activities, referring to the CEFR's classifications.

Ethical Considerations

Before initiating the study, we upheld rigorous ethical considerations. Permission to access the requisite data was diligently sought from the institution's director, accompanied by a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose and the potential benefits it could offer the institution. Of notable importance is the involvement of Researcher 1, who maintains a direct affiliation with the institution and plays a pivotal role in facilitating communication and collaboration. All participating teachers and relevant stakeholders were informed about the research objectives, and their written consent was duly obtained. The director, recognizing the persistent challenges faced by students in listening comprehension, expressed keen interest in the study. Throughout the research process, ethical principles and practices were meticulously adhered to, safeguarding the privacy and rights of all participants.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings concerning the specifications of examinations utilized in the B1-level course at a private language institution. We comprehensively analyzed two types of examinations: (a) the unit and final tests derived from the course curriculum testing package (CCTP) and (b) the mock PET exam selected as the B1-level exit assessment. We summarize the findings and engage in a thorough discussion to shed light on the implications for students' listening skills and test performance.

Summary of Findings

Table 1 offers a comprehensive overview of the specifications of the examinations at the B1 level, categorizing them into CCTP and ETP (PET). It outlines the purpose, theoretical framework, listening construct, and alignment with test goals for each examination.

Table 1. Specifications of the Examinations at the B1 level

Specification	CCTP		ETP
	Tests	**Midterm Exam**	**PET Exam**
Purpose of the test	Unit Test	Proficiency test	Proficiency test
Description of Theoretical Framework	Each unit test measures the understanding of the listening decoding skills presented in the unit in a similar context to the one.	Aligning language to the CEFR. They resembled established international English language exams not only in their form but also in their purpose.	Students should be able to understand and respond to public announcements, show precise understanding of short factual utterances to make identifications based on these, and extract information from speech that will contain redundancies and language outside the defined limits of PET.
Listening construct	Relying on Field's research, listening in Navigate focuses on features of the spoken language. Therefore, it focuses on word recognition and decoding skills for listening to later switch attention from it to building up the speaker's purpose and the conversation.		It is a complex skill operating at several levels and must be practiced accordingly (Field, 2008).
Why does it meet the purpose of the test?	Only listening sections to test the listening decoding skills covered in the class unit.	Listening tasks look like tasks in PET.	Assessment of candidates' ability to understand dialogues and monologues in both informal and neutral settings on a range of everyday topics.

Note. Information about CCTP was taken from Navigate: Pre-intermediate B1: Teacher's Guide with Teacher's Support and Resource Disc. (p. 22-23, 32-33) by Merifield et al. (2015). Oxford University Press. Information about ETP, the Preliminary English Test (PET), was taken from the Preliminary English Test: Handbook. (p. 35) (2005). University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations.

The analysis reveals distinctions between the examinations. The unit tests within the CCTP primarily gauge students' comprehension of listening decoding skills relevant to the specific unit context. In contrast, the midterm and PET exams aim to assess learners' proficiency at the B1 level.

The discrepancies in the goals and constructs of these examinations prompt a significant discussion. As an integral component of the CCTP, the unit tests emphasize word recognition and decoding skills, with a gradual shift towards a more comprehensive understanding of the

speaker's intent and overall conversation context. This approach aligns with Field's signal-based approach (Field, 2003), emphasizing progression from perception to comprehension.

Conversely, as outlined in the Preliminary English Test: Handbook (2005), the PET exam focuses on evaluating students' ability to understand dialogues and monologues in diverse informal settings. The disparity in examination constructs becomes evident when comparing the number of listening tasks: the PET exam consists of four listening tasks, whereas the midterm exam includes only two.

Including the PET exam as the exit assessment aims to validate that the program attains the expected English proficiency level of a B1 student according to the CEFR. Nevertheless, the course curriculum and its associated examinations emphasize the development of word recognition and decoding skills, assuming that this training will ultimately enhance learners' listening proficiency at the anticipated level and facilitate success in the PET exam.

However, the analysis echoes the findings of Jiménez et al., (2017), who stress the importance of explicit test preparation and consistent self-evaluation processes in bridging the gap between standardized test results and curriculum objectives. While the midterm exam aligns with standardized test tasks to some extent, its limited number of listening tasks and the absence of comprehensive test preparation may explain students' lower-than-expected scores in the PET exam's listening section.

Furthermore, implementing consistent and continuous self-evaluation processes, as Jiménez et al., (2017) propose, can facilitate ongoing analysis of the relationship between standardized test results and curriculum objectives. This approach will empower teachers to make informed decisions to enhance students' language skills and performance on standardized tests.

CCTP and ETP Assess Different Types of Knowledge Regarding Listening

The analysis uncovers a notable diversity in the types of knowledge assessed by examinations from the CCTP and ETP (PET). The curriculum test packaging at the B1 level primarily addresses phonological knowledge related to understanding English language sounds in fast speech and recognizing spoken words and lexical phrases (see Appendix A). This alignment is consistent with the identified purpose of the unit tests from the CCTP, focusing on the evaluation of listening decoding skills (see Table 2 above).

However, Cárcamo-Morales (2018) highlights the importance of fostering active interaction with audio texts, framing listening as a process that involves decoding information and organizing, evaluating, and responding to it. He asserts that limiting students' opportunities for active engagement with aural texts and neglecting cognitive processes

associated with comprehension could hinder their performance in standardized tests. This observation is particularly relevant to the curriculum's exclusive emphasis on phonological knowledge.

Within the curriculum, only one task in test number six assesses syntactic knowledge, explicitly targeting the understanding of cohesion markers in discourse (see Figure 3 below). This limited inclusion of syntactic knowledge assessment suggests room for enhancement in aligning assessments with a more comprehensive understanding of listening skills.

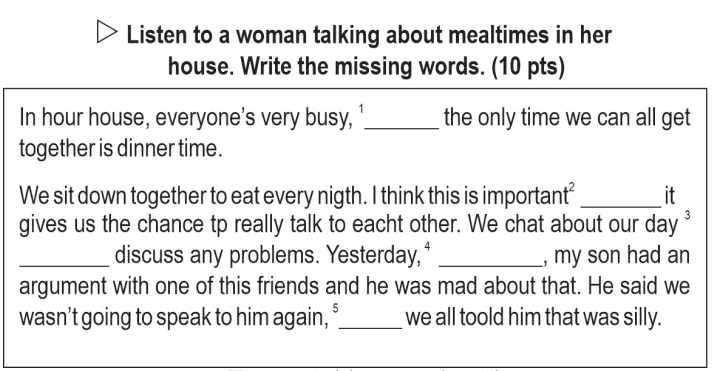

Figure 3. Test Number Six

Compared to the tests following each unit, the listening tasks in the midterm exam extend their focus beyond the recognition of spoken words and lexical phrases. Both tasks in the exam evaluate pragmatic knowledge, particularly the ability to follow the flow of given information versus new information. Our identification of the test specifications (Table 2) suggests that the midterm exam's tasks resemble established international English language exams (Merifield et al., 2015) and aim to assess similar knowledge categories as outlined in Appendix A.

Analyzing each section of the PET listening exam reveals a distinct approach. While the curriculum tests and midterm exams primarily emphasize phonological knowledge to test listening decoding skills, the PET exam integrates multiple dimensions of language knowledge, including phonological, lexical, pragmatic, and general knowledge (see Appendix B). This comprehensive approach aligns with the PET exam's purpose of assessing the learner's ability to perform tasks corresponding to the CEFR's description of the B1 level (Appendix E).

The divergence in the types of knowledge assessed by examinations from the CCTP and ETP raises significant considerations. Latimer (2009) observed a similar challenge in

his study on the washback effects of PET at an Argentinean bilingual school. Although the school adopted the PET as an external, credible means of demonstrating students' English proficiency, teachers expressed reservations, believing that the PET needed to encompass the full scope of students' English knowledge and abilities.

Considering these findings, Latimer (2009) suggested integrating PET preparation into extracurricular activities to avoid disrupting the institution's holistic communicative language mission. Similarly, the analysis of our assessments implies that examinations from the CCTP and ETP evaluate different dimensions of listening knowledge. Consequently, the institution should consider aligning its curriculum objectives, examination constructs, and test preparation strategies to address these disparities comprehensively.

Lack of Variety in Listening Assessment Forms

The analysis has revealed a significant limitation in the forms of listening assessments used within the B1-level course. Notably, all unit tests feature the same integrative test format, akin to a complete or partial dictation, primarily focusing on scoring based on the correct supply of missing words (Rost, 2011, p. 216). This lack of variety in assessment forms raises concerns about the scope of listening assessment in unit tests.

Cárcamo-Morales (2018) articulated a similar concern when analyzing tasks in an English text. While different types of tasks were present, they predominantly practiced the same type of knowledge. This pattern restricts students from progressing to more intricate levels of listening comprehension. In the context of the analyzed listening tests, the lack of variety in form and the type of knowledge assessed limits the breadth of listening assessment throughout the unit tests. Furthermore, it hinders learners' exposure to diverse task formats commonly encountered in international exams, such as the PET.

Lack of Exposure to Different Types of Communicative Listening Activities in CCTP

The analysis of the course's curriculum and associated assessments revealed a notable limitation—students' limited exposure to diverse communicative listening activities. We assessed the types of communicative "listening activities" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 65) presented in each test from the curriculum. As depicted in Table 3 below, listening to audio media and recordings appears consistently across tests, even within the midterm exam. Furthermore, some activities, such as sentences with gaps to be filled, were identified in tests with two listening activities. Nevertheless, these activities do not correspond to any of the communicative listening activities described by the CEFR.

Table 3. A Checklist for the Communicative Listening Activities Addressed in CCTP

Communicative Listening Activities	Test 3 Pt 1	Test 3 Pt 2	Test 4	Test 6	Test 8 Pt 1	Test 8 Pt 2	Test 11 Pt 1	Test 11 Pt 2	Exam Part 1	Exam Part 2
Listening to public announcements and instructions	—				—		—			
Listening to audio media and recordings	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓
Listening as a member of a live audience	—				—		—			
Listening to conversations between native speakers	—				—		—			

These findings parallel those of Morales and Beltran (2006), who observed that most listening materials in coursebooks engage learners in artificial, nearly flawless language use—an approach considered beneficial by designers. However, the authors highlight the importance of exposing learners to authentic listening situations reflecting real-life language use. Their study found that natural speech activities, such as films, news, and cartoons, posed more significant difficulties for students. This underscores the need for diversified listening experiences.

In contrast, our PET-exam analysis revealed various communicative listening activities integrated into its sections (Table 4). This diversity likely stems from the PET's alignment with the principles and approach of the CEFR, as it aims to assess English proficiency.

Table 4. A Checklist for the Communicative Listening Activities Addressed in ETP

Communicative Listening Activities	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Listening to public announcements and instructions	✓		✓	
Listening to audio media and recordings	✓	✓		

Communicative Listening Activities	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Listening as a member of a live audience				
Listening to conversations between native speakers	✓			✓

This disparity in communicative listening activities between the course curriculum and the PET exam has several implications. First, while students take the PET exam upon completing the course curriculum for the B1 level, an achievement test tailored to assess the skills taught within the curriculum might be more appropriate. Such a test could provide insights into the effectiveness of the listening approach outlined in the curriculum.

On the other hand, if the PET exam is intended to serve as an external measure of students' English proficiency, like Latimer's (2009) findings, a different approach is needed. PET preparation should be integrated into the curriculum, making it a fundamental component of course examinations.

Our analysis has highlighted the disconnect between the course curriculum's approach to listening, which emphasizes word recognition until it becomes automated, and the expectation that students demonstrate B1-level listening abilities in an external examination, such as the PET. Interestingly, an examination of students' results consistently reveals the lowest scores in the listening section (see Appendix F).

We can say that assessment practices uncovered in this study exhibit both alignment and misalignment with the foundational principles and properties of language assessment outlined in the literature. We now examine how these principles and properties are reflected in the assessment practices found in the study:

- Practicality involves considerations such as cost, time, ease of administration, scoring, and interpretation (Brown, 2004; Malone, 2011). In the study's context, the assessments, particularly the unit tests derived from the course curriculum, align well with the practicality principle. They are integrated into the course structure and can be administered efficiently within the institution's resource constraints.
- Reliability pertains to the consistency of test results across various factors. It requires clear instructions, uniform rubrics, and unambiguous items or tasks (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The study's assessments demonstrate a degree of reliability, especially in terms of uniformity, as they are derived from a standardized curriculum with established content and procedures.

- Validity is often deemed the most critical principle in language assessment. It ensures that a test accurately measures the intended construct (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The alignment between the curriculum objectives, the assessment constructs, and the PET exam's construct validity is a point of concern highlighted in the study. While the curriculum-based assessments align with the curriculum objectives, they may not adequately prepare students for the broader construct of the PET exam. This raises questions about the validity of the assessments in accurately measuring the listening abilities expected at the B1 level.
- Authenticity stresses the importance of assessment tasks mirroring real-world language use (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The assessment in the study, particularly the unit tests, demonstrates a degree of authenticity by incorporating tasks such as listening to audio media and recordings. However, the lack of exposure to diverse communicative listening activities, which are considered more authentic, is a limitation.
- Washback refers to the influence of assessments on teaching, learning, motivation, materials, and classroom practices (Hughes, 2003; McKinley & Thompson, 2018). The study suggests that the misalignment between the curriculum-based assessments and the PET exam can lead to a lack of effective washback. Students may not be adequately prepared for the external exam, impacting their motivation and learning outcomes.
- Construct validity emphasizes that a test should measure the intended construct or ability (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). In the study, there is a notable difference in the construct validity of the curriculum-based assessments and the PET exam. The curriculum assessments primarily focus on phonological knowledge, while the PET exam assesses a broader range of listening skills. This misalignment questions the construct validity of the curriculum assessments in preparing students for the PET exam.
- Interactiveness and impact identified by Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlight the need for assessment to be interactive and to have a significant impact on teaching and learning. While the PET exam is designed to be interactive and impact teaching and learning by serving as an external benchmark, the curriculum-based assessment may fall short in terms of interactiveness and impact, particularly if it inadequately prepares students for the external exam.
- Practicality, as described by Bachman and Palmer (1996), encompasses elements of ease of use and usefulness. While the curriculum-based assessments may be practical in terms of their integration into the course, questions arise about their usefulness in adequately preparing students for the PET exam.

In summary, the assessment practices found in the study align with practicality and, to some extent, reliability principles. However, there are notable misalignments with the principles of validity, authenticity, and washback, particularly in the context of preparing students for an external proficiency exam like the PET. This suggests the need for curriculum adjustments and teacher assessment literacy (Giraldo, 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Giraldo et al., 2023; Giraldo & Murcia, 2018, 2019) to address these misalignments and enhance the effectiveness of listening assessment practices.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to characterize the listening assessment used in B1-level classes at a private language institution in Colombia to understand why the learners' listening skills are consistently below the expected level when taking a proficiency test such as the Preliminary English Test (PET).

The findings discern that this course's pedagogical approach to listening assessment predominantly centers on developing word recognition and decoding skills. As students progress through the course, they are gradually exposed to the broader context of understanding speakers' intent and the dynamics of complete conversations, aligning with the principles articulated in the course objectives. Unit tests from the CCTP predominantly assess phonological knowledge, specifically recognizing spoken words and lexical phrases, chiefly through listening to audio media and recordings. Intriguingly, the midterm exam, also stemming from the CCTP, delves deeper into the listening assessment landscape. It targets the recognition of spoken words and phrases and evaluates the learners' capacity to follow the flow of information within a listening context. These examinations aspire to replicate the characteristics of internationally recognized English language tests, albeit with a notably limited inclusion of only two listening tasks throughout the B1 course. This could leave students ill-prepared for the final exit exam, which is a PET mock assessment.

These findings expose a misalignment between the course listening pedagogy, assessment practices, and the use of an external standardized test as the ultimate exit examination. While the decision to employ the PET exam as the exit assessment is seemingly logical, considering that students complete the B1 curriculum before undertaking it, the analysis has unveiled a discernible discrepancy. Anticipating that students can demonstrate CEFR B1-level listening competencies after engaging in a curriculum primarily grounded in word recognition has proven ineffectual, as substantiated by the consistent underperformance in the listening section.

This study suggests two main implications: curriculum alignment and teachers' assessment literacy. In consonance with Latimer's (2009) recommendations, if the institution elects to

retain the PET mock exam as the B1 level's concluding assessment, it becomes imperative to integrate extracurricular activities dedicated to PET preparation. Such an approach mitigates disruptions to the holistic communicative language mission of the course curriculum. Furthermore, our study resonates with other researchers' advocacy for incorporating specific test-taking skills and familiarity with test items throughout the course. This encompassing approach includes a comprehensive analysis of question types and text genres students can encounter in the PET exam. This alignment should consider the principles and properties of language assessment, ensuring practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

Concerning teachers' assessment literacy, the findings underscore the importance of providing teachers with comprehensive training in listening assessment (Gamboa-Mena & Sevilla-Morales, 2015; Giraldo et al., 2023; Giraldo, 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Giraldo & Murcia, 2018, 2019). Enhancing listening test design practices can be achieved through targeted teacher training, subsequently ameliorating assessment quality. Therefore, it is the institution's imperative to contemplate providing training in listening assessment methods for its teaching faculty.

This study augments the meager corpus of empirical insights regarding listening assessment within the Colombian context. It extends a contextual comprehension of listening and its assessment within the EFL classroom, affording teachers and institutions the capacity to make judicious decisions, adaptations, or proposals harmonious with learners' unique characteristics and exigencies within the prescribed curriculum.

The findings of this study, originating from a specific private language institution in Colombia during the period spanning 2017 to 2019, should be cautiously interpreted within this localized context. While they yield valuable insights into listening assessment practices, the results may differ from the diverse approaches adopted by other institutions or changes that may have occurred since the study's timeframe. Additionally, this study principally relies on quantitative data, with a limited exploration of the nuanced perspectives of both teachers and learners. Consequently, future qualitative research may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate challenges and potential opportunities inherent in listening instruction and assessment practices.

Subsequent research could further expand the scope of this study by undertaking comparative analyses encompassing multiple language institutions across Colombia. Such comparative investigations might reveal commonalities, distinctions, and best practices in listening assessment within the broader Colombian EFL landscape. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking students' linguistic progression, specifically emphasizing their listening skills, could offer insights into the enduring impact of varied instructional approaches and assessment methodologies. Additionally, research exploring the efficacy of teacher training programs, particularly those that bolster assessment literacy and refine listening instruction,

could shed light on how such training influences classroom practices and, in turn, student outcomes within this EFL context.

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Appendix A
Checklist: Type of knowledge in CCTP

Types of Knowledge	Specific Attributes	TEST 3 Pt 1	TEST 3 Pt 2	TEST 4	TEST 6	TEST 8 Pt 1	TEST 8 Pt 2	TEST 11 Pt 1	TEST 11 Pt 2	Exam Pt 1	Exam Pt 2
Phonological	Recognition of phonemes and phonemic clusters										
	Knowledge of allophonic variations in fast speech	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Knowledge of prosody, intonation, and stress										
	Spoken recognition of words and lexical phrases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lexical	Recognition of basic word forms										
	Knowledge of the meaning of words										
	knowing of lexical relationships, collocations,										
	Syntactic knowledge (allowable forms of words)										

Types of Knowledge	Specific Attributes	TEST 3 Pt 1	TEST 3 Pt 2	TEST 4	TEST 6	TEST 8 Pt 1	TEST 8 Pt 2	TEST 11 Pt 1	TEST 11 Pt 2	Exam Pt 1	Exam Pt 2
Syntactic	Ability to perform sentence-level parsing (understand basic grammar within pause unit)										
	Ability to perform discourse-level parsing (grammar across pause unit)										
	Recognizing collocations										
	Understanding cohesion markers in discourse				✓						
Pragmatic	Following the flow of given vs. new information									✓	✓
	Inferring speaker intention and motivation										
	Recognizing intertextuality (cultural references)										
	Understanding social and cultural conventions										
	Understanding relationships between interlocutors										

Types of Knowledge	Specific Attributes	TEST 3 Pt 1	TEST 3 Pt 2	TEST 4	TEST 6	TEST 8 Pt 1	TEST 8 Pt 2	TEST 11 Pt 1	TEST 11 Pt 2	Exam Pt 1	Exam Pt 2
General	Content/background knowledge										
	Extra linguistic knowledge (visual context, gestures, facial expressions)										
	Paralinguistic knowledge (prosodic features)										
	Social and pragmatic knowledge										
	Strategic knowledge (social, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies)										

Appendix B
Checklist: Type of knowledge in ETP

Types of Knowledge	Specific Attributes	PET Part 1	PET Part 2	PET Part 3	PET Part 4
Phonological	Recognition of phonemes and phonemic clusters				
	Knowledge of allophonic variations in fast speech				
	Knowledge of prosody, intonation, and stress				
	Spoken recognition of words and lexical phrases			✓	
Lexical	Recognition of basic word forms	✓	✓	✓	
	Knowledge of the meaning of words				
	knowing of lexical relationships, collocations,				
	Syntactic knowledge (allowable forms of words)				
Syntactic	Ability to perform sentence-level parsing (understand basic grammar within pause unit)				
	Ability to perform discourse-level parsing (grammar across pause unit)				
	Recognizing collocations				
	Understanding cohesion markers in discourse				
Pragmatic	Following the flow of given vs. new information	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Inferring speaker intention and motivation				
	Recognizing intertextuality (cultural references)				
	Understanding social and cultural conventions				
	Understanding relationships between interlocutors				
General	Content/background knowledge				
	Extra linguistic knowledge (visual context, gestures, facial expressions)	✓			
	Paralinguistic knowledge (prosodic features)				
	Social and pragmatic knowledge				
	Strategic knowledge (social, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies)				

Appendix C
Checklist: Forms of Assessment in CCTP

Type of test	Type of Task	TEST 3 Pt 1	TEST 3 Pt 2	TEST 4	TEST 6	TEST 8 Pt 1	TEST 8 Pt 2	TEST 11 Pt 1	TEST 11 Pt 2	Exam Pt 1	Exam Pt 2
Discrete Item	Multiple choice questions										
	Open questions									✓	
Task-Based	Closed task involving single response										✓
	Open tasks involving multiple responses										
Integrative	Memory test following or during listening to an extract.										
	Dictation, complete or partial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Communicative	Written communicative tasks involving listening (such as writing a complaint letter after hearing a problem description).										
	Oral tasks involving listening (such as following directions on a map).										
Interview	Face-to-face performances with the teacher or another student										
	Extended oral interviews										

Appendix D
Checklist: Forms of Assessment in ETP

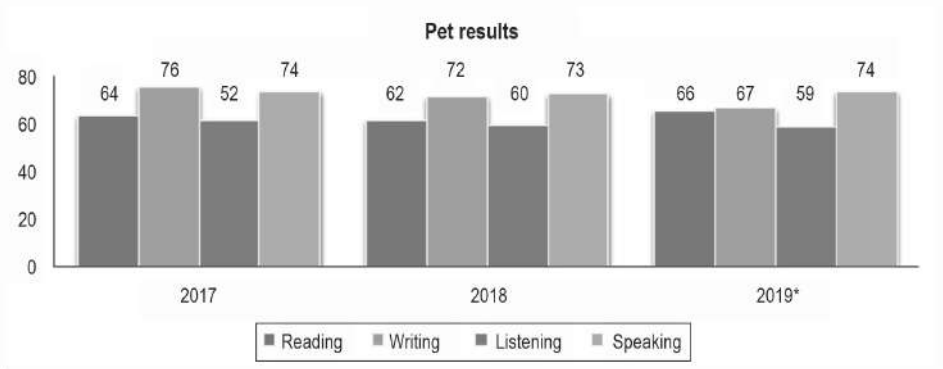
Type of test	Type of Task	PET Part 1	PET Part 2	PET Part 3	PET Part 4
Discrete Item	Multiple choice questions	✓	✓		
	Open questions				✓
Task-Based t	Closed task involving single response			✓	
	Open tasks involving multiple responses				
Integrative	Memory test following or during listening to an extract.				
	Dictation, complete or partial				
Commu-nicative	Written communicative tasks involving listening (such as writing a complaint letter after hearing a description of a problem).				
	Oral tasks involving listening (such as following directions on a map).				
Interview	Face-to-face performances with the teacher or another student				
	Extended oral interviews				

Appendix E
Examples of Can-Do Statements at the B1 level - CEFR

Examples of Can Do statements at Level B1

Typical abilities	Listening and Speaking
Overall general ability	CAN understand straightforward instructions or public announcements. CAN express simple opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way.
Social & Tourist	CAN identify the main topic of a news broadcast on TV if there is a strong visual element. CAN ask for information about accommodation and travel.
Work	CAN follow a simple presentation/demonstration. CAN offer advice to clients within own job area on simple matters.
Study	CAN understand instructions on classes and assignments given by a teacher or lecturer. CAN take part in a seminar or tutorial using simple language.

Appendix F
PET Listening Section Results (2017, 2018, and 2019)



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Factors Contributing to EFL Learners' Construction of Arguments in Culturally Infused Discussions

Factores que Contribuyen a la Construcción de Argumentos de Estudiantes de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL) en Discusiones Culturalmente Infundidas

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Abstract

This study describes the factors that enhanced students' construction of arguments when participating in culturally infused discussions at an undergraduate English as a foreign language British Culture course. The research was conducted at a university in Northwestern Colombia. This paper presents a section of the results of a larger project whose objective is to identify the elements that aid participants in building and elaborating arguments in culturally infused discussions. Socratic questioning was an integral element of the discussions. To attain the purpose of this study, a qualitative single-case design was employed. Findings show that the factors facilitating the construction of arguments could

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potentially be peer scaffolding, previous knowledge, connection to participants' reality, and curiosity and inquiry. This study makes important contributions to the field of critical thinking skills work in English as a foreign language setting, particularly argumentation, as it sheds light on relevant aspects to foster students' collaborative argumentation.

Keywords: argumentation, critical thinking, culture, discussions, Socratic questioning

Resumen

Este estudio describe los factores que enriquecen la construcción de argumentos de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera cuando participan en discusiones sobre cultura en un curso de pregrado de cultura británica. La investigación se realizó en un programa de licenciatura de lenguas extranjeras en una universidad en el noroeste de Colombia. El objetivo es identificar los componentes que ayudaron a los participantes de este estudio a construir y elaborar argumentos en discusiones sobre temas de cultura. Las preguntas socráticas fueron un elemento integral de dichas discusiones. Para lograr este objetivo, se empleó una metodología cualitativa bajo la forma de un estudio de caso. Los hallazgos muestran que los factores que facilitaron la construcción de procesos argumentativos en las discusiones pueden ser el apoyo entre compañeros, el conocimiento previo, la indagación y la conexión con la realidad de los participantes. Este estudio hace contribuciones importantes en el campo de las habilidades de pensamiento crítico en el contexto del aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, en particular, la argumentación ya que explica aspectos relevantes que se deben considerar al momento de fomentar la argumentación colaborativa.

Palabras Clave: argumentación, cultura, discusión, pensamiento crítico, preguntas socráticas

Introduction

The study of critical thinking has become an important aspect of university training. Students, teachers, and workers in general agree that critical thinking is the main purpose of education (Halpern, 2013). It is so important that it is, in fact, a defense against a world of too much information and too many people trying to convince others (Epstein et al., 2006). This study centers on one of the key components of critical thinking: argumentation. Bloom et al. (1957, revised later by Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) proposed a tool to set educational goals that would push students towards critical levels of thinking. Baker et al. (2019) claimed that students who engage in argumentative discussion are more likely to use intellectual and cognitive-linguistic abilities, resulting in a critical reflection and examination of participants' contributions to the interactions.

Argumentation, at the core of critical thinking, does not only require a social-scientific context but also a strong sense of ownership and engagement over the topic of discussion, as contended by Evagorou and Osborne (2013). Nonetheless, there is little exploration of the role that the cultural background of participants plays in supporting engagement with a given topic. Moreover, some traditional classroom practices (e.g., reading for grammatical analysis, writing extensive essays, or doing role-plays) do not foster argumentation as an

inherent part of students' discourse. When such argumentative practices are introduced in the class, students struggle to participate in dialogic, rational argumentation, or even in group discussions (Erduran et al., 2004).

One common strategy that has been used to promote thinking abilities such as argumentation is critical reading using literary texts. Liao (2009) proved that Literary Circles improve university English as a foreign language students' critical thinking skills by using Bloom's Taxonomy. Likewise, Kohzadi et al. (2014) asserted that teaching through literary texts has positive effects on developing critical thinking of EFL learners, attesting to the interrelationship between critical thinking and critical reading of literary texts.

Employing critical reading as a strategy to promote critical thinking abilities is very often mingled with another strategy: an argumentative discussion. It is believed that discussing after reading critically may enhance a stronger basis to develop critical thinking abilities (Helterbran, 2007). Hayes and Devitt (2008) estimated that small groups for discussion are an effective tool for developing critical thinking skills among young students.

These authors have indeed found a strong relationship between critical thinking skills, including the creation of arguments, and Socratic questions. Moreover, other researchers, such as Guo (2013) and Roberge (2018), have claimed that the creation of arguments is linked directly to socio-cultural aspects and cultural symbols. Yet, despite all the work that has been done to figure out the complex Socratic Questions-Argument and Culture-Argument relationship processes in oral discussions, a question remains as to what factors come into play for arguments to emerge. Especially, in situations where EFL students from a public university are asked to build them in an open oral discussion of a British Culture course. Holding debates, discussions, or conversations about any topic is a common strategy used in EFL courses, but there is very little research on how these arguments are constructed and framed within cultural topics of great relevance. To fill this gap, this study aimed to answer the following research question: What factors contribute to EFL students' construction of arguments when participating in culturally infused open discussions?

Theoretical Foundations

Argumentation

Argumentation is the most vital critical thinking skill in Bloom's taxonomy (1956, updated by Anderson & Karthwohl, 2001). Baker et al. (2019) explained that the term "argumentation" stemmed from the Latin word "argumentum". "Argu" alludes to the verb "arguer", meaning to indicate or bring to acknowledge, and "mentum" denotes the techniques that are utilized to put into practice the verb "arguer". Thus, argumentation pertains to "a

means for leading people to acknowledge what you say" (Rigotti & Greco Morasso, 2009, as cited in Baker et al., 2019).

O'Keefe (2003) discussed that the study of argumentation is often focused on two perspectives. One is oral interactions, either a debate or a discussion, in which two or more individuals engage in interchanging arguments. Another is written texts, either in the form of a speech or an opinion on an editorial. However, for argumentation to occur, there is a need for information to support and give meaning to arguments (Besnard & Hunter, 2008). If a person does not have any information, it is unlikely to have arguments, but tautologies. For this paper, argumentation was studied as an object of interaction because the case was researched and explored in oral discussions about culture-driven topics.

From a similar standpoint, Amossy (2009) proposed four elements to bear in mind when analyzing argumentation from a discursive point of view. The first element is called the situation of discourse within its socio-historical components. The situation of discourse comprises two subcomponents: (1) the framework of enunciation, in other words, who speaks to whom, where, and when; and (2) the situation of communication, which includes contextual elements such as the situation of the exchange, the selected media, and the reputation of the speaker. The second element has to do with the genre of discourse with its preplanned framework and limitations. The third element is the dialogical dimension, which is the social dialog that flows at a given moment. The fourth element is called the institutional dimension, which is related to the attitude that the speaker takes in a specific field.

Evagorou and Osborne (2013) explained that engagement and appropriation of information are key factors to construct arguments. Lastly, Baker et al. (2019) talked about collaborative argumentation, referring to the kind of argumentation that is dialogical and pluralistic, and involving different individuals who influence one another to share information. Veerman et al. (2002) confirmed that the participants of the discussion, the questions, the tutor, the instruction, the medium, and the task are circumstantial factors that influence argumentation through collaboration.

Socratic Questioning

Socratic questioning has its roots back in ancient Greece. More specifically, Socrates, from whom the technique derived. He believed that decisive, rational, and well-founded answers could be achievable with the use of the right suitable questions to open the source of knowledge that exists in every human being (Helterbran, 2007).

Socratic questioning can be thought of as a technique that guides students in producing as rational answers as possible when engaged in discussions (Tofade et al., 2013), thus promoting their argumentative skills (Maiorana, 1991; Paul & Binker, 1990). Similarly, Socratic

questioning incites analytical thinking in students' minds with a continuous examination of the subject under discussion by asking thought-provoking questions (Paul & Binker, 1990). As a result, through interactions, Socratic questioning can pave the way for students to elaborate their arguments by exchanging ideas continuously.

Hayes and Devitt (2008) claimed that Socratic questioning has a positive impact on classroom discussions. In addition, Socratic questioning proved beneficial to enhance critical thinking skills, including argumentation in content-based instruction (Burder et al., 2014; Sahamid, 2016). At present, three categories of Socratic questions can be distinguished: spontaneous, exploratory, and focused (Paul & Elder, 2008). According to these authors, spontaneous Socratic discussions go unplanned, and questions emerge depending on participants' answers. The authors continue to explain some spontaneous "*moves*", such as "*asking for evidence for a position*". Also, exploratory questioning aims at exploring participants' values and perspectives regarding a topic. One example of an exploratory question can be "Why do you say that?". Lastly, focused Socratic questions intend to analyze and interpret concepts in depth. Therefore, these questions are carefully pre-planned by the moderator of the discussion. Regardless of the types of Socratic questioning, all three are equally important for this study. The goal of discussions was for students to develop strong arguments and take increasing ownership of their thoughts and argumentation (Helterbran, 2007), and therefore, identify the factors that enhanced them to construct such arguments.

Why Culture?

Culture is "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about the world and attitudes towards life" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Correspondingly, Goetz and Hansen (1974) claimed that anthropologists have limited the term culture to "the learned and shared knowledge that is used to generate behaviors" (p. 1). The study presented in this paper regarded three important topics, such as "The Partnership of Church and State", "The Magna Carta" and "Women's Rights" as symbolic forms of culture in which participants of the study developed their knowledge and attitudes towards life. The most practical way of applying this symbolic knowledge was an open argumentative discussion.

Culture-based knowledge has a direct impact on the production of critical thinking abilities such as argumentation (Guo, 2013). This author claimed that one strategy to do this is by administering small readings about a target culture, in the case of this current study, the British culture, a compulsory course in the participants' undergraduate program. Those readings should include different thinking dispositions so that the reader interprets them and provides arguments about them subjectively. Hence, implementing speaking activities is

necessary after the reading to activate critical thinking. Speaking about the reading, perhaps in a discussion, of the target culture can facilitate the activation of argumentative skills.

As noted above, culture, as the development of knowledge, has strong ties to the construction of arguments as a critical thinking skill. They both go hand in hand because culture provides a context or a setting in which a thinker can construct argumentative attitudes. Roberge (2018) proposed three suitable elements to develop critical thinking skills: social activism, socio-cultural, and pedagogical strategies. Any of these elements might be fundamental for the description of the case study of this paper. Roberge (2018) also suggested that teachers must create a socio-cultural atmosphere to develop critical thinking in the classroom. Culture and culture-related factors constitute the debated aspects that may influence people's thinking capabilities (Manalo et al., 2013). Similarly, other researchers such as Nisbett et al. (2001) have argued that the social, ecological, and cultural differences that affect the way that humans interpret the world require a reevaluation of certain cognitive techniques to develop argumentation as a skill.

Method

This study stems from the interpretive paradigm of research (Boas, 1995; Ryan, 2018; Willis, 2007). Our purpose was not only to describe a qualitative case but to deeply understand and interpret it within its socio-cultural context (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Coherent with interpretivism, this study follows a qualitative approach (Allan, 2020; Creswell, 2007).

Using a qualitative single case study design (Creswell, 2007; Given, 2008; Stake, 1995, 2010; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2003), we inquired into the experiences and perceptions of EFL students in a British Culture course, to unveil the factors that were potentially influencing the way they constructed their arguments to participate in culture-related discussions.

Participants

The participants of the study were purposefully selected from a group of students in a Foreign Languages undergraduate program at a public university in the northwestern part of Colombia. Participants were recruited through the British Culture course. All students were fluent in English (B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference). The course was taught by one of the researchers of this study.

All forty-two students who took part in the course participated in the discussions. The case used for collecting relevant data for analysis was built with 10 participants, who volunteered to participate in the interviews and who participated in all three discussions. These participants were assigned a number according to the order of the course list.

The researchers made sure that ethics was a major priority throughout the study. Thus, an informed consent form was required for each participant before participating in the study. All participants were over the age of 18 and none of them displayed any type of mental impairment. Also, no risk or threat to human subjects in this study took place. The confidentiality of all participants' information was respected, and none of their names were used in this paper. The data collected were only used for this research and all recorded materials were kept on Google Drive and will be deleted within a frame of three years to minimize any future risks related to confidentiality.

Data Collection

The main source for data collection was the discussions per se and semi-structured interviews. These two techniques were conducted to capture the essence of participants' experience after each culturally infused discussion, and henceforth, to comprehend and analyze the way they internalized the construction of their arguments while participating in a discussion.

The discussions began with Socratic questions about the cultural topics, very often containing traits from all three types of Socratic questioning. The choice of these genres of questions was grounded in the fact that they stimulated participants' minds into analyzing and reflecting on the topics of discussions in a continuous manner (Hayes & Devitt, 2008; Paul, 1993; Paul & Binker, 1990; Tofade et al., 2013).

Semi-structured interviews had different moments. First, they commenced with pre-designed questions to collect in-depth insights on the factors that aided participants in creating their argumentative contributions to the discussions. Then, some pre-designed open-ended questions continued about the participants' feelings during the discussion. They aimed to know whether some feelings such as anxiety or fear became obstacles for them to produce arguments. Lastly, semi-structured interviews continued by getting the participants' general perceptions of the exercise. It was pivotal to perceive whether the discussions were nurturing the most vital of Bloom's critical thinking skills, which is argumentation.

As suggested by Evagorou and Osborne (2013) and Besnar and Hunter (2008), the exercise of argumentation inherently needs a source of information. In consequence, the participants were first assigned short reading extracts on three cultural topics from the course syllabus: "The Partnership of the Roman Church and the English State", "The Magna Carta" and "The Rights of Women in British History". Such readings were taken from the book "An Illustrated History of Britain" (McDowall, 1989).

Throughout the discussions, all types of Socratic questions were asked (Paul & Elder, 2008). Focused Socratic questions were asked such as "What generalizations can you make about this issue?", "What is an example of …?", "What are the strengths and weaknesses of …?", and "Why are we having this discussion today?". However, some spontaneous or unplanned questions, such as "Why are you saying that?", emerged from the discussion as the participants kept on intervening. Likewise, in some cases, spontaneous moves took place; for instance, when the participants illustrated their point or made it clearer. Finally, exploratory questions like "Can you deepen what you said?" or "Why do you say that?" occurred throughout the three stages. This exercise was done to encourage argumentation through the discussions.

After each discussion, the participants were interviewed in a private online room. Semi-structured interviews were used. Some questions were asked to certain participants and not to others. For example, some pre-structured questions, such as "How did you manage to construct your arguments to take part in the discussion?", "How did you feel during the discussion?", and "Do you think it was a good exercise? Why?" were used to know how the participants managed to construct their arguments to participate in the culturally infused discussions or to know how they felt during the exercise, or pinpoint participants' perceptions on the activity. Not all the participants were asked why their intervention was so short or too general. The latter was a question that came up according to the participant's previous answer to a structured question since not all contributions and discussions were alike.

Data Analysis

Data from the three semi-structured interviews were analyzed following a holistic analysis to report the themes of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The analysis, informed by thematic coding (Gibbs, 2007), unfolded in three different steps: (1) preparation of raw data files, (2) close reading of data, and (3) creation of themes. First, transcripts of the interviews were written and uploaded to a cloud for continuous analysis as suggested by Yin (2003). As each interview was transcribed and coded manually, at each level and step of the analysis, a constant comparison was used to distill the data further until coherent themes emerged from the participants' testimonies.

Texts from semi-structured interviews were divided into meaning units that were condensed and subsequently coded. The themes were interpreted and compared for differences and similarities, and finally, sorted into tentative themes of the case. Through a process of reflection, discussion, and systematization of findings between the researchers, the list of themes was reduced to pick the most relevant. The four most salient themes were formulated to unify the content of the case.

Findings

The coding of themes allowed us, as the researchers, to get a glimpse into the factors that aided participants in building their arguments for the discussions. The interviews were analyzed holistically, allowing a general description of the case. Four distinctive themes could be identified as potential factors that contribute to the participants' construction of arguments: peer scaffolding, previous knowledge, curiosity and inquiry, and connection to the participant's reality.

Peer Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a concept associated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978, as cited in Tudge, 1992) which is described as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86, as cited in Tudge, 1992). That is why, teacher-student scaffolding is necessary, but student-student scaffolding can be even more powerful, too. Peer scaffolding usually occurs in social interactions in which a community builds knowledge together. One example of the latter can be a class discussion. Most of the participants shed light on peer scaffolding when asked how they constructed their arguments about the topics to participate in the discussions. Besnar and Hunter (2008) asserted that argumentation needs information. In other words, argumentation needs an input source, which can come from peers. Likewise, this theme reinforces Baker's et al. (2019) "collaborative argumentative" notion given that participants influenced one another's arguments by exchanging ideas.

In the three interviews, the participants notably seized the nature of what peer scaffolding stands for. For example, one participant shared his thoughts on how his peers aided him in building his arguments. He affirmed that he constructed a "bigger" argument thanks to the contribution of another peer:

> … *I had the opportunity to construct something more... Something bigger than the idea that I had at the beginning through the interventions that my friends did. So, yes, I had that opportunity to take some parts of them (sic) ideas.* (Int_P5, November 2021).

Another participant shared a similar point of view, but provided more details as to how he constructed his arguments to engage in the discussion through peer scaffolding:

> *Knowing people's* [their classmates'] *decisions might actually help to rebuild your ideas, to connect them, even to include them in your repertory (sic).* (Int_P8, November 2021)

Then, after being asked what he had done to build his arguments to take part in the discussion, the same participant claimed that he had used his peers' previous interventions to develop an argument of his own.

> *That's what I did in the few interventions that I made. I… I kind of used you guys [giggles] to complement my arguments because I was really good… good. I really needed to get to know what you were thinking and also bring complement for (sic) the development and my performance in the discussion. So, I think that that would be it.* (Int_P8, November 2021)

When asked about how he felt during the first discussion, another participant said it was a good experience provided that not only did he learn from his peers, but also, he had expanded his knowledge. As the participant highlighted, being exposed to activities like discussions, the flow of information that comes from different perspectives may increase one individual's knowledge. Once knowledge is available and accessible, argumentation occurs.

> *In my case, I learned a lot. You know, hearing several points of view from different people is kind of enriching. You can ... you have like ... a magnificent lens (sic) [=magnifying glass] that allows to maximize (sic) the knowledge you acquire.* (Int_P29, November 2021)

Almost identically, when asked how another participant constructed her ability to argue critically about the Magna Carta, she described how other classmates' comments were a base for her to construct valid genuine arguments.

> *I tried to read and to know what people said about it and then I constructed my argument based on other people's comments.* (Int_P5, November 2021)

An additional contribution was the importance of listening to the other classmates to avoid repetitive arguments on the same topic. These participants provided deeper ideas about peer scaffolding being a fundamental factor for building an argument; asserting that contrasting previous peer information was key for them to come up with new arguments on the Magna Carta.

> *I think that every time that I tried to participate by saying something new or something that others didn't say, I took a point that no one had talked about. I say it because I listened to my classmates, and they didn't talk about it. Thus, I decided to talk about it.* (Int_P8, November 2021).

> *Sometimes I want to say a point of view, but somebody said that, so I have to (sic) rethink what I have to say and... for me, it was a good exercise also because it's a good process.* (Int_P9, November 2021)

Finally, as soon as the third discussion on "Women's Rights" concluded, a few participants still highlighted the notion of how peers' interventions impacted them meaningfully. Naturally, such importance resulted in the main source of inspiration to make their contributions to the discussion. One participant declared that there is a constant exchange of ideas among classmates in the course. This drill provided enough ground for this participant to put the arguments in order and, subsequently, contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

When asked whether discussing the partnership of Church and State, the Magna Carta and Women's Rights helped him argue critically, another participant provided sufficient understanding as to how peer scaffolding behaves in his mind and how it helps to improve

one's critical argumentation. Thus, the idea highlighted by all these participants supports the notion that other peer's arguments are the most accessible information to create new ideas, leading peer scaffolding to have a great influence on the participants' thinking.

> *These discussions provide (sic) me with things that I can't find in other place (sic). It's not like a videoconference; in this case, our discussions were special because, well, it's the most accessible information I can get. They have a lot of influence on my thinking. I'll try to get better to ... improve my critical thinking.* (Int_P29, January 2022)

Another participant pointed out that diversity of thinking, ideas, and arguments help to complement one's thinking and learning. In simpler words, the participant asserted that reading information to prepare arguments about the cultural topic did not suit her best, as a result, learning together as a community aided to correlate with one another.

> *It is good because, maybe, there are people who don't read a lot about this or are not very into that, but we can learn together. We can notice that, as there are, like, diverse thinking and interests because there are many readers or students who read about different things and these readings complement each other.* (Int_P32, January 2022)

Later, the same participant added that active peer listening strengthens the diversity of thought to make an argumentative point of discussion stronger.

> *I think that while listening to my other partners, I could realize that there were more things to add that could make my point stronger and other premises that I didn't have (sic) into account at the moment of studying the subject or being critical. It is stronger.* (Int_P32, January 2022)

Previous Knowledge

Previous knowledge comprises the activation of students' memory of what they have comprehended about a topic and their understanding of it. Therefore, prior knowledge plays a pivotal role in influencing students' scientific argumentation (Liu et al., 2019). Yet, very little is known as to how it facilitates the enhancement of argumentation through culture-based discussions. Paul and Binker (1990) contended that Socratic questioning promotes analytical thinking by posing thought-provoking questions. Perhaps, the art of asking these sorts of questions opened a cognitive filter within the participants' minds that allowed them to retrieve past information and transform it into arguments. Previous knowledge is a broad term with many connotations, but it has its roots in diverse philosophical tenets and learning theories, such as postmodernism and constructivism. Some characteristics of these theories were found throughout the data analysis. For instance, the perception of a socially evolving world, dealing with postmodernism (Mirchandani, 2005), and the formation of an individual's understanding of the world based on past experiences as suggested by the constructivist theory (Jia, 2010).

When asked about his feelings after the first discussion, one participant claimed that he appropriated the topic under discussion very easily. By stressing that he likes to talk about political-religious issues, the participant related to the topic of discussion as his field. By making such claims, the participant has had enough experience talking about the topic. Therefore, she used her reservoir of knowledge to have a basis to support her ideas. Then, she proceeded to construct her arguments and get involved in the conversation.

> *It was very enlightening. I like [it] when I ponder because I mean, in these kinds of topics like history and religion, and the government, I feel like it's my field.* (Int_P12, November 2021)

Another participant affirmed that she employed an experience to construct her argument in the second discussion. As the Magna Carta allowed more people to own private property, the participant remembered watching on the news that the notion of private property in China was not fully respected. Therefore, her argument on the topic was grounded on previous information that she connected with the topic.

> *I think that not at the moment, but the topic makes you reflect on the society, so it gives you a lot of information that maybe you know and you're connecting everything, so maybe we can construct something, but if we have a previous basis.* (Int_P5, November 2021)

Another participant shared his thoughts about the Magna Carta, stating that as it is an international symbol, it has become "common knowledge" to talk about it. Put another way, this participant had solid previous input about the Magna Carta to the point that he labeled it as "the law of laws".

> *For me, it was kind of the same, but Magna Carta, I think, it was easier than the other (discussions) because we have certain knowledge about it, since Manga Carta is in the whole world, so it is the law of laws. It's like the root that built the constitution of every country.* (Int_P17, November 2021)

As for the participants' previous knowledge about Women's Rights, Participant 12 said it has been a topic they had already discussed several times. Consequently, this participant had enough input from previous experiences to elaborate arguments and partake in the discussion.

Likewise, another participant asserted that he constantly reads articles related to women's rights and that feminism is a common topic and a trend everyone knows of. The fact that some participants relate to some topics as "common" means that, for them, the acquired knowledge about such topics has become part of general culture, general knowledge. So, these general notions somehow activate their reservoir of knowledge to provide grounded arguments and engage in the conversation.

> *I mean, I had some knowledge about Magna Carta because I really love watching documentaries, in (sic) TV or YouTube videos. For women's rights, I always read articles related to women... feminism... topics related ... because I think ... not only because they are the trend nowadays, but because, generally, those things impact the way I behave in relation to women [...] It's a common topic.* (Int_P29, January 2022)

Connection to Participant's Reality

Chall (1947) argues that one important factor of critical reading is the emphasis readers put on past experiences. In other words, the more a reader experiences events in their life, the more the reader will be able to understand a given written material. The participants' perceptions may shed light on this theory. For instance, one participant asserted that reading the material and comparing its content to reality was a foundation for him to create critical arguments.

Also, Roberge (2018) proposed social activism as a fundamental element to develop critical thinking skills. In this case, social activism, for instance, feminism, can be looked up as part of the participants' reality because it shaped and nurtured their reservoir of knowledge with which they were able to come up with well-constructed arguments. When discussing, for instance, Participant 12 claimed that although the discussion took place in the British Culture course, the topics went beyond Britain and applied to their context. Thus, relating the topic of discussion to the participants' reality became a source of inspiration to elaborate argumentative ideas and participate in the discussion.

> *I read the material, the document, the book, and I kind of adjust to a little bit of (sic) the situation. I like to compare things that happen in the present time and try to match them. So that's kind of - like - I always do with my arguments.* (Int_P12, November 2021)

Moreover, Participant 9 confessed that the way she reads is always directed to putting the reading into perspective. She was very methodic when it came to constructing her argument. From a linguistic point of view, she organized her arguments so that they would respect her positions vis-a-vis the Magna Carta. Bringing up her context or reality undoubtedly aided her in coming up with sufficient arguments to intervene.

> *Well, when I read, I try to put that kind of things (sic) into the real life. So, I did a list of things that Magna Carta has (sic) similarities to these days, so I took those to make my intervention.* (Int_P9, November 2021)

In addition, another participant highlighted the idea of personal context regarded as her reality to create solid arguments to participate in the discussions.

> *Always we speak about women's rights, I ask myself questions about the... the place we're living in, the social background … I think it helps me to construct my answer.* (Int_P12, January 2022)

This participant's reality also contributes to the construction of arguments when the topics are closely related to the class's interest and engagement in social activism or change. The third discussion (Women's Rights) was mainly the scenario where several participants confessed their involvement in feminism. So, when requested to ponder on the quality of her arguments, another participant insisted she was a convinced feminist. This is supported by Participant 18's constant comments in the discussion considering herself a feminist philosopher who likes to talk to little girls and boys about feminism as social work. This inspired her to "have a lot of things to say":

As a feminist, I have a lot of things to say that I have my mind going like this (snaps her fingers) in that discussion. (Int_P18, January 2022)

When inquired further about her involvement in feminism and the potential connection between her social and political engagement and the construction of her critical argumentation, she said:

I think that my perspective like (...) because I know that there are many branches of feminism and I've navigated a lot of them so… like… I have my own feminism myself - like a different perspective of things. (Int_P18, January 2022)

A similar case was spotted while interviewing another participant when he confessed to being a feminist himself, and feminism was the primary source to produce critical ideas during the discussion. He attested that he always ponders on it.

Curiosity and Inquiry

For some participants, inquiry and a curious state of mind were a solid base to produce critical ideas regarding the topic in discussion. They also reiterated that "going beyond" the cultural topic was imperative to create arguments to participate in the discussions. Saying something "worthy" and "meaningful" was pivotal given that discussions were sometimes seen as an arena where the best argument won.

In the first discussion, in particular, various participants highlighted the idea of investigating beforehand to have solid arguments and be fully prepared to get involved in the discussion. One participant added that inquiry was just primordial before the discussion to have substantial arguments to join in the conversation. Inquiring seems to provide a strong basis for the participants to come up with different arguments, and then, they select the most important argument to express in the discussion.

I also investigate more on the internet because to me, it is really important to have good arguments and write it (sic) because I want to keep my best point of view, because I know that many of my partners have really good points of view and sometimes, we can't ... don't have some words for some opinions but I really enjoyed this exercise. (Int_P9, November 2021)

Similarly, in the second discussion, some traces of this theme were found. Another participant, peculiarly, said that she researched the Magna Carta, and based on the research, she was able to predict the type of question that was going to be discussed.

Well, I first searched about Magna Carta, so I had the context. It was something very concise because I had to read many sources and I found new information in the reading that you assigned us; and after that, I tried to ask myself the questions that could appear in the discussion, like about the reasons and history of Magna Carta today. (Int_P18, November 2021)

Another participant confessed that she knew little about the topic; therefore, she did some extra research to get her arguments prepared to be expressed.

> *Of course, because that was like a useful part of the information to participate in the discussion, but besides that, I researched more about it online and that made it easier for me to answer the questions.* (Int_P3, November 2021)

Like the previous participant, one more also described a similar experience. She explained that she was disciplined when she prepared her ideas by inquiring on the internet, combining it with some peer scaffolding.

> *At (sic) the beginning, I tried to read about it in (sic) the internet. So, by reading, I created the arguments ...* (Int_P5, November 2021)

Another participant shed light on researching as much as he could to give his best and impress, given the academic and peer pressure he felt. Inquiry became a motivation for this participant because he wanted to show off his argumentative skills before his classmates. Thus, to build arguments, he devoted himself to researching many details about the Magna Carta to have sufficient ground to talk about.

> *Well, first of all, I had a basis on the last things. I actually searched on details and some dates and the causes and the consequences of Magna Carta and I built that with some arguments that I searched before [...] I considered that I needed to search more because I wanted to show more knowledge than my classmates.* (Int_P17, November 2021)

Another participant said that inquiry comes naturally to him and that could explain his good performance during the discussions. According to the participant, his arguments emerged from an instinctive curiosity that motivated him to research on his own. Not only did he research for academic purposes, but also out of curiosity for personal growth. Consequently, when the participant is exposed to inquiry, he feels prepared to tackle any issue argumentatively.

> *Naturally, when it comes to the class, I was prepared. I always have an interest in investigating those topics, it doesn't matter if it's for the class, it's for my own private study because I want to learn more about religion and social matters. It comes naturally to me.* (Int_P29, November 2021)

Discussion

The factors that potentially contributed to the success of EFL students in a British Culture course in the construction of arguments could be explored through a single case study. Findings suggest that four main factors are at play: (a) peer scaffolding, (b) previous knowledge, (c) connection to participants' reality, and (d) curiosity and inquiry.

Most participants referenced getting other participants' interventions, also known as peer scaffolding, as the key basis for producing valuable arguments and then participating in the discussions. Underlying some of these statements was pivotal for the participants to construct critical arguments and interpretations, even when they were not ready to participate or were not quite acquainted with the cultural topic.

Peer scaffolding played a vital role in developing the cognitive processes comprised in Bloom's Taxonomy (1956, updated by Anderson & Karthwohl, 2001). Similarly, Veermen et al. (2002) categorized the "student and the peer" as two inseparable factors in collaborative argumentation. Our findings reinforce the notion that peer interaction has an impact on the elaboration of arguments in culturally infused discussions. Even when peers share the same ideas on the same topics, they can refine arguments to create new ones. Evagorou and Osborne (2013) also highlighted the notion of the need for a source of information to support or give meaning to arguments. In this case, the source of information came in the form of another peer's interventions.

Having some prior knowledge vis-a-vis the culture topic under discussion was foundational to creating arguments about the topic per se. Our findings highlight that prior notions of topics represent a strategy employed during discussions to put into practice abilities such as argumentation. The idea is that previous experiences become previous knowledge that condenses into students' reservoirs of knowledge. Then, when the time comes to let that knowledge flourish, they use it as a strategy to construct arguments.

The scholarly literature on the field weighs the importance of previous knowledge as a key factor in the promotion of critical abilities, especially when it occurs in culture courses. Thurman (2009) believed that critical thinking skills involve identification and analysis of the sources of information to attain credibility, indicating previous knowledge, making connections, and, as a result, deducing conclusions. The participants in this study agreed that they analyzed every piece of information in the form of a YouTube video, article, or online forum. So, these sources became the most convenient and credible chunk of information, complementing and reinforcing what participants already knew about the topics of the discussions.

Students' personal lives and social or political engagement played a key part in their development of arguments as well. Some participants asserted that the way they read and construct arguments is always directed at putting the discussion into perspective or into "real life". Personal experiences such as being a social actor might potentially put into context students' thinking abilities, subsequently, bringing about well-structured arguments to discuss culture. As shown, some participants did confirm that they developed their knowledge and widened their attitudes towards life through the cultural topics, which, in part, are symbolic forms of culture, respecting Geertz's (1973) definition of culture.

Students' reality means context. As presented, the participants' insights coincide with Lipman's (2006, as cited in Roberge, 2018) idea of sensible context being necessary for argument development. He affirmed that individuals use thinking processes in a given context to help them discern the information they receive. Some participants alluded to this idea by claiming that they often brought about the discussion of the situations that they are living in today. The cultural issues we discussed in the course date back to previous centuries. Hence, the fact that the participants confessed that they were able to relate it to today's reality was a major finding of this study. Nisbett et al. (2001) claimed that the ecological, social, and cultural way that humans interpret the world requires a constant reevaluation of cognitive techniques. In this case, it could be added that personal experiences and the socio-cultural context of the participants in which they occurred indeed played a distinctive role in inspiring them to build arguments and take a stance on the discussion.

Some participants of this study thought of themselves as social actors and activists whose desire is to educate others to accomplish a better society. In other words, their engagement in current cultural issues of tremendous relevance, feminism, and politics in particular, became a source of inspiration to construct critical arguments for today's society. In this sense, Roberge (2018) asserted that three suitable elements could be used to develop critical literary skills: activism, socio-cultural climate, and pedagogical strategies. As explained by some participants, their social engagement and political views became a compass that helped them "navigate" through the discussed matters.

Finally, comparing and contrasting abilities as well as problem-solving skills are indispensable for inquiry. These types of exercises develop cognitive skills that activate argumentation dispositions (Lampert, 2006). As one participant pointed out, the students of the course very often engaged in thorough research about the cultural subject matter. That means they may have engaged in conversations about the topic before the discussion to share "*different points of the information"*, "*investigate more*", and "*know more about the topic"*.

Conclusions

The objective of this qualitative case study was to take a deeper look into the factors that enabled participants to build arguments in culture-driven discussion in an EFL British culture course. Findings suggest that peer scaffolding, prior knowledge, connection to participants' reality, and curiosity and inquiry are indispensable elements when creating arguments to take part in discussions about culture.

The findings of this qualitative case study can inform the context of argumentative skills development in university settings. It is no secret that enhancing EFL students' thinking and argumentative skills is a pressing need in the Colombian context. Culturally infused

discussions have been demonstrated to be rich sites where collaborative argumentation can grow when students can use their prior knowledge, enrich their thinking with their peers, and make clear and relevant connections to their realities.

Further inquiry into students' development of arguments could investigate the role of metacognition, as this was a theme that had some presence in the data but could not be investigated in-depth in this study.

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Pedagogies of Well-being: A Narrative Perspective to Explore Two English Student-Teachers' Experiences

Pedagogías del Bienestar: Una Perspectiva Narrativa para Explorar las Experiencias de Dos Estudiantes-Profesores de Inglés

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Abstract

This article reports on a series of narrative events extracted from an action research methodology that explores teaching practices and pedagogical experiences to foster well-being in English language student-teachers. Although the study adopted an action research methodology, it does not account for the implementation of the pedagogical process per se. Instead, it resorts to its stages (i.e., planning, reflecting, and acting) to situate the narrative events regarding well-being. The study was conducted in a public university in Bogotá, Colombia, exploring the experiences of two student-teachers at the practicum stage. The purpose was to document narrative events concerning teaching practices and pedagogical experiences implemented to foster well-being. These experiences reveal that student-teachers engage in thought-affective pedagogies or pedagogies of well-being that coexist with traditional language pedagogy, although they are not cognitive-oriented pedagogies. Interestingly, student-teachers could engage in more human pedagogical practice to see the other not as a learning object but as someone who feels and requires attention and care.

Keywords: action research, identity, narrative, pedagogical practicum, teacher education, well-being

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Resumen

Este artículo presenta una serie de eventos narrativos extraídos de un estudio de investigación-acción que busca explorar prácticas docentes y experiencias pedagógicas para fomentar el bienestar. Aunque el estudio adoptó un modelo de investigación-acción, no da cuenta de la implementación del proceso pedagógico per se. En cambio, recurre a sus etapas (i.e., planificar, reflexionar y actuar) para situar los acontecimientos narrativos en torno al bienestar. El estudio se realizó en una universidad pública de Bogotá, Colombia, explorando las experiencias de dos docentes en formación. El objetivo fue documentar hechos narrativos sobre prácticas docentes y experiencias pedagógicas implementadas para promover el bienestar. Estas experiencias revelan que los docentes en formación se involucran en pedagogías pensamiento-afectivas o pedagogías del bienestar que coexisten con la pedagogía del lenguaje tradicional, aunque no son pedagogías de orientación cognitiva. Curiosamente, los docentes en formación lograron participar en una práctica pedagógica más humana para ver al otro no como un objeto de aprendizaje sino como alguien que siente y requiere atención y cuidado.

Palabras clave: investigación-acción, identidad, narrativa, práctica pedagógica, formación docente, bienestar

Introduction

Teacher well-being is an engaging analytical category in teaching nowadays. Although English language teaching in Colombia has mainly addressed cognitive and procedural aspects of instruction (Fandiño-Parra et al., 2016), there has been an upsurging interest in educating teachers and students from emotional and personal perspectives (Turner & Thielking, 2019). Notions such as anxiety, a psychological construct (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020), or emotions (Arizmendi-Tejeda et al., 2016) are now more visible due to evident discrepancies concerning the central disciplinary tenets imposed on teacher education programs (Granados-Beltrán, 2018) that do not fully encapsulate the human condition inherent in education.

English language teaching seems to be oriented toward learning and professional development (Golombek & Johnson, 2019; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). However, this proposal adheres to a broader perspective in which teaching is far from "decontextualized [disembodied] forms of being in the field of teaching" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 18) and encompasses the socio-emotional and affective aspects of teaching (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). This perspective, I believe, is critical of the dominant way of existing as an English teacher (Ubaque-Casallas, 2021a). In such a position, this proposal interweaves discourses in which "the goal of the language teacher is to help students and individuals become efficient, creative and critical users" (Fandiño-Parra, 2017, p. 122) and opens a conversation with a different architecture to educate from the notion of well-being.

Emotions in professional literature are neglected. For Richards (2020), it is due to the fact they "were often typically regarded as soft and unobservable in comparison to the hard quantifiable and rational facts about second language learning and teaching" (p. 445).

However, emotions carry the meaning of identity (Michalinos, 2003). Therefore, since this study accounts for the narrated experience of two student-teachers implementing an emotional-oriented curriculum[2] at a private bi-national institution in Bogotá, Colombia, this study documents narrative events concerning teaching practices and pedagogical experiences implemented to foster well-being.

Lastly, this study aims to contribute to shifting the geography of reason by re-signifying well-being. Although the ELT field has witnessed how teacher education has been thought to be outside the being (i.e., student-teachers' subjectivities), I choose to divest myself from the notion of well-being as a path for development and its rational orientation (e.g., Mercer & Gregersen, 2020), to rather explore possibilities of sensing and emotioning in and through pedagogies.

Theoretical Foundations

Teaching Practicum

The teaching practicum (TP) is an opportunity for student-teachers to develop disciplinary self-efficacy (see, Lucero & Cortés-Ibañez, 2021; Martins et al., 2015). This view has permeated initial teacher Education programs worldwide to the extent that TP has been thought to be the space in which student-teachers learn to be language teachers (Freeman, 2002). Nevertheless, such a perspective has been criticized as it is limited to applying procedural knowledge acquired in teacher education programs (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018). Therefore, since the TP comprises several processes of constructing professional teaching knowledge (Fuentes-Abeledo et al., 2020; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018), it must be explored deeply to comprehend those other forms of knowledge student-teachers create, co-create, and engage in.

Although I agree with the fact that the TP experience is critical in the development of teacher identity (see below) and disciplinary competency (Burns & Danyluk, 2017), it requires deeper analysis and documentation if we consider that there is a myriad of epistemologies (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020) that are mobilized in it. To this respect, I do not regard the TP from the traditional lens in which an experienced mentor directs and shares their knowledge with a novice and inexperienced student-teacher (Valle et al., 2022, p. 64). Instead, I think of it as a space in which student-teachers create ruptures (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) to delink (Mignolo, 2007) from instrumental and procedural principles that limit the construction of knowledges *Other* (Castañeda-Londoño, 2019).

[2] An emotional-oriented curriculum is a gateway to learning and teaching. It builds on and from SEL to open space for the development of healthy identities, management of emotions, and supportive relationships.

English Language Teachers' Identities

It is not easy to define what identity is or what it may be. Although there is no clear definition, identity has been described in various contexts. Among some, in teacher education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), from psychological or sociological viewpoints concerning the notion of self-awareness (Kreber, 2010), in the English language teaching field (Salinas & Ayala, 2018), and many others. However, to narrow my comprehension of the term, I echo Barkhuizen (2017), who states that language teacher identities (LTIs) are "cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical […] LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying" (p. 4). In his view, LTIs are deeply emotional as these are also perceived from the inside and the outside of the self.

LTIs encapsulate the emotional dimension. They carry teachers' subjectivity (i.e., sensing and emotioning). Hence there must be a variety of emotional episodes that modify and filter the teaching and learning process. For instance, teachers are expected to display emotions in particular ways (Zembylas, 2005). Among some, Agbaria (2021) claims that teachers are expected to show emotional intelligence (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills); this seems to help develop good classroom management skills. A similar claim is presented by Valente et al. (2019) who link emotional intelligence to discipline management. Being this the panorama, teaching practices are thought to be also defined by emotional expectations. Nevertheless, I do not regard emotions as a mechanism to improve teaching and learning (as it is the perspective of the scholars above). I understand them as inherent to the human condition. They are lived in, and through the body and influence, one's doing and thinking. They are important to foster learning, but they are pivotal to helping student-teachers and learners to exist and re-exist.

English Language Pedagogy

English language pedagogy (ELP) is a colonial construct. Traditionally, ELP has been mainly informed by top-down perspectives that regard teaching a language from procedural and instrumental levels. This perspective portrays ELP as nested in Neoliberalist discourses (Veliz & Veliz-Campos, 2019). It cannot be denied that teaching practices, procedures, and methodologies (e.g., Task-Based Learning, Flipped Learning) reflect ideologies that contain subalternizing perspectives (Pennycook 1999). These separate the subjects from their bodies and their geographical location (see Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2021), forcing English language teachers to be mere consumers of a monothilic view of theoretical knowledge about teaching in which ELT is a product and result of colonialism (Pennycook, 2002).

Although I agree with the perspective above, I cannot deny that ELP has also engaged in practices that dislocate the colonial roots (Aguirre-Garzón et al., 2022; Ubaque-Casallas,

2021b). This has implied a significant shift from procedural and cognitive orientations to a more inclusive pedagogical approach in which other dimensions such as emotions, mindset, and well-being have been incorporated (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020) to debunk the colonial histories imposed on English instruction (Motha, 2006). Being this said, ELP becomes a mechanism to explore personal approaches to well-being and a path to explore the increasing neoliberal discourses about teaching. This means that ELP is not regarded from its procedural and instrumental dimensions but from the possibility of rewriting identities regarding well-being.

Socio-Emotional Learning and Well-being

Cognitive and socio-emotional processes in learning and teaching are interwoven (Isohätälä & Järvelä, 2020). The traditional perspective in teaching English has prioritized procedural knowledge and practices that do not incorporate other non-instrumental approaches. In this study, I understand social and emotional learning (SEL) as **"**the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others, competencies that are essential for all students" (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 234). SEL becomes a vital dimension in inspecting teaching practices and pedagogical experiences.

Since teaching is emotional by nature (Zembylas, 2003), to understand LTIs, it is necessary to think of teachers' emotions and the meaning they allow teachers to make about their teaching practices. From the psychological perspective, emotions are defined as distinguishing between different affective dimensions (Badia Garganté et al., 2014). Quite recently, Arizmendi-Tejeda et al. (2016) reported findings from a study in which they tried to discover whether or not novice English as a foreign language teachers regulate their negative emotions during their initial teaching practice. This study revealed that novice teachers are aware of employing specific emotional strategies to handle negative emotions. Méndez López and Peña Aguilar (2013) conducted a study that reported on the effects of the emotional experiences of Mexican language learners on their motivation to learn English. Importantly, this study found that emotions enhance motivation.

Although the studies above focused on instrumental views of language and learning, it cannot be denied that they are significant as they help bring to the table the importance of emotions in ELT. I then agree that "despite inhering in the nature of teaching practice, teacher emotionality has long been marginalized to cognitive aspects of teacher learning" (Korucu-Kış, 2021, pp. 246-245). Therefore, well-being is in this study about "finding meaning and connection in the world" (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, p. 3); it is a bet to move away from the rational orientation that has influenced language learning and teaching.

Methodology

This study reports on a series of narrative events extracted from an action research methodology (Macintyre, 2000) to explore teaching practices and pedagogical experiences to foster well-being. This study adopts a model of action in which planning, reflecting, and acting are the main stages of any pedagogical intervention. Nevertheless, this study does not account for the implementation of the pedagogical process per se. Instead, it resorts to the stages it consists of to document and situate stories that emerged in implementing this methodology. The purpose was to document teachers' own experiences concerning well-being. These experiences were understood as narrative events that "comprise meaningful happenings, facts, memories, among others, which are relevant for the speaker or writer" (Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016, p. 56).

Narrative events were analyzed then to comprehend pedagogies of well-being. Thus, the content of the events narrated was made accessible through the transcription of the verbatim to be further situated within concrete teaching/learning situations according to the action research stages this study accounts for (i.e., Planning, Reflecting, and Acting). By arranging narrative events into sequences and then grouping them based on their content, the experiences narrated were inspected and explored along with Jane and Michael. I tried to establish a horizontal dialogue to advance toward a more situated comprehension of language pedagogy and well-being.

Context and Contextualization

This study describes the narrated pedagogical experience of two English language student-teachers during their teaching practicum experience. For six months, a regular academic semester, a series of pedagogically oriented activities were analyzed to document teaching practices and pedagogical experiences concerning well-being. These activities took place in a B1-2[3] levels English class. Since the teacher education program where this documentation took place not only fosters the creation of appropriate conditions (i.e., instructional ones) for students to learn on the cognitive dimension but the emotional one as well, lessons where the narrated experiences emerged revolved around developing the language skills of speaking, writing, reading, and listening. However, as pedagogical interventions accounted for an emotional language pedagogy perspective, these skills were oriented to well-being.

[3] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment Companion Volume with New Descriptors (2018).

Participants

This study resorted to the experiences of Jane and Michael, not their real names, two English language student-teachers. They were invited to participate as they were doing their teaching practicum. Not only were they willing to narrate their experiences, but they provided me with the opportunity to analyze their lesson plans and observe some of their lessons. They were close to my interest (Robinson, 2014) in documenting narrative events concerning teaching practices and pedagogical experiences implemented to foster well-being.

Inspection and Collection of Narrative Events

The narrated experiences inspected in this study are embedded in an action research methodology. This approach accounted for a pedagogical intervention by implementing cognitive and socio-emotional tasks. It is worth noting that such intervention addressed both task-focused cognitive tasks in which the content to be learned focused on sharing, elaborating, and processing knowledge (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008) and socio-emotional interactions that dug into positive ways of feeling when performing the learning tasks (Bakhtiar et al., 2017). All interventions had to be planned by following a Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) approach as this was the chosen teaching paradigm the institution offered student-teachers. However, lesson plan sessions and interventions were thought and tailored to be more than a set of disciplinary-based decisions. Arguably, the narrated experiences presented here are in these two dimensions of teaching.

I believe that "there is great value in the integration of research techniques and innovative practices in the classroom experience" (Beard & Booke, 2016, p. 149). Therefore, since action research is also a narrative and not a theory (Inciarte González, 2011), it becomes a path to integrate epistemological and methodological visions of the actors that attempt to understand the subjective essence of the experiences here inspected and that are also narrative in nature. Therefore, the narrative events below are presented up to the action research stage where these were embedded. They intend to get a closer view of student-teachers' teaching practices and pedagogical experiences.

Planning

Lesson planning is critical to knowing how one can best teach (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020). However, this assumption, and for this study, does not only account for procedural knowledge but for the construction of teaching practices to foster well-being. Therefore, I resort to Jane's and Michael's narrations regarding lesson planning to comprehend their pedagogies of well-being. The excerpts below open up space to reflect upon this.

Jane

> Lesson planning was almost a burden. I would not say I liked it. We have a format in which we must use Bloom's taxonomy to set the objectives for all tasks. However, I always feel overwhelmed. I get anxious. I do not know how to make it happen. I know it is essential to guide the learning process, but there are times when it does not consider other things. I mean, one day in my class, a student spat on another. I scolded the boy who did it because I knew it was not okay. That was something that you could not plan a lesson on, but it would be interesting to think of these scenarios. Do not get me wrong, lesson planning is super relevant, but one learns that there is more than just PPP [Presentation, Practice, and Production] - *Jane's narrative* -[*sic*].

For Jane, lesson planning is an activity that causes *discomfort*. Although she acknowledges the importance of sequencing the content, one can see that this tendency reflects "the current educational landscape [that] prioritizes technique through scripted lessons and instructional design" (Trumble, 2021, p. 313). Such a view makes her feel *anxious*. She is aware that several personal endeavors and comprehensions about teaching cannot be instrumentalized. However, Jane refers to a canonic teaching and lesson planning approach: Presentation – Practice – Production. It is a method for teaching structures (e.g., grammar), and it is thought to move from tight teacher control toward learner independence. It has been used to sequence content and provides an "effective" way to teach.

One might think that a disciplinary approach to teaching and planning would entirely benefit a teacher's construction of teaching knowledge. However, as I have explained elsewhere (e.g., Ubaque-Casallas, 2021a, 2021b), methods and approaches lack the ontological dimension. As such, they are significant to learning the technical dimension of teaching, which cannot be denied, but they fail to incorporate the personal and the individual into the planning and teaching-learning process. Jane's *discomfort* makes it evident, especially since there are other scenarios to be considered when teaching and planning.

Michael

> Lesson planning was useful in developing communication. In the beginning, it is not easy to comprehend Bloom's taxonomy and how those many objectives can help you understand your own class. I learned more this semester in my practicum. However, I have to be honest with you teacher, one learns that although planning is important, there are things that influence us. Do you remember the day you observed me? That day I knew that one of my students had tried to commit suicide. Everybody was in shock, and so was I. The class was supposed to be about conditional but I could do nothing. Girls were especially sensitive. What I tried to do, adapting to the situation, was to have them reflect upon this. If you remember, I asked them questions like: how would your parents feel, if you made this decision to end your life? - that might not have been the most academic class, but I think the priority that day was different. I myself vent out my thoughts. I went through that at some point in my life. - *Michael's narrative* -[*sic*].

Michael reflects deeply on his experience. Like Jane, he acknowledges the importance of lesson planning as a path to provide a clear cognitive framework for the content to be taught. Nevertheless, his student's reality intersects with his history as a human being, not as a professional -*I myself vent out my thoughts. I went through that at some point in my life*- Interestingly, from a SEL's perspective, Michael's language pedagogy provided students and himself with the space to manage emotions. Importantly, Michael opened a discursive space for students to communicate their emotions. However, such space did not account for an ideal linguistic repertoire to be used but it fostered the enactment of subjectivities (i.e., being, sensing, emotioning). Michael showed a deep understanding of context, not from an ethnographic point of view but a human one. He displayed "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145).

I think it is pretty important to refer to what Michael mentions about *priorities*. There has been a long tradition concerning how students and teachers learn in English language teaching and teacher education. However, this perspective has accounted for a cognitive-procedural epistemology in which the only *priority* is to comply with theoretical principles through theories and methods (e.g., Richards, 2015). This has made teachers distant from students and themselves as these theoretical foundations lack ontological principles. On the contrary, by venting out his thoughts, Michael brought his voice and attempted to dwell on students' experiences. This action, from a SEL's perspective, positions students' well-being as a more important concern. It is important to mention that although research has concentrated mainly on how high levels of well-being make teachers perform more effectively and creatively (Kunter et al., 2013), Michael's subjectivity became a bridge to meet his students'. That is, being, sensing, and emotioning became a pedagogy of well-being.

Reflecting

Although "reflection [has been thought of as] a process of self-examination and self-evaluation in which effective educators regularly engage to improve their professional practices" (Shandomo, 2010, p. 103), I am not accounting for this sort of improvement-oriented process. On the contrary, I think of reflection as a narrative possibility (Moen, 2006) to make sense of the lived experience. Therefore, I resort to Jane's and Michael's narrations after the lesson planning process to comprehend their pedagogies of well-being. Let me go over the excerpts below.

Jane

For me, it was a bit difficult to comprehend that, not all the time, you need to stick to your lesson plan. After some classes and after talking to you [mentor], I stopped to think about the conflicting personal issues I was encountering in my classes. I remember when I was with the ten graders, and

> this girl told me she felt anxious during the class. I thought it was because many people feel like speaking in public. So, I started giving her some tips to improve. However, out of the class session, she told me that she had some personal issues that were really conflicting. She just came out. She had told everyone she was lesbian. I felt really bad because I only thought about the competences, you know what I mean? and she needed some support like an individual, like a human being. That is why I chose to work on some emotional related vocabulary in the next sessions, not only with her but with all the guys. That allowed me to begin the class knowing their feelings and maybe change some areas of my class, not to solve their problems but to distract them from those personal circumstances. - *Jane's narrative* -[*sic*].

Jane's reflection does not happen only at this stage. In the previous account (Lesson Planning), she made evident a personal endeavor to think about her practice. However, benign this the reflection stage, such a process seems to be more noticeable. It is quite interesting to see that Jane realizes that not all the episodes of anxiety her students feel come from the idea of being exposed in class. She finds out that her students' personal, social reality gets to influence their being in the class. Jane's language pedagogy comes from being a prescription, a technical plan oriented to cognitive accumulation and skills development, to turn into a pedagogy that configures, individually and collectively, a space for her students to exist.

Moreover, although Jane aimed to improve her student's well-being, this event helped her develop a sense of otherness and self. Not only did she feel for her student, but she also felt for herself. According to current theoretical approaches, well-being seems to go beyond the absence of ill-being (e.g., Collie et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Jane's pedagogy of well-being started by acknowledging anxiety and low mood in her students. This awareness permitted her to change her teaching practice to develop a pedagogy of care. For Tang and Walker-Gleaves (2022), "caring pedagogy is more than just student-centeredness or relationship building, and is also more than affective relationship building only or ethical disciplinary actions" (p. 508); it is a pedagogy based on the recognition of oneself and the other. A pedagogy that implied respect and loving care as ways of relating.

Michael

> Teacher, I must say that confronting death in class is not easy. Being surrounded by so many emotions is not easy. Nobody teaches you how to deal with it. How can you teach someone the value of life if you do not know what they are going through? This question stayed in my head for so long. I must confess I have no idea how to tackle this pedagogically speaking. However, I am trying to be more aware. This awareness is not about grammar, pronunciation, or fillers, as it was before. This awareness is about student's feelings and emotions. It is about helping my students build better mental health. It is about making them understand that life is not easy but worth living it - *Michael's narrative* -[*sic*].

Mental health is not a minor issue. In Colombia, the suicide attempt rate by age group has increased exponentially. The highest rate belongs to the age group between 15 to 19 years, followed by the group 20 to 24 years (Boletín de Salud Mental Conducta Suicida

Subdirección de Enfermedades No Transmisibles, MinSalud, 2018). Michael's awareness is oriented toward building a better mental condition in his students to avoid situations like the one narrated. I dare to say that Michael's pedagogy is aligned with Jane's pedagogy of care, yet, Michael's is more oriented toward building a solid growth mindset among his students.

A growth mindset has been mainly oriented toward improving academic results (Rullman et al., 2022). The perspective has been mostly cognitive. However, although I might agree that building a growth mindset might help students do better academically, Michael's perspective is more oriented towards embracing life challenges with open arms and thinking about failure as a learning experience. Pedagogically, Michael chose to work on an emotional vocabulary repertoire aligned with helping his students develop emotional intelligence. Let's consider that emotional competence (Saarni, 2000) as "the demonstration of self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting social transactions" (p. 68) has been used to think of knowledge about emotion and emotions as knowledge. It makes sense to provide students with the tools to name their sensations. For Saarni (2000), it is not just about being aware of one's own emotions; but about discerning others' emotions. This is why language builds some skills to cope with distressing circumstances.

Acting

In any action research study, action implies mobilizing pedagogical principles and procedures to achieve a specific outcome. However, I was not interested in documenting any instructional dimension but in comprehending different teaching practices and pedagogical experiences implemented to foster well-being. This stage accounts for Jane's and Michael's doing of their well-being pedagogies. Therefore, I build upon the notion of pedagogization that, according to Castañeda-Peña and Méndez-Rivera (2022), is an attempt to adopt "a more pedagogical *sentipensar* to be thought-affective. This means embracing educators' subjectivity, putting together mind, soul, affection, and emotions" (p. 812) in their doing.

Jane

This lesbian student I told you about made me change. Since I only thought about developing competences [i.e., speaking, reading, writing, and speaking], I did not know how to offer her a more human class. I then looked for some help. I contacted a friend of mine of is lesbian. Laura [not her real name] taught me -identification. I can tell you, for example, that I started being more aware of my wording when delivering instructions, etc. However, what really changed in my classes was the rationale behind them. I do not know how to explain this to you, but I will try.

> I thought of students as customers. I was providing a service, and they were gaining knowledge. But since I started this new thing, I have paid more attention to students' lives. I included one day a lesson about lesbian empowerment. I once brought a reading criticizing [name deleted] work as a major and another defending her administration. I never told students about her gender expression or orientation, but they got it. To my surprise, many of my students were against her being lesbian, but since she was a public figure, they said they had to put up with this. I used this as an opportunity to build some respect for the life of others. I have no idea if it worked, but that day I was paying close attention to my lesbian student; to make her feel she was not alone - *Jane's narrative* -[*sic*].

There is an instrumental cognitive principle in language pedagogy. I may say that such a principle has distanced pedagogical doings from an "ethical goal that goes into the construction of intersubjective meanings that help us both to understand ourselves and others in the interest of better societies" (Granados-Beltrán, 2018, p. 175). This ethical goal, in Jane's pedagogization experience, is what becomes her pedagogy of well-being. She incorporates a different rationale in her classes. - *I do not know how to explain this to you, but I will try. I thought of students as customers. I was providing a service, and they were gaining knowledge. But since I started this new thing, I have paid more attention to students' lives* – Such a change in her teaching implies engaging in the pedagogy of the Other, a pedagogy that transgresses, displaces, and affects the ontological negation that traditional pedagogy[4] has exercised over lesbian identities.

Pedagogies of well-being are not cognitive-oriented pedagogies. They are, instead, pedagogies of difference and co-production of existence. First, Jane incorporates the differences from a different genealogy. She does not look for acceptance or inclusion, but she uses the difference to build a safe space for her students to be and live in the classroom. Jane also engages in the co-production of her student's existence since she creates a space for her to feel identified and to connect with others. This thought-affective attempt is the doing of Jane's pedagogy; it is her pedagogization process in which she makes pedagogy a verbality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Although Jane's students seemed to be against lesbian identities, she did not perceive this as an obstacle. On the contrary, she decided to exercise her pedagogical agency and act to help her students heal personally and collectively.

Michael

> Teacher, as I have told you, I am trying to continue teaching grammar, pronunciation, and those other things I must. However, since I am now paying more attention to students' feelings and emotions, I have had to learn about this. I must say that I started incorporating new things into

[4] Traditional pedagogy has one type of knowledge and produces one kind of being. It could be understood, according to Palermo (2014), as an "official pedagogy, at the service of the political and economic system that sustains, promotes and, also, drops it in favor of more efficient" (p. 9).

> my lesson plan. I am now including a restorative cycle. That is, in simple words, a pedagogical path to create a trusting environment. I have allowed students to make positive choices and interact respectfully in the classroom. I have mainly used effective language. It consists of verbal and nonverbal communication that encourages individuals to open up. I learned to use, for example, statements like -*I feel / when/ because*- this looks simple, but it has changed my students and me. After the suicidal case, I told you, I used this, and students expressed things like – *I feel anxious when I think about suicide because this idea has also crossed my mind* - having the possibility to voice up these thoughts is a way to persuade them not to make that mistake.

Pedagogies of well-being can coexist with traditional pedagogy. Although both have different rationalities, they have no conflicting nature. What changes is the objective. While traditional language pedagogy focuses on acquiring skills and reproducing technical knowledge, pedagogies of well-being are pedagogies of alterity. These welcome different ontologies to build different epistemologies. In Michael's case, listening to someone else's statement was intended to create social awareness about suicide. For Michael, this was a possibility for him to build a shared space to identify with others and recognize the impact such an action would have on others. Michael's thought-affective pedagogy started by disrupting his lesson plan; he moved from a PPP construction to a possibility in which he could "question and discern all the dimensions involved when planning a lesson. In this sense, since not only is lesson planning about instrumental notions of language but also about how certain personal views may get to interplay with [more instrumental] notions" (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020, p. 140), Michael disrupted traditional and canonical lesson planning approaches.

Michael's inclusion of restorative cycles also makes it possible to welcome broken ontologies. I refer here to individuals whose lives are or have been at risk. However, in SEL, restorative practices are used to build equitable learning (Mahoney et al., 2018). Michael's attempt is far from this cognitive dimension. He looks for a state of mental well-being that enables his students to develop all their abilities to make decisions, establish relationships, and shape the world in which they live. Moreover, his attempt is oriented towards creating empathetic listening and encouraging his students to listen to understand someone else's perspective. This ends up building social awareness.

Conclusions

The teaching practicum is a critical scenario for professional and personal development. Although the former has been thought to have student-teachers analyze their teaching (Tiainen et al., 2018), the latter is becoming increasingly important. Becoming a teacher is not only about handling procedural and technical knowledge but also about constructing other practices that help student-teachers exercise their agency (Aguirre-Garzón & Ubaque-Casallas, 2022) and building a self of their own. Therefore, the final thoughts I am about

to present document narrative events concerning teaching practices and pedagogical experiences implemented to foster well-being. These provide no definite conclusions about student-teachers' well-being during their pedagogical practicum. Instead, they offer a lens to comprehend the importance of developing physical, mental, and emotional health when it comes to initial teacher education (Bardach et al., 2022).

Initial teacher education programs should constantly re-think and re-conceptualize the teaching practicum dimensions. For example, although "teacher education […] seeks to prepare future teachers as lesson planners" (König et al., 2020, p. 801), lesson planning cannot be just a technical task. As seen in Jane's narrative, it can cause *anxiety,* and as such, not only should it serve to think of the sequencing of a cognitive task, but it should also become a space for student-teachers to sense and explore their own emotions when facing a teaching activity. The same can be said based on Michael's experience. A lesson plan is still a key component in teaching. Nevertheless, a lesson plan can also become a road map to enacting thought-affective pedagogies or pedagogies of well-being that can both coexist with traditional pedagogy but add a more human lens to see the other not as a learning object but as someone who feels and requires attention and care. Arguably, just by acknowledging the human component of their teaching, they begin enacting other forms of knowledge in which they can create and co-create existence.

Well-being should not only be linked to teacher development. Even though such a perspective (e.g., Mercer & Gregersen, 2020) aims at helping teachers develop emotional awareness to cope with the difficulties of the teaching profession (e.g., burn-out syndrome), pedagogies of well-being are more oriented towards creating an opportunity to connect with others. Such a connection does not remain at the instrumental level; instead, it goes beyond that and opens space to put down the rigid and cold identities and subjectivities constructed around and for English language student-teachers. As in Jane's narrative, one's pedagogy can make some feel that they are not alone. It means making someone feel alive, seen, and perceived. It also means, as in Michael's experience, attempting to create restorative cycles in which both students and student-teachers can overcome the burdens that life itself brings to those individuals who meet in the classroom.

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Critical Reading inside a Cross-curricular Approach

Lectura Critica dentro de un Enfoque Trasversal

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Abstract

This qualitative action research study explores six reading strategies to engage students in more dynamic reading through the implementation of workshops focused on the cross-curricular approach to develop critical reading skills among ninth graders at a public school. The study was conducted with 22 students selected, in the city of Manizales, Colombia. The data collection instruments were students' artifacts, teachers' field notes, focus group questionnaires, survey questionnaires, and documentary analysis. The findings demonstrate that the use of reading strategies within a cross-curricular approach facilitates the development of critical reading in students. In addition, the design of materials (workshops), based on topics related to the students' environment, has an impact that not only contributes to improving their knowledge of English but also to expanding their knowledge in other areas of the academic field.

Keywords: critical reading, cross-curricular approach, reading strategies, reading workshops, vocabulary

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo de investigación acción explora seis estrategias de lectura: predecir, inferir, propósito, conectar, tono del escritor y palabras claves Para lograr la participación de los alumnos en actividades de lectura más activas, se desarrollaron una serie de talleres considerando un enfoque transversal para el desarrollo de la lectura crítica entre los alumnos de noveno grado en una escuela pública. Se realizó con 22 estudiantes seleccionados en la ciudad de Manizales- Caldas. Los instrumentos utilizados para recopilar los datos fueron los artefactos de los estudiantes, las notas de campo de

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los profesores, el cuestionario de los grupos de discusión, el cuestionario de la encuesta y análisis de documentos. Los resultados demostraron que el uso de estrategias de lectura permitió el desarrollo de la lectura crítica en los estudiantes. Además, se llegó a la conclusión de que el diseño de materiales (workshop) basados en temas relacionados con el entorno de los estudiantes no sólo contribuyó a mejorar su conocimiento del inglés, sino también para ampliar sus conocimientos en otras áreas del campo académico, relacionado directamente con un enfoque intercultural.

Palabras clave: lectura crítica, enfoque transversal, estrategias de lectura, talleres de lectura, vocabulario

Introduction

The present qualitative action research study explores the development of ninth graders' critical reading through teacher-designed workshops focused on a cross-curricular approach. Considering that these students must be exposed to literature in all their academic subjects, reading must be a fundamental and complementary part of any educational institution to awaken their critical and comprehensive analytical abilities. However, in most institutions, reading has become only an academic practice since students read to pass exams, do in-class presentations, and fill-in-the-blank in grammar-centered activities, which derives in reading for a passing grade. This is why, I decided to engage ninth graders in an active and more demanding reading process that entails making sense of what they read and assuming a critical stance of the implicit information in cross-curricular reading texts. I did so by using six workshops in which learners were exposed to reading strategies. Experts such as Cohen (1990), Carrell (1989), Grabe and Stoller (2002), Pani, (2004), and Block and Israel (2005) were considered for the study since they talk about reading strategies. They affirm that reading strategies are important mental processes to make sense of what students read. Sari et al., (2020) argue that teachers need to be prepared on how to design effective reading comprehension strategies and how to teach these strategies to their students. I as a teacher, must act with the awareness that we can transform, through our teaching practices and resources.

For the above-mentioned reasons, this research study aims to respond to the bilingual educational policies stated by the National Ministry of Education (MEN) regarding the English proficiency level that high school graduates should have, which is B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (MEN, 2002) for the English language teaching learning and evaluating. Therefore, to accomplish this policy, this project seeks to achieve the Basic Standards of Competence (MEN, 2006) set as a graduate requirement for eleventh graders, so that they can demonstrate they are skillful critical readers. For the before reason, this research study contributes to developing my ninth-grade students' critical reading, and at the same time their English language proficiency level. In doing so, I consider the insights of scholars like Conley (1992), and Brown and Atkins (1994), who state that

good reading habits have been operationally defined to embrace multiple abilities. Using contextualized reading for the workshops on the good reading habits stated by the cited authors.

Include owning a need for information, knowing what to read, being able to locate information from various media, applying critical thinking to what is read, recognizing a writer's purpose and tone, making inferences, connecting reading material to own experience, identifying key vocabulary, as well as being able to communicate expanded information in speaking and writing contexts.

To carry out this study, an action research design was adopted. To collect data, I used instruments and techniques such as observations, a focus group, a survey, and school documents. To analyze the procedure, I triangulated and validated the collected information.

The findings confirm that, by using reading strategies, the participating students changed their traditional reading to a more active, so that they could read the texts more broadly. Furthermore, their motivation to read increased; likewise, they were able to react to texts by giving their opinion and interacting with partners with themes related to their context. In addition, the students used English as the target language to enrich their vocabulary. They understood that the use of these reading strategies can help not only to improve their reading comprehension in English but also to gain experience and use the skills automatically through learning and practice.

Literature Review

Critical reading has become an important skill to be promoted in EFL teaching because most learners are not yet able to read critically. This is especially true in most of the public schools' evidence in my work as an English teacher, most of the students do not assume a critical stance of what they read. According to Kurland (2000a), "Critical Reading refers to a careful, active, reflective, analytic reading" which involves reflecting on the validity of what one has read considering prior knowledge and understanding of the world. The three constructs presented here are reading strategies, critical reading, and the cross-curricular approach.

Reading Strategies

These strategies are conscious techniques or unconscious processes employed by readers in their attempt to make sense of the written text (Barnett, as cited in Gascoigne, 2005). Hence, the use of strategies like writer's purpose and tone, making inferences, connecting reading material to own experience, and identifying key vocabulary. Developing reading skills is a complex process of understanding a written text that involves a conscious process that leads learners to be more efficient readers through practice.

English language teachers need to face the problems of students and develop these skills through practice. Consequently, teachers must promote reading strategies, as one of the main goals to enhance better reading comprehension skills in the school. Reading strategies is the broad term used to describe the planned and explicit actions that help readers translate printed material to meaning. According to Cohen (1990), reading strategies are "those mental processes that readers consciously choose to use in accomplishing reading tasks" (p. 83). Reading strategies are mental processes that learners apply in their process of reading that help them improve in their procedure of academic future and professional development.

Pani (2004) defines reading strategies as "the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read. Good readers apply more strategies more frequently and more effectively than poor readers" (p. 355). Teachers can help improve student comprehension through the instruction of reading strategies like writer's purpose and tone, making inferences, connecting reading material to own experience, and identifying key vocabulary. With the before strategies used learners go more than an explicit reading comprehension.

Critical Reading

In the current society and everyday life, I frequently demand to deal with sociocultural issues, make decisions, and solve problems. To encounter the problems mentioned effectively and efficiently, I need to be able to critically evaluate and analyze what I see, hear, and read. The critical reading skill is important for students to be able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what is read; it can be executed with the practice reading strategies to have a position compared to what has been read. Anderson (2003) asserts that "critical reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning". Likewise, Pirozzi (2003) defined critical reading as a very high-level comprehension of written material that requires the reader's interpretation and evaluation to separate important and unimportant information, opinion, and facts, and determine the writer's purpose and tone. In Wallace's words (1992), critical reading is an interpretation more than comprehension. Based on these insights it can be affirmed that critical reading is a process that allows students to go beyond using reading material between the lines, to practice critical reading to activate and build thinking. For the previous reason, teachers should encourage students to formulate questions to challenge and improve their thinking skills instead of looking for answers in the given text to certain questions that are superficially found in the text. To develop critical reading skills in the English classroom, students should be taken further through the development of reading strategies to motivate them to ask themselves about the information they are reading. In this way, they can reflect on what to do with problems related to their environment.

Cross-Curricular Approach

Cross-curricular refers to competencies that are not related to the content of one or more content subjects, but that can be taught, practiced, and applied. Cross-curricular give an advantage for students to read about their context. Likewise, if teachers design material with content to explore notable subjects, problems, and questions, students can hold a wide range of reading, expanding concepts, enriching background knowledge, and fostering attitudes about reading topics. According to Beane (1995), "young people are encouraged to integrate learning experiences into their schemes of meaning to broaden and deepen their understanding of themselves" (p. 616). Moreover, Timmerman (2017) argues that, in practical terms, cross-curricular teaching covers various activities: "Teachers can plan it individually or collectively, links between subjects can be made as other subjects can partially be used to explain one concept in a subject, a large variety of projects can be led by teachers, etc." (p. 2). According to this definition, the use of cross-curricular initiatives in the class motivates teachers and schools to achieve meaningful achievements since cross-curricular integration makes a positive result for students' learning process and the teachers' work. Teachers still need to be experts in their topics to set up cross-curricular approaches. Thus, teachers need to be conscious about their relevant role in education; cross-curricular approaches give teachers a great option to foster students' competence; and to implement the cross-curricular approach to develop critical reading.

Participants

The research involved 22 students from 14 to 16 years old. The participants take four hours of English class weekly. They were selected first on a convenience sampling basis (Cozby, 2000). The ninth-grade class was part of the researcher's academic duty; also, because in the diagnostic stage of the study, data showed that they needed a good basis on their English language and, they presented a lack of reading strategies, they were passive in their reading, they did not react to the readings, I could observe that students need to improve their reading skills. Therefore, they needed to reinforce their English learning skills, so that they could face new challenges in their academic or future professional life. In this case, to be able to read critically and comprehensively passages of different types.

Research Instrument

During the diagnostic stage, the problematic situation of the lack of critical reading skills was identified with data collection instruments and techniques. Students' work was used to analyze their language performance; this visual and physical material collected from

them corresponded mainly to reading comprehension activities, how they worked, and what they did when exposed to reading activities.

Field notes were taken during the observation stage. I could write students' reactions, about the process of completing language tasks. Through this instrument, I could find that the students reacted positively to visual input, but I also found they had weaknesses like translating words frequently failing to read texts comprehensively, and lacking vocabulary to express their ideas; additionally, the data in this instrument, showed low interest in using reading strategies.

A survey questionnaire was administered to collect data about their opinions, perceptions, concerns, learning techniques, and tools to study EFL. According to the students' opinion, they develop strengths, learning techniques, and main skills with this instrument. I confirmed that most of the students did not use reading strategies. They ignored that those strategies existed; this instrument made it evident that they lacked English reading strategies and critical reading skills.

National policies concerning the Basic Learning Rights (BLR) serve as a guide in the English area as a fundamental tool. These rights describe knowledge and skills that students must learn and develop in the English area from sixth to eleventh grade (MEN, 2006). In addition, the school EFL curriculum looks to achieve a level of English proficiency pre-intermediate (B1) at the end of the eleventh grade. In summary, the data analysis in the diagnostic stage shows that the students reported multiple weaknesses in their reading skills.

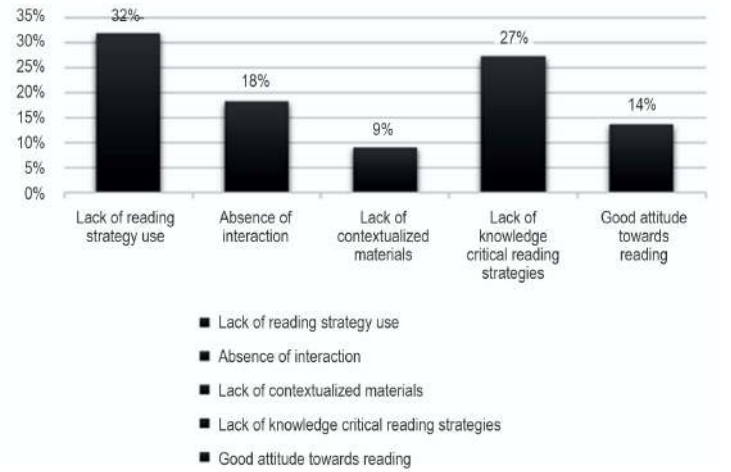

Figure 1. Categories of Analysis in the Diagnostic Stage

Pedagogical Intervention

Design Stage

According to the weaknesses identified in the diagnostic stage, I decided to develop an instructional design that included six workshops. These workshops contained short texts related to their environment. To approach the texts, the students were instructed on how to use reading strategies such as inferring, predicting, connecting, establishing the writer's tone and purpose, and listing keywords.

The format of the workshops followed the three reading stages by Brown (1994). Before, while, and after reading. In the pre-reading stage, students constructed new words, received the input they needed to understand the texts, and became familiar with new vocabulary. The second stage of each lesson was the while reading, in which the students were instructed to use their critical reading skills and get a hold of vocabulary and input to understand the information included in the text. The previous stage includes critical reading assessment through reading and the students' reaction to the topic.

Moreover, this study considered the cross-curricular approach focus in the areas of Natural Science, Social Studies, and Ethics. In consequence, the topics of the workshops were based on the focus studies belonging to programs related to this area (Health Science). These topics were chosen after conducting a survey in which the students expressed what they wanted to work on and the workshops. According to Ball (2008), "content knowledge is crucially important to the improvement of teaching and learning, attention to its development and study has been uneven" (p. 2); therefore, it is essential to give importance to the content taught in class and combine it with the foreign language to achieve better and permanent students' motivation and results.

Action Stage

During the pedagogical intervention, four instruments were used to follow the students' performance. A teacher journal was used to record the researcher's observations and insights while conducting the six workshops. The non-participant observation form was used to record the observer's descriptions and insights while the learners performed the six workshops. A student self-assessment form helped to collect information about the students' reflections and insights about their performance in the reading tasks. A reading rubric form facilitated a report of the student's performance in the main reading task of each workshop.

Evaluation Stage

In this section, the evaluation of the whole process is presented. To confirm if the students learned to use the planned reading strategies previously implemented to develop

critical reading through a cross-curricular approach, a final reading task was designed and implemented. This task helped to determine whether the strategies explored in the project were applied by the students independently. It consisted of a text referring to a familiar topic chosen by the learners in the survey (cannabis and its effects on human behavior and health problems). In the reading task, I intended to know if the learners were able to recognize and use the implemented reading strategies automatically.

In the evaluation stage, I used two instruments: a questionnaire survey to collect the learners' opinions, insights, and reflections about their progress in reading, and a reading rubric form to determine the results of the student's reading performance after having completed the six workshops.

According to the students' self-evaluation, it is evident that through the workshops developed the learners perceived they had good progress in their reading skills. They said that they learned and now know what reading strategies they should consider when reading to go beyond literal information. As displayed in the graph, most learners assessed themselves with high scores (4 or 5) in all aspects, which means that after the research project implementation, they saw themselves as good readers, because they were able to put into practice the different strategies they were exposed to and take advantage of them inside the cross-curriculum orientation of the proposal. According to Figure 2, the identification of the author's intention and tone were the strategies in which they were most successful with scores of 4 and 5 as reported by 22 students. In the second place, the use of previous knowledge, inferences, and identifying the author's purpose were perceived as successful according to an average of 21 students. In the third place, connections were also perceived as effective since 21 students assigned scores of 4 or 5 to this strategy. These perceptions were ratified by the learners' comments in the assessment in which they stated that:

I learned to use strategies that allow me to have a better reflection on the readings.

I did, with these strategies I developed my understanding skills in a broader way.

The strategies I learned were not usual, I didn't know them in English, it could be that I used them in Spanish, but I wasn't aware of the importance of their use, but now I know how they work.

These workshops were a way of learning to read differently that helped me to read in a different way.

Figure 2 below also shows that a few students (3 out of 22) still reported some low scores (3) in the reading strategies identifying the author's purpose and intention, connections, and inferences. To this respect, they explained their difficulties with comments that highlighted their weaknesses in going beyond the literal reading making inferences or connecting the reading to their context or previous knowledge: *One of the most difficult strategies for me was to infer the information from the text. Reading clues were difficult to identify in a text. The grammar in reading was very difficult for me.*

Concerning vocabulary, students concluded that this was a different way to learn unknown words with real pictures of their context and integrated topics related to knowledge in their daily interaction. This result corresponds to the cross-curricular themes and the vocabulary aspects explored in the self-assessment form. For the cross-curricular themes, 17 out of 22 students chose option 5 and 5 option 4; for the vocabulary item 11, students selected score 5, and 7 learners chose option 4; additionally, for the vocabulary recognition, 10 learners chose option 5, 8 learners' option 4, and only 4 students chose score 3, which means that they identified and contextualized vocabulary expressions concerning the texts. The students commented that one of the most favorable points was the design of the workshops since they were divided into steps where first they found the new vocabulary with drawings associated with each meaning, some of these photos were with themselves as protagonists which called learners' attention; for example, the students' reactions and perception about the use of the vocabulary in the workshops are presented below:

> *What I liked most was the design of the workshops with real photos of my context. This called my attention because while reading I learned through the drawings the new vocabulary that was related to the topics. The vocabulary presented through familiar pictures helped me to better retain the new words, so I could memorize and recognize them in the readings. Drawings and illustrations in the text helped me to remember the text, it is like making pictures about it in my memory.*

Back to Figure 2, the data show that the students perceived that they made significant progress in using the language forms studied in each workshop. They asserted that they used English appropriately to express their point of view about the themes. As seen in the graph, 15 out of 22 learners gave themselves a score of 5 while 5 assigned 4 and 2 assigned 3 correspondingly to the language use aspect; this means that they used the language forms effectively in real context based on the readings. The students who chose option 3 indicated that they still had doubts about the use of the language when answering questions related to the text. According to the student's comments, they practiced the language structures not only through the reading of the texts but also through their writing and speaking performance when reporting their comprehension of the content of the readings. They stated that they improved their ability in the language, acquired the language for the principal objectives of each lesson, and achieved the pragmatic purpose being the main goal. This improvement was confirmed by the following excerpts from the self-assessment form:

The use of the English language in these workshops was a way to practice the different structures of the language in contexts that surround me through reading and writing.

> *It was a little difficult for me to read in English in a text. Identifying grammatical structures in texts was a slow process but with practice, I think I could improve.*

> *It was a different practice where I reinforced my knowledge of the language in a different way not through common sentences but through texts.*

Finally, the students' self-assessments also included their perceptions about their critical reaction to written texts. In this section, 17 students chose score 5, and 5 students selected score 4; this means that they learned to use implicit strategies to practice critical reading and react to the information and that they were able to express their opinion about a given reading discussing their views about issues related to their social context. Only one student chose score 3 demonstrating that they were not sure about expressing their opinions in a different way than the writer's position. These findings are evident in the following learners' perceptions.

The workshops were very good because they dealt with interesting topics from my context, this motivated me to read, and I learned to read in a different way. Now I know that I must always reflect on what I read and express my own opinion.

With the different topics discussed, I had the opportunity to interact with my colleagues' exchanging experiences, opinions, views, and reactions that we had never shared before.

In the discussion of the readings, I learned about my peers' circumstances that I did not know and how they cope with problems in their families.

With these workshops, I learned that I could have the freedom to react freely to any topic or issue related to my social context and even discuss and propose solutions.

This section has presented the results of data collection and analysis from the action and evaluation stage of this study, which reported a positive effect of reading strategies on the critical reading skills of ninth graders inside a cross-curricular approach.

According to the students' self-evaluation, it is evident that through the workshops, the learners perceived they had good progress in their reading skills. They said that they learned and now know what reading strategies they should consider when reading to go beyond literal information.

As displayed in Figure 2, most learners assessed themselves with high scores (4 or 5) in all aspects, which means that after the research project implementation, they saw themselves as good readers, because they were able to put into practice the different strategies they were exposed to and take advantage of them inside the cross-curriculum orientation of the proposal.

Conclusions

I present the conclusions of this study considering the established research question about the impact of reading strategies within a cross-curricular approach on the critical reading skills of ninth graders through a cross-curricular approach at a public school.

Firstly, the design and implementation of workshops based on a cross-curricular approach and implicit reading strategies correspond to an effective pedagogical strategy

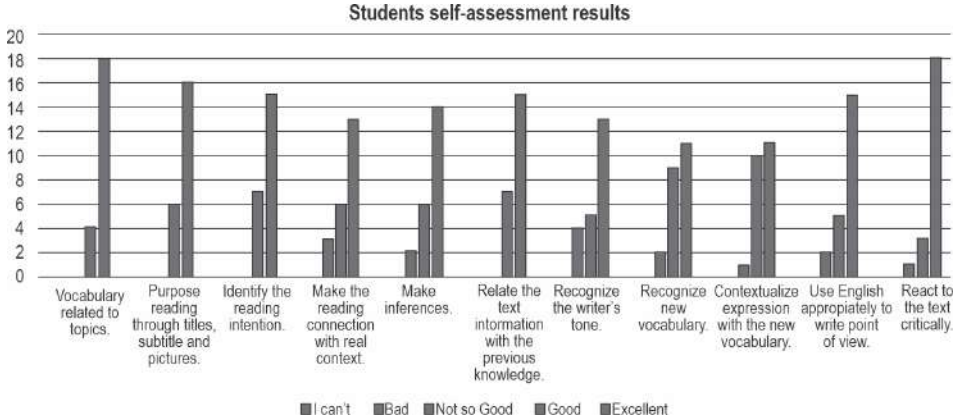

Figure 2. The Students' Assessment of Their Use of Reading Strategies

to solve different reading weaknesses in the learners and to elicit learners' reactions to the topics. When learners start to implement the reading strategies (such as inferences, connections, identifying purpose, predictions, identifying key vocabulary and writers' tone) they are better prepared to respond to academic tasks that demand critical reading. Teachers are recommended to implement these kinds of strategies in their classes to help their pupils widen their critical comprehension of texts and the world.

Reading strategies to promote critical reading help learners move from superficial reading to a much deeper and more reflexive one. By performing each reading, the interpretation improves in each workshop until developing the final task, demonstrating a continuous improvement in the use of reading strategies through practice. As well as showing that they understand the texts and become familiar with the reading strategies. When learners are exposed to these types of reading strategies, they automatically work with them together to build the process of meaning easily. Teachers at the secondary and high school levels must promote these strategies to prepare the students for higher-level reading tasks such as standardized tests.

Secondly, with the training in the use of reading strategies, students sometimes showed more difficulty with some strategies than with others, which is why including reading strategies in their daily practice helps them develop critical reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers are strongly advised to do explicit teaching of reading strategies to provide learners with the tools to become aware of their thinking and react to the content of any reading material.

The teaching of reading strategies through the design of critical reading workshops motivates the participation of the students also making them aware of the existence of such strategies and helping them to learn how to apply them consciously and unconsciously. It also benefits the development of abstract thinking, critical attitude, and more analytical response-ability. Also, better decision-making processes in their academic experience.

Third, critical reading strategies help learners to recognize cross-curricular vocabulary that works as a bridge between the content and the language that encourages the students toward the class and stimulates their curiosity for the language learning process making a connection to the reading themes. As well, cross-curricular vocabulary fosters motivation and positive attitudes toward the target language, which is why, school curricula should include these types of reading strategies.

Teaching how to read critically with specific reading strategies with the use of themes related to the learner's social context encourages their participation in class because they can demonstrate knowledge, read, and learn more. Additionally, sharing their opinions with this kind of reading becomes critical to their realities. In this respect, teachers are encouraged to promote critical reading strategies in their lesson planning to make their classes more interesting for the students and their levels of reading more active.

Regarding vocabulary recognition, I can conclude that according to the student's reactions, reading strategies help students to recognize new vocabulary related to their context with familiar topics. In addition, students deduce meaning and make inferences, connections, and predictions that encourage their interest and promote their critical analysis of content.

Fourth, in terms of critical reading, teaching reading strategies is one of the most powerful skills to be acquired, for many factors that affect this process: educational and social background, social interaction, previous experience, inference capacity, and vocabulary. In this respect, Hannon (2012) affirms that reading comprehension is a complex ability that combines many cognitive processes. Due to the increasing need to go beyond literal reading, it is necessary to develop reading through the use and practice of these strategies to help learners change basic reading to a more complex one.

Implementing a cross-curricular approach with reading about the student's context develops critical reading skills in the English classroom. With this approach, students learn how to react using reading strategies as a tool to express their point of view by evaluating the writer's opinion and background with arguments and reflections allowing them to discuss different views between themselves. In other words, this type of reading develops a critical reading with an active process that involves students' interaction with the information in the reading to understand it in its entirety. I agree with Wallace (2003), who states that the text

is the starting point and that the students make the meaning of the texts with their reactions to them.

The application of an interdisciplinary approach encourages students to take an active part in class taking advantage of their previous knowledge. The inclusion of content related to the causes and consequences of drugs, food waste, pregnant teenagers in Colombia, etc. Specific topics related to the students' interests and life motivates them to carry out the activities and play a more active role in their reading process. Teachers are invited to do so in their classrooms to improve the reading performance of their students.

Regarding the recognition and use of language forms, I can conclude that reading reinforces the student's knowledge base in linguistic factors such as syntax, vocabulary, punctuation, etc. Students learn in an implicit form that language allows them to express their feelings more naturally. Some learners had a lack of language production in writing with many errors. Then, the teacher had to intervene to help these students to reflect on their own mistakes. These factors play an important role in determining their results.

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The Contribution of Board Games to Pre-Kindergarten Students' Oral Production

La Contribución de los Juegos de Mesa en la Producción Oral de Estudiantes de Pre-Kínder

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Abstract

During the last decades, global interest in learning English as a foreign language has increased, encouraging countries to include it in school education. This trend was followed by the Chilean Ministry of Education, which suggests teaching English based on a communicative approach starting in early childhood education. To foster students' learning, it is imperative to acknowledge that children learn differently than older learners and that English as a foreign language teachers should be able to identify their needs and implement age-appropriate strategies. This article reports the action research findings that explore the contribution of board games, memory, and bingo on pre-kindergarten students' oral expression when participating in English lessons. A group of 19 children aged four from a private school in Concepción, Chile, took part in this study by playing online and board bingo, and memory games. Data were gathered by qualitative methods, such as an observation checklist, a semi-structured

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interview applied to the co-teacher, and group interviews carried out with students at the end of the intervention. The group and semi-structured interview data were analyzed through the thematic data analysis technique, along with frequency data analysis used to process the observational checklists. The results show that students increased their English oral production when games were implemented in their lessons.

Keywords: board games, English as a foreign language, early childhood education, games, oral production

Resumen

Durante las últimas décadas, el interés mundial por el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera ha aumentado, incentivando a los países a incluirlo como parte de la educación escolar. Esta tendencia fue seguida por el Ministerio de Educación de Chile, que sugiere la enseñanza del inglés basada en un enfoque comunicativo desde los primeros años de educación. Para fomentar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, es imperativo reconocer que los niños aprenden de manera diferente a los mayores, y que los profesores deben ser capaces de identificar sus necesidades e implementar estrategias adecuadas para esa edad. En este artículo se presentan los resultados de una investigación-acción que explora la contribución de los juegos de mesa, memoria y bingo, en la expresión oral de los alumnos de educación preescolar cuando participan en la clase de inglés. Un grupo de 19 niños de cuatro años, de un colegio privado de Concepción, Chile, participó en este estudio jugando bingo y juego de memoria con material en línea y concreto. Los datos se recogieron mediante métodos cualitativos, como una lista de observación, una entrevista semiestructurada aplicada a la co-docente y entrevistas grupales realizadas a los estudiantes al final de la intervención. Los datos recogidos por la entrevista grupal y semiestructurada se analizaron mediante un análisis temático, y un análisis de frecuencia para las listas de observación. Los resultados evidencian un aumento en la producción oral en inglés de los estudiantes cuando se implementaron juegos en la clase de inglés.

Palabras clave: educación temprana, juegos, juegos de mesa, inglés como idioma extranjero, producción oral

Introduction

In recent years, parental interest in their children learning English at early stages has increased worldwide (Oliver & Azkarai, 2017). In Chile, this interest has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) affecting the educational policy. For example, in 2020 MINEDUC published a suggested curriculum to be implemented in early childhood education based on the Communicative Language Approach. This has brought new challenges for early language teachers, who face demands on children's characteristics, motivation, and strategies to develop English language skills. Thus, there is a need to explore different ways to foster children's foreign language learning, in which games emerge as an appropriate strategy to support this process.

Games promote exploration and the development of meaningful learning which are the foundation of early childhood education in Chile; therefore, they are considered an important tool for children to learn (Ministerio de Educación, 2018). Furthermore, games create opportunities to learn through playful interactions with objects and others that lay the foundations to understand abstract concepts in the future (UNICEF, 2018) engaging and allowing students to repeat tasks without losing interest.

In early language learning, the role played by the English language teacher is essential. It has been shown that teachers working with children must have a deep knowledge of their cognitive development, learning needs, and skills (Mourão & Ellis, 2020; Pinter, 2011) to select and organize games that create conditions for all students to feel confident, and develop their language skills.

Against this background, the purpose of this article is to report the findings of an action research study, in which language practice games were implemented to foster Chilean pre-kindergarten students' oral production in English in their English as a foreign language (EFL) lesson. The results provide evidence of the relevance of games for engaging children in the use of English. Similarly, this study's results show the crucial role that teachers play in supporting children's foreign language development.

Theoretical Framework

Early Foreign Language Learning

The number of English language programs for early language learners has been increasing globally. According to Barahona (2016), English is regarded as a tool that facilitates access to economic development, leading governments all over the world to implement early English language learning programs as part of their educational systems. Similarly, parents have developed the assumption that learning English will be important for their siblings in the future (Tabalí, 2020). Thus, English has emerged as an international tool of communication fueled by the relentless forces of globalization (Barahona, 2016).

In Chile, the learning of English has been regarded as a key element to help the development of the country and to promote the globalization process (Tabalí, 2020). In this regard, English has become a compulsory foreign language subject since the 1990s. Nevertheless, the Chilean curriculum has changed substantially during the last 20 years (Barahona, 2016), moving gradually to introduce English in primary school (Inostroza, 2018; Tabalí, 2020). In 2012, the MINEDUC proposed the Communicative Language Approach as a key element of the curriculum as this approach involves students in an active role in incrementing the exposure to the target language (Tabalí, 2020). Moreover, in 2020, the

MINEDUC published a document called 'Curriculum Proposal for Teaching English as Foreign Language for Kindergarten', setting up as its main objective to allow students to communicate in English in a meaningful and contextualized way (MINEDUC, 2020).

Thus, a new demand for qualified English language teachers with an understanding of pedagogic principles and child development has emerged (Mourão, 2015).

Very Young Language Learners' Characteristics

Children are naturally interested in activities that help them make sense of the world and their place in it. According to Puchta and Elliott (2017), the term *very young language learner* is used when referring to children between three to seven years old. Children maturation is influenced by their culture, sex, environment, and parents (Ameer, 2016; Washington-Nortey et al., 2020). Early language teachers must know children's attitudes, interests, and learning circumstances to select appropriate tasks (Ameer, 2016).

In Chile, children often start attending school at the age of four. At this age, they are naturally curious and enthusiastic and have intrinsic motivation to explore the world around them (Pinter, 2017). However, Mourão and Ellis (2020) suggest that children's positive attitudes and high motivation do not guarantee future success and continued confidence. To keep their motivation and interest, they need to continue feeling good about learning a foreign language.

Recent studies (e.g., Hu, 2016; Pokrivčáková, 2020) have challenged the idea that very young learners have a cognitive advantage in learning foreign languages, focusing on the learning experiences as critical factors. As Pinter (2011) declares, early learners of English could become superior pupils to those who started later, only if the teaching was appropriate, teachers were qualified, and there was continuity between primary and secondary schooling. Similarly, Mourão and Ellis (2020) suggest that different factors contribute to successful learning, such as respect for the way children learn, close collaboration with parents, and planning the transition. By considering those factors, "it is more likely that the child will become a successful language learner and confident user of English" (p. 8). In this regard, Puchta and Elliott (2017) argued that it is vital to provide opportunities to practice the new language making children feel familiar with the concepts, which would allow them to use the language spontaneously. Similarly, Degirmency and Yavuz (2015) suggest that the implementation of concrete material, and physical and fine motor activities combined with the foreign language, could contribute to learning. Moreover, some scholars (e.g., Pokrivčáková, 2020; Emery & Al-Marzouki, 2018) remark that teachers should provide a variety of activities that encourage the use of their imagination, creativity, and energy; for instance, games.

Early Language Learners Speaking Skills

In pre-primary education, foreign language learning tends to be considered as a preparation for a further level of education; therefore, it generally aims to develop basic communication abilities, foster motivation by making language learning experiences fun, and develop cognitive, metacognitive, and metalinguistic skills through initial contact with a foreign language by integrating language and context. Hence, the development of oral production is gradual and connected to understanding development; children enjoy playing with words and experimenting with the language, even when they rely on limited resources (Pinter, 2017). Ameer (2016) argues that children start using their language skills before they become aware.

Thus, teachers must be aware of age-appropriate strategies to support the development of language-speaking skills. For instance, Pinter (2017) suggests that when learners begin to speak, they start using single words, nouns, adjectives, and short formulaic expressions. In the same line, Puchta and Elliott (2017) notice that children learn to speak by imitating what they hear and see, and emphasize that teachers expect children to start speaking, first imitating what they have heard, interacting with others, and then learning to say things by themselves.

Vocabulary Development in Early Language Learners

Vocabulary development is a key element when learning a language. It requires learners to have a solid mnemonic ability and a high level of metacognitive ability to encode the information in different ways (Tonhyani & Khanehgir, 2017). Pokrivčáková (2020) suggested that new vocabulary must be presented in a meaningful context because when words are linked to visual manifestations (pictures, photographs, drawings, flashcards, or real objects), they create opportunities for children to develop learning in a multi-sensory experience.

Likewise, Pinter (2011) highlights that learning new vocabulary is a critical process in which children hear relevant words in relevant contexts. Still, before starting to use them, they need to encounter the words several times. Consequently, identifying children's cognitive foundations (memory and recall ability), neurological maturation, communication with adults, and individual and cultural differences are important factors to consider. Moreover, Pinter (2017) notes that respecting students' first language and considering its use to support their second language is essential. Additionally, the scholar acknowledges that learners should have opportunities to reproduce patterns and vocabulary in a controlled way before expressing more freely highlighting the importance of remaining fun.

Mourão and Ellis (2020) provide a set of recommendations related to vocabulary acquisition at early ages (Figure 1) emphasizing the relevance of teachers' preparation, students' exposure, and the importance of playing, among others.

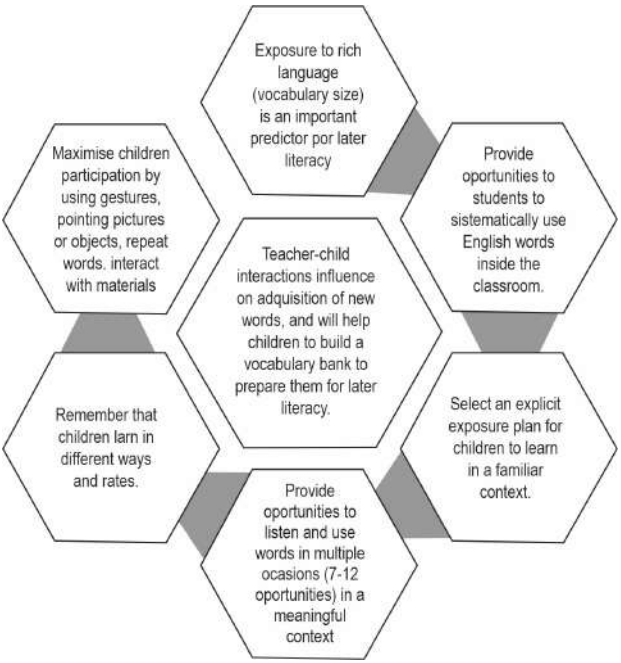


Figure 1. *Vocabulary Development Suggestions According to Mourão and Ellis (2020)*

Source: Own creation

For example, Emery and Al-Marzouki (2018) carried out a study in two Omani state primary schools about using language-learning tasks in the young learners' classrooms. Their findings showed that teachers perceived that those tasks involved learners in challenging themselves, promoted teamwork, required students to use the language in real-life situations, and gave opportunities to practice their speaking fluency.

Games in Early Language Learning

Playing is one of the pillars of early childhood school education in Chile; therefore, learning experiences and materials have an important role when teachers prepare their lessons (MINEDUC, 2020). According to Derakhshan and Davoodi (2015), vocabulary games make

the learning process more valuable, enjoyable, and relaxing as they help students retain target words quickly by allowing a more communicative language use. According to Putcha and Elliott (2017), games involve looking, listening, and moving all at the same time; thus, making language learning more memorable and emotionally engaging. Additionally, Pokrivčáková (2020) notices that when playing, children learn new words and phrases unconsciously.

In the same line, Pinter (2017) suggests that games offer great opportunities for hearing the same language repetitively, and for learning to take part in simple conversations. Additionally, educational games encourage to be physically and mentally active, represent student-centered activities, focus children's attention, and promote socialization; thus, they seem appropriate for early language learners (Derakhshan & Davoodi, 2015). However, not all games are appropriate for all students. For instance, Mourão (2018) informs that children differ in their favorite English language games and activities. In her study with pre-primary children, she found that these activities include dialogues with a puppet, a variety of games (many involving flashcards), looking at books, songs, rhymes, telling stories, and inventing games. Likewise, Inostroza's findings (2018), based on children's voices, inform that the implementation of games in the EFL lesson supported their motivation and made sessions feel shorter.

Method

This is an action research study exploring the contribution of games to foster the English oral production of a group of pre-kindergarten students. This involves action and reflection from the teacher, along with a critical and systematic exploration of her practices (Burns, 2010).

Research Problem

In 2020, the MINEDUC launched a proposed curriculum to teach English from pre-kindergarten. This document suggests considering games as a central element. In this regard, early language learners are expected to orally communicate in English using the target vocabulary when participating in class, interacting, and expressing themselves in the foreign language with peers and adults.

In the study teaching context, after the first months of instruction, early-year students could identify and comprehend commands and questions in English, and they displayed great motivation for participating in the English language lesson. However, every time that they were asked to participate during the lesson, they tended to use their L1, Spanish. Thus, board games (Memory and Bingo games) were implemented during the lessons to foster students' oral skills.

Research Objectives

The current action research's general objective is to explore the contribution of board games (Memory and Bingo) on pre-kindergarten students' oral use of English in EFL lessons. There are three specific objectives of this study: (1) to describe the frequency of children's English language use when playing board games (Memory and Bingo); (2) to identify the co-teacher's perception of the use of games to support students oral use of English; and (3) to identify students' perception of the use of games in the EFL lessons.

Participants

One of the participants was a Chilean nursery schoolteacher, who has the expertise on teaching EFL to pre-primary students. She worked with the teacher-researcher, this was her first year teaching this group and her first time using board games to teach English.

The other participants were 19 pre-kindergarten students who were invited to take part in the study. These were children between four to five years old in their first year attending a private school in urban Concepción, who had daily 40-minute EFL lessons. All of them were L1 Spanish speakers, presented positive attitudes to the English language lessons, and had high levels of motivation towards games and activities where they were active. However, they tend to lose motivation and concentration when performing a passive role, such as answering questions, matching pictures, and textbook activities. All participants had presented consent from their parents to participate in the study.

Procedure

The intervention lasted six 30-minute sessions that were part of their English lessons, in June 2022. Students worked in the classroom as a whole class and in small groups. Tasks were planned from guided activities to more independent ones, as can be seen in Figure 2 below.

Sessions were planned considering three stages: pre-, while, and post-task. During the pre-task stage, students were able to recall and reproduce daily vocabulary, such as colors, weather, and days of the week, among others. During the while-task stage, target lexical items were presented and students were given opportunities to practice them by playing Bingo and Memory games. Finally, in the post-task stage, children were provided with opportunities to recall and name the target vocabulary items (Figure 2).

In each of the six intervention sessions, which were part of the English lessons, students' participation was registered in an observational checklist.

In the first session, students played an online memory game displayed on the whiteboard; they selected two cards and named them. In the second session, they were organized into

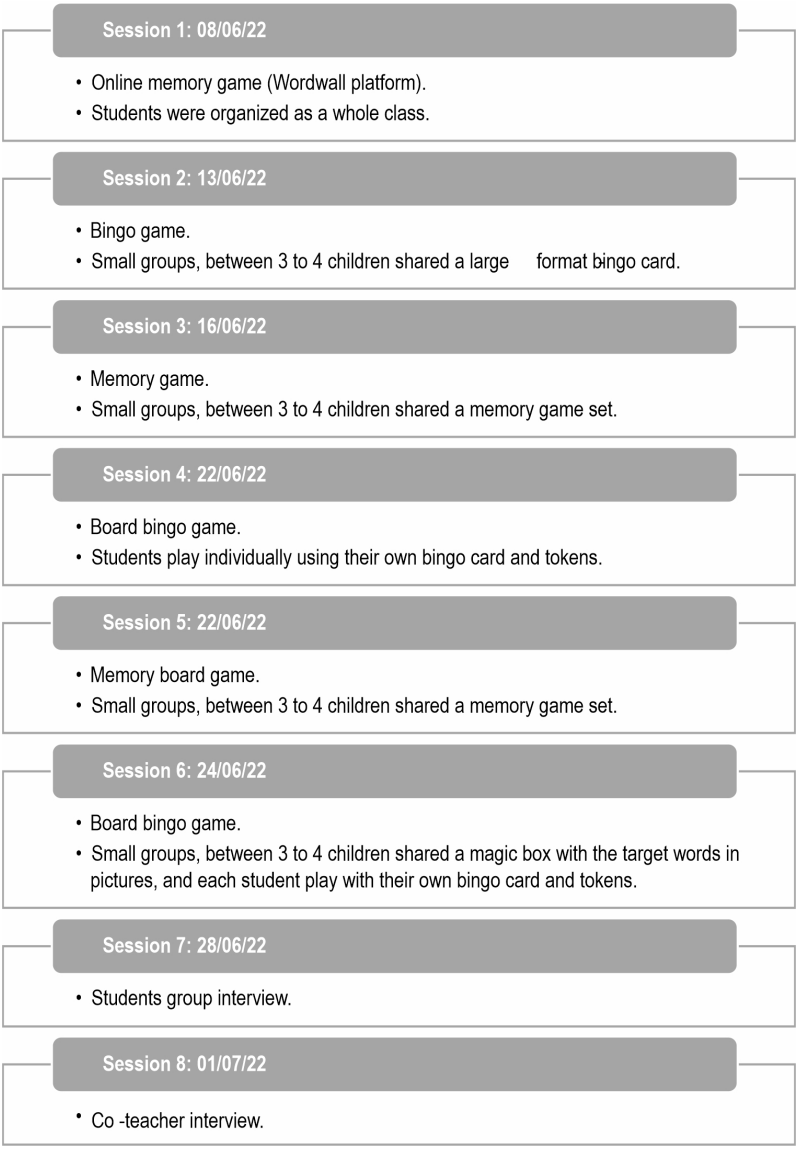


Figure 2. Intervention Summary

Source: Own creation

five groups and shared a large bingo card, a digital roulette was displayed on the whiteboard, and in turns, students were asked to name the vocabulary presented in English. In the third session, they were organized into two groups of four children and one group of five; altogether played a memory game (each group was monitored by the teacher and students were asked to name the target vocabulary in English). In the fourth session, they played bingo with individual bingo cards; the teacher walked around the classroom asking students to take a card from the magic bag and name it for the class. In the fifth session, they were organized into two groups of four kids and one group of three; they played a board memory game. In the last session, they were in two groups of four and one group of three and played a board bingo game.

Finally, the last two sessions were used to carry out two group interviews with students and a semi-structured interview with the co-teacher.

Data Collection Techniques

Three techniques were used: (1) observational checklist, (2) group interview, and (3) semi-structured interview. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, the interviewees' first language, to avoid issues of communication and to make them feel more comfortable.

Observational Checklist (Appendix A)

Observational sheets in the form of a checklist were used to register the students' oral use of English in each lesson. The items addressed the times children named, or did not, the lexical item in English or Spanish. These sheets were completed by the teacher-researcher and the co-teacher. In the last two sessions, students were divided into three groups and a teacher oversaw registering students' responses on an observational checklist for each group.

Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix B)

A semi-structured interview was applied to the co-teacher as this instrument is flexible, promotes reciprocity between the interviewer and participant, and allows the interviewer to follow up with questions based on participants' responses (Kallio et al., 2016). It considers five questions, and its purpose was to gather information about her perception of students' use of English during the games.

Group Interview (Appendix C)

A group interview was applied to seven students in two small groups, one group of three and another group of four children. According to Lewis (1992), this type of interview better responds to children's characteristics and age promoting their participation. Interviewees

were selected regarding their consistency in attendance at the intervention sessions. There were three questions, and their focus was to identify students' perceptions of the use of games in English lessons.

While both interviews were carried out in Spanish, they were translated into English for this article.

Data Analysis Technique

Thematic data analysis was used to process the obtained data from the interviews, which was transcribed, analyzed, and categorized from emergent codes related to motivation and the use of English during the lessons. The observational checklist data were analyzed through frequency analysis, by counting the number of times children carry out the actions described in the checklist according to the lesson stages of pre-, while-, and post-task.

Results and Discussion

In the present study, the results and discussion have been organized by each of the three specific research objectives (SO# henceforth). In addition, to protect children's identity, pseudonyms have been used to identify the participants.

SO1: To Describe the Frequency of Children's English Use When Playing Board Games (Memory and Bingo)

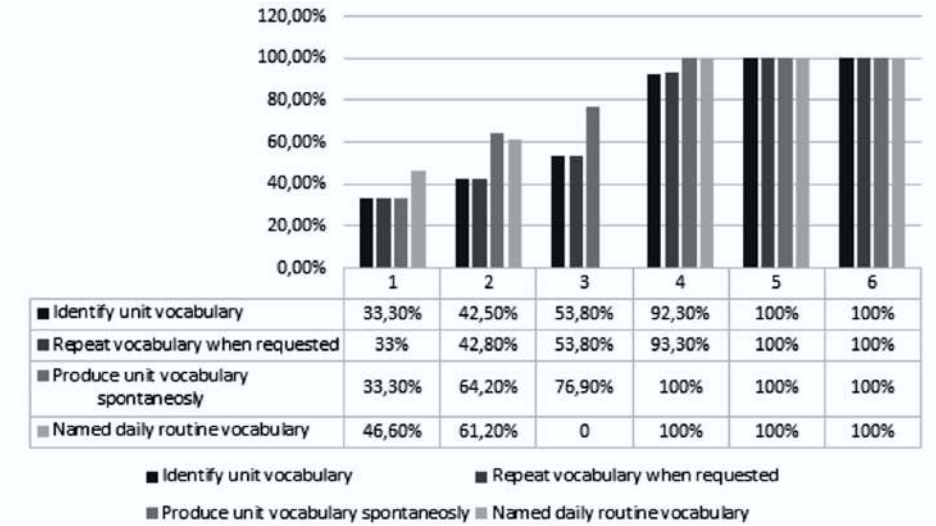
Data were gathered using observational checklists that the teacher-researcher and the co-teacher applied during each session. The findings were organized by the stages of the session (pre-, while, and post-task).

Pre-task

Activities were carried out as a whole class and data were registered regarding (a) the number of students attending and (b) their participation in the lesson. Due to school internal activities in session 3, pre-task was not reviewed; therefore, data from that session were not reported in Figure 3.

Considering the pre-task stage, by the end of the intervention, almost all the students were able to identify the unit vocabulary, repeat it when requested, produce it spontaneously, and name it related to the daily routine (Figure 3 below).

Results give evidence that regarding students' vocabulary repetition, there is a slight difference from the first to the last session while implementing the games. However, all other



	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identify unit vocabulary	33,30%	42,50%	53,80%	92,30%	100%	100%
Repeat vocabulary when requested	33%	42,80%	53,80%	93,30%	100%	100%
Produce unit vocabulary spontaneosly	33,30%	64,20%	76,90%	100%	100%	100%
Named daily routine vocabulary	46,60%	61,20%	0	100%	100%	100%

Figure 3. Percentage of Students' Participation at the Pre-Task Stages

Source: Own creation

aspects observed increased while the students were exposed to the implemented games, such as students' identification (session 1: 33%, session 2: 42.8%, session 3: 53.8%, session 4: 93.3%, and sessions 5 and 6: 100%), spontaneous production of the unit vocabulary (session 1: 33.3%, session 2: 64.2%, session 3: 76.9%, and sessions 4, 5 and 6: 100%), and students' spontaneous naming of vocabulary related to the daily routine (session 1: 46.6%, session 2: 64.2%, session 3: no data, and Sessions 4, 5, and 6: 100%).

Results illustrate that students' use of English increased, as can be observed in Figure 3; by the last session, all students were able to identify and produce target vocabulary spontaneously.

While-task

Results focused on the number of opportunities given to students to orally use English during their participation in the games. In general, students struggled with two lexical items: *wrench* and *tire*; therefore, none of them used English while playing the games.

These results show some consistency from session 1 to session 5 (Figure 4). Session 6 inconsistency is observed, this could be because of external and internal factors, such as poor

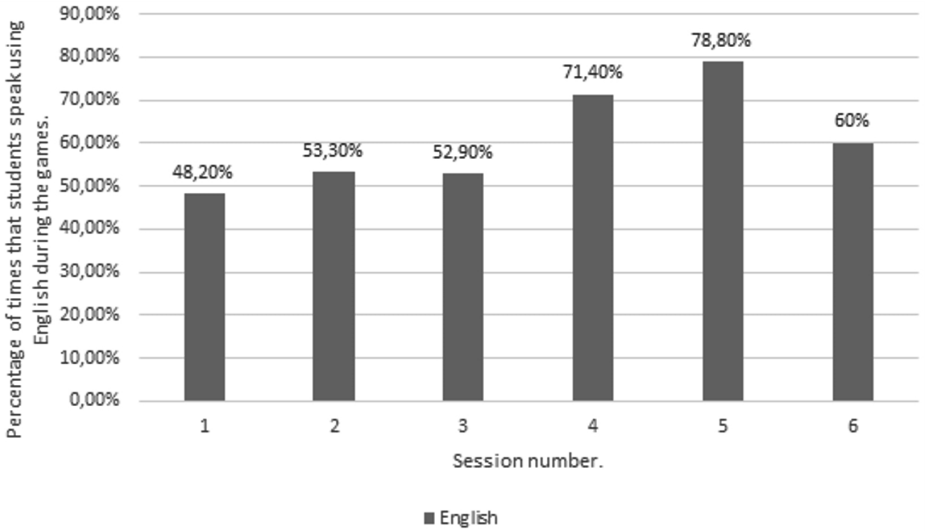


Figure 4. Percentage of Times Students Speak in English During While-Tasks

Source: Own creation

self-efficacy, motivation, and students' silent periods, among others. These results are in line with Clarke (2009) who demonstrated that early language learners vary in their willingness to start using English: while some take risks, others will be more reticent in starting to speak.

Results show that there was an increase in the number of times in which children used English from session 1 through session 5. In session 1, 48.2% of the time students named concepts in English; therefore, by session 5, 78.8% of the time students named concepts in English. In session 6, recoil is found, with only 60% of the time students named concepts in English. These results are consistent with those obtained by Shintani (2012) in which learners gradually reduce the use of L1 and increase more complex L2 output, with their motivation staying high throughout the cycles of repetition. The same scholar suggests that over time, they perform tasks more easily and their comprehension improves. In both Shintani's (2012) and the current action-research study, as students repeated the task, some started to switch from being listeners to becoming producers.

The results showed that during sessions 4 and 5, students' use of English was more frequent than during sessions 1, 2, and 3 (as can be seen in Figure 5 below).

Post-task

Results were analyzed considering the number of opportunities given to students to orally use English during closing activities. There is an increase in the number of times they use English orally (Figure 5), but this increase was inconsistent during the sessions. In session 1, students answered using English 60% of the time during closing activities; in session 2, 53.3% of the time; in session 3, 50% of the time; in session 4, 84.6% of the time; in session 5, 71.4% of the time; and finally in session 6, 71.4% of the time.

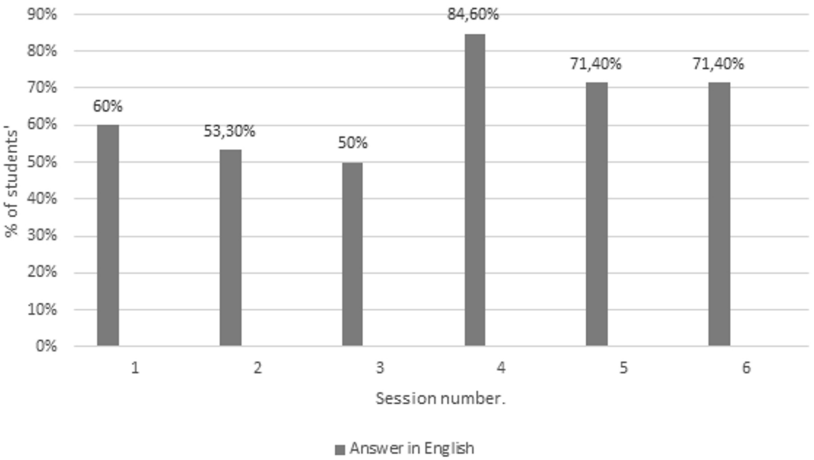


Figure 5. Percentage of Students' Use of English in Closing Activities During Post-Task Activities

Source: Own creation

These results suggest that implementing games could foster students' oral use of English when participating in English language lessons. This would support the idea that games are a natural activity for children, which promotes motivation, reduces anxiety levels, and promotes enjoyment in early language learners (UNICEF, 2018). In addition, these results confirm Pinter's (2019) views that game-playing produces positive effects on language learning processes such as vocabulary. Furthermore, these results are in line with Inostroza (2018), who remarked that games are meaningful activities that give children opportunities to use language in a comfortable environment. Similarly, Derakhahan and Davoodi (2015) stated that vocabulary games allow students to use language communicatively, creating context to use and exchange language to communicate and express their opinions.

Following Clarke's (2009) argument and the current action research findings, games supported learners to use English based on their comprehension and proficiency level of English. This also shows that skilled early childhood professionals can support children's conversations, scaffold their oral language when engaging them in conversation, and find a balance between talking and listening to the children.

SO2: To Identify the Co-Teacher' Perception of the Use of Games to Support the Oral Use of English

Data to address specific objective two were gathered in a semi-structured interview applied to the co-teacher at the end of the intervention, the interview was transcribed, read, and analyzed through thematic analysis. Data were categorized into one theme: Use of English, and four sub-themes, namely, confidence, repetition, students' participation, and contextualized use of English (Figure 6).

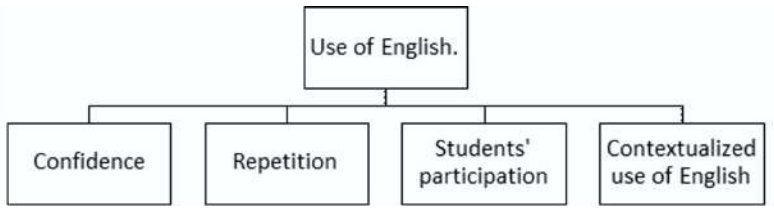


Figure 6. Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes Related to the Use of English

Source: Own creation

Sub-theme 1: Confidence

Regarding this first sub-theme, findings show that the co-teacher perceived that students tend to use English when feel confident. These findings suggest that when students were in the last stages of the intervention, they presented a better comprehension of English and their self-efficacy grew, therefore, they felt more confident to speak using the target language. The co-teacher advised that when students understood and had opportunities to use the vocabulary in a contextualized manner, they felt more confident in using English. The following quotes illustrate this point:

T: More confidence to express them verbally.

T: In the end, this is received naturally, meaning, they have already internalized it even more.

T: [The use of English] was also seen in the children's confidence since contextualizing it through the games gave children more confidence.

These findings are in line with Pinter (2019) who suggested that repetition allowed children to get immersed in the task, express their potential, and increase their motivation, confidence, and self-efficacy. Over time, learners were able to perform tasks easily, their comprehension improved and there was a positive effect on their confidence. The same scholar noticed that repetition makes children more confident, fluent, and accurate; students became better at handling cognitive difficulties, as well as managed to consider each other's needs as listeners, which makes them more motivated and confident as speakers.

Sub-theme 2: Repetition

Regarding this second sub-theme, findings show that the co-teacher perceived that repetition helped students foster their participation using English when playing the games. The co-teacher suggested that games that required repetition helped students to express themselves in English. Furthermore, the co-teacher considered that the memory game promoted repetition, because of the mechanic of the game itself in which students name the concept each time they turn over a card. The following quotes show this point:

T: In my case, I feel more achievements of their oral expression with the memory game since it was repeated more.

T: Of course, they had more turns. The other thing is that when turning the flashcards over, they had to say it twice.

T: At the beginning, I only noticed a repetition of vocabulary, and this gave me the chance to observe that through these strategies, they were able to internalize and understand it more.

This point is also consistent with Rokita's study (2007) that informed that children learn English quickly but also forget it fast when frequent repetition and high-intensity exposure are not provided. This is also aligned with Pinter's (2019) findings that suggested that repetition is a valuable pedagogic tool because it promotes cooperation, enjoyment, motivation, and confidence; over three repetitions, children are allowed to focus on meaning and form simultaneously.

Sub-theme 3: Students' Participation

About this third sub-theme, findings show that the co-teacher perceived that students were in general motivated to participate during the English lessons when games were implemented. She argued that students' oral participation using English was more frequent during the last sessions, and she identified the memory game as promoting better students' oral participation, as in this game children had more opportunities to interact with peers and to speak in general. The following quotes illustrate this point:

T: There was already a higher percentage of expression in English.

T: Yes, the use of English was evident, and it was registered more than anything else in the individual participation when I asked them directly, they tended to use English.

T: I can mostly identify the memory game, in which there was more verbal expression.

These findings are consistent with the Washington-Nortey et al.'s (2020) study, which showed that children benefited from peers' expressive language skills, and denoted that children are more likely to interact with peers than adults (teachers) in the classroom.

Another key element that emerges in these findings is repetition to engage children's participation during the lesson. In this regard, Pinter (2019) noted that when playing, children spontaneously engage in repetition, moreover when they want to repeat a game or activity that was fun the first time.

Sub-theme 4: Contextualized Use of English

Regarding this fourth sub-theme, the co-teacher argued that when students had a better comprehension of the target vocabulary, they used it more often. According to the co-teacher, when children understood the lexical items and had opportunities to use them in a contextualized manner, they felt more confident in using them. Furthermore, the co-teacher suggested that bingo promoted students' comprehension of the new language. The following quotes illustrate this point:

T: [The use of English] was also seen in the children's confidence since contextualizing it through the games gave children more confidence.

T: Bingo promoted more understanding.

T: That is not only naming but also understanding the vocabulary and everything related to it.

This is consistent with Mourão and Ellis's (2020) recommendations; they suggested teachers select a plan to develop explicit exposure to help students learn in familiar content and focus, providing opportunities for the children to listen and use words in a variety of contexts and on multiple occasions. In this manner, games are shown as an efficient strategy to foster English language learners.

SO3: To Identify Students' Perception of the Use of Games in the English Lesson

Data to address specific objective 3 were gathered in two group interviews applied to seven students at the end of the intervention. These interviews were transcribed, read, and

analyzed through thematic analysis. Obtained data were categorized and reported into one theme, enjoyment, and three sub-themes, namely, games, memory, and bingo (Figure 7).

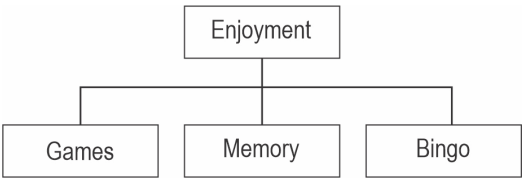


Figure 7. Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes Emerged from Children's Views

Source: Own creation

Theme: Enjoyment

Regarding this theme, findings show that students enjoyed the English language lessons, especially when games were implemented; most students identified games as their favorite aspect of the English language lessons. Furthermore, two children said that the lessons were fun. However, they were not able to refer to specific aspects they enjoyed. The following quotes show an example of this point:

Researcher: Do you like English language lessons?

Vane, Daniel, David [all at once]: Yes.

Andrea: I like everything.

Researcher: English language lessons are fun or boring?

David: Fun.

Vane: Everything [Referring to the fact that she likes everything about the ESL lesson].

Considering the interview answers, it can be concluded that in general children showed a positive attitude toward the English language lessons and they also enjoyed activities related to this specific subject. These findings are aligned with Pinter (2019) who suggested playful and fun tasks feed intrinsic motivation.

Sub-theme 1: Games

Regarding this first sub-theme, findings show that students enjoyed games in the English language lessons. Most students were able to identify their favorite game. However, it was hard for them to explain the reason behind this, with two students answering recursively *"just because"*, and because it was fun. One of the students mentioned that he enjoyed the mechanics

of games. Moreover, they suggested that in the future they would like to play games in the English language lessons. Examples of these points can be found in the following extracts:

Researcher: Did you like the games?

Vane, Daniel, David [all at once]: Yes.

David: When I work on the games.

Daniel: In the games.

Vane: The games.

Vane: [Nodded affirmatively with her head, referring that she likes both games: memory and bingo].

Researcher: Would you like to play more similar games later with some new words?

David, Daniel, and Vane [at the same time]: [Nodded their heads in agreement].

This positive perception about implementing games into English language lessons could be fostered by the game characteristics such as being useful, fun, and inviting to active participation; it is dynamic, and socially interactive (UNICEF, 2018). Similarly, the obtained data are consistent with the literature, when referring to the fact that the nature of the game fits children's nature. Games are a student-centered activity, which includes interaction, physical and cognitive activity, socialization, competition, and cooperation (Derakashan & Davoodi, 2015). These results are consistent with Inostroza's (2018) findings on children's views on games, their enjoyment, and engagement, which help them develop their language skills.

Sub-theme 2: Memory

Regarding this second sub-theme, findings show that four out of seven students identified the memory game as their favorite. However, they could not identify the reasons behind their choices, tending to say, *"Just because"*. Only three students verbalized them, two participants referred to their enjoyment, and one student referred to the mechanic of the game itself. The following quotes show this point:

Researcher: What do you like the most about the English language class?

David: Memory.

Daniela: Because it is fun.

Researcher: What was your favorite?

David: The memory.

David: Because…because you must find the same.

Sub-theme 3: Bingo

Regarding this third sub-theme, findings show that students presented a positive attitude to the Bingo game, even when most of the students did not identify it as their favorite game.

Students liked playing during lessons. Three out of seven students selected bingo as their favorite game. However, they were not able to identify the reasons behind their choices when asked. The following quotes show this point:

Vane: Bingo.

Andrea: Eh, bingo.

Findings showed that implementing games in English language lessons can foster children's use of English and promote student participation and motivation.

Conclusions

The current action research results provide evidence that the use of board games (memory and bingo) could contribute to pre-kindergarten students' oral use of English. They also show that games are valuable for EFL lessons as they engage and motivate children, allowing them to repeat a task without losing interest.

This intervention highlighted the key role played by English language teachers when planning appropriate strategies to teach English to pre-kindergarten learners by considering their characteristics and interests to support their vocabulary development. Moreover, teachers must know how to select and organize games to encourage English use, create conditions for all students to participate boldly and confidently, and develop their language skills.

Another aspect that emerges from the current study is the importance of innovation in the classroom, and the search for new strategies that motivate students into the adventure of learning a foreign language, fostering their learning processes.

While the current study presents insights into the contribution of games in EFL lessons, some limitations related to the study's data collection instruments have been identified. Unfortunately, video recordings were not allowed by the school authorities; this technique would have helped to clarify data obtained from each student's usage of language during the lessons. Further studies need to be carried out in the field of early foreign language learners, especially when referring to children under six years old.

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Appendix A
Observational Checklist

Session:		**Date:**		
Teacher:				
T.	**Item**	**Yes**	**No**	**Frequency**
Use of English.	Pre-task			
	Students identify vocabulary from the unit.			
	Students repeat vocabulary when requested (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	Students spontaneously reproduce vocabulary related to the unit (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	Students spontaneously reproduce vocabulary related to daily routines (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	When asked a question, students respond to it in English (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	While-task			
	When participating in the games, students verbalize the concept presented in English (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	When participating in the games, students verbalize the concept presented in Spanish (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	When participating in the games, the student does not respond verbally or physically about the concept presented (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	Post-task			
	When asked a question, students respond to it in English (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	When asked a question, students respond to it in Spanish (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			
	When asked a question he/she does not answer (the number of times this occurs is recorded).			

Appendix B
Co-teacher Semi-structured Interview

English version

Theme: Use of English.

1. Do you think there were changes with the implementation of the games? If yes, what changes did you observe on the part of the students?
2. Among the games implemented, in which of them did you observe a greater use of English by the students?
3. In which session of the intervention did you observe a greater use of English by the students?
4. In which session of the intervention did you observe a greater use of Spanish by the students?
5. Was spontaneous use of English by the students observed, and if so, on what occasions was this situation evidenced?

Appendix C
Student Group Interview

English version

Sub-themes	Questions:
Perception of the English class	1. Do you like English lessons? why? 2. What do you like most about the English classes? 3. What do you like least about English classes?
Perception of games	4. Do you like it when we play games in English class? why? 5. Which game was the one you liked the most? (images of the games played are shown to remember "Memory game" and Bingo are presented) Why? 6. What did you like the most when you were playing that game (images are presented of the students playing the game they mentioned in the previous question) Why?
Use of English	7. Did you speak English when you played? 8. Did you speak in Spanish when you played? 9. Did you speak in both English and Spanish when you played?

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Information Literacy and Discourse Analysis for Verifying Information among EFL Learners[1]

Alfabetización Informacional y Análisis del Discurso para Verificar la Información entre Estudiantes de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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Abstract

The task of verifying credible and original information is now more complicated, especially for undergraduate students. This study uses information literacy and discourse analysis to develop English as a foreign language learners' critical reading skills while verifying information on social media. A

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reading test including false news was used to assess the learners' awareness of the credibility of social media information. Then, they were divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was trained in evaluating a set of false news using information literacy and discourse analysis skills. The control group did not receive any training. The experiment was conducted again on both groups. The results show a significant improvement among the experimental group compared to the control group. The findings of this study shed light on the growing need for creating a pedagogical space in English as a foreign language classroom that focuses on raising learners' awareness of information literacy and discourse analysis skills to read with critical perspectives.

Keywords: fake news, information literacy skills, discourse analysis skills, EFL teaching

Resumen

La tarea de verificar información creíble y original es ahora más complicada, especialmente para los estudiantes universitarios. Este estudio utiliza la alfabetización informacional y el análisis del discurso para desarrollar las habilidades de lectura crítica de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera al verificar información en las redes sociales. Se utilizó una prueba de lectura que incluía noticias falsas para evaluar el conocimiento de los estudiantes sobre la credibilidad de la información en las redes sociales. Luego, los estudiantes se dividieron en grupos experimentales y de control. El grupo experimental se capacitó en la evaluación de un conjunto de noticias falsas con la utilización de habilidades de alfabetización informacional y análisis del discurso. El grupo de control no recibió ningún entrenamiento. El experimento se realizó de nuevo en ambos grupos. Los resultados muestran una mejora significativa entre el grupo experimental en comparación con el grupo de control. Los hallazgos de este estudio arrojan luz sobre la creciente necesidad de crear un espacio pedagógico en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera que se centre en aumentar la conciencia de los estudiantes sobre la alfabetización informacional y las habilidades de análisis del discurso para leer con perspectivas críticas.

Palabras clave: noticias falsas, habilidades de alfabetización informacional, habilidades de análisis del discurso, enseñanza de ILE

Introduction

The advancing technology in media and information systems has led to a growing increase in "participatory culture" where individuals are allowed to create and publish media; however, the authenticity and validity of knowledge have become highly questionable (Gretter & Yadav, 2016, p. 510). Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become a central hub through which an increasing amount of information is published, making it easier for people to access, use, create, and share different content (e.g., text, images, videos). This flow of information makes users subject to unlimited streaming of information leading many people, particularly college students, to be victims of "information overload" as well as "information anxiety" (Bawden & Robinson, 2009). The exposure to social media is likely accompanied by the threat of spreading false or inaccurate information deliberately or accidentally. Several terms and classifications have been introduced to refer to false/

inaccurate information. For instance, *fake news*, *misinformation*, *disinformation*, and *rumors* have been proposed to suggest the level of facticity and intention (see Tandoc et al., 2018; Wardle, 2017). Due to the lack of a clear-cut definition of the phenomenon, we, the researchers of this study, do not use a particular term, but instead, refer to them broadly as false or inaccurate information.

As reported in previous research (e.g. Arafah & Hasyim, 2022; Gretter & Yadav, 2016), the digital world and the internet make it available to exchange information worldwide, some information is created or manipulated by unknown parties to mislead readers. Consequently, many social media users fall victim to such unauthentic information. Since social media covers a broad spectrum of topics and issues, they have become a source of learning for college students. Lacking the skills to evaluate information may result in risks (e.g., legal, environmental, and health) due to an imperfect learning experience. To face such a challenge, college students need to possess skills that empower them to function more critically in today's digital world.

Findings from previous research on discourse analysis and language teaching/learning contend that learning a new language requires developing discourse skills that are necessary for coding and decoding different messages in that language (see Amari, 2015; Cots, 2006; Dar et al., 2010; Hammond, 2006; Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012). Thus, studies on the use of discourse analysis in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms have concluded that discourse-based approaches are "central to the process of enabling learners to become competent and efficient users of a new language" (Amari, 2015, p. 87). Further, as Hazaea and Alzubi (2017) point out, by using discourse analysis in classroom practices, students have become more active and critical language users in dealing with different texts and evaluating their contents. A similar observation was also reported by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) who stress that incorporating a discourse-oriented approach in language teaching is found to be more effective for language learning than the traditional grammar-oriented approach in which learners are not equipped with the necessary skills for evaluating the text.

As it can be noted, investigating EFL learners' skills to evaluate the credibility and reliability of information is a research area that has not been explored enough in the literature. This situation urges us, as academicians, to examine college students' ability to verify and evaluate the credibility of information on social media to obtain, make use of, and share reliable and valuable information. Thus, this study aims to explore how EFL undergraduates' critical reading practices can be improved using information literacy and discourse analysis skills. It focuses on Saudi EFL undergraduate students. To accomplish this goal, we, as the researchers, invest in training EFL learners on information literacy and discourse analysis skills to help them gain lifelong learning while critically evaluating information on social media and assessing their credibility. Since information on social media can be textual or

with images and videos, we are concerned mainly with textual content such as written posts and tweets.

Literature Review

Information Literacy

Traditionally, *information literacy* has been used to introduce to and train students and researchers on searching, finding, and using print resources such as books and encyclopedias. Several definitions and frameworks of information literacy have been proposed to describe a range of essential competencies to learn. For instance, the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Library Association (2000, 2001) have broadly defined information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to discern when information is needed and to find, assess, and apply that information effectively and proposed a set of standards and performance indicators (2000, p. 64). Also, the Chartered Institute of Library Information Professionals (CILIP; 2018) defined information literacy as the capacity to analyze information critically and reach fair conclusions about any data people discover and use. It enables citizens to reach and express knowledgeable opinions and actively participate in society. Other organizations, such as UNESCO (2005), defined information literacy as a process of developing people's abilities to evaluate and judge opinions or claims. Information literacy emerged as a response to a host of communication that requires specific competencies such as finding authentic sources and identifying authorship. The goals of obtaining information literacy skills are for individuals to build lifelong learning and make educated decisions on varying content with a critical eye. These goals developed throughout the formation of the information literacy concept and are shared in almost all definitions. Although the main goals of information literacy are still relevant, the methods and techniques to achieve them change in line with the recent advances in technology and teaching or training.

The internet allows people from different parts of the world to access and publish information not subject to editorial review. Thus, the concept of modern information literacy was developed, recognizing the overlap with other forms of literacies (e.g., digital, media, and the web), which all share common aspects. The variety of literacy forms can be explained in terms of emerging technologies and by emphasizing specific domains. Mackey and Jacobson (2011) point out that this situation calls for reframing information literacy, and thus, propose an overarching concept to combine emerging technologies and other literacy forms under "metaliteracy." This is driven by social media in which different modalities are utilized and distinguished by "the recognition of producing and sharing information in

collaborative online environments" (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011, p. 64) and open the door widely for emerging literacy forms.

Discourse Analysis and Information Literacy

As the internet and social media have become essential tools to delineate how people communicate, there has been a growing interest in using discourse analysis as an approach to explore language and discourses of contexts (Bouvier, 2015). Michel Foucault was the first scholar to introduce discourse analysis as a research approach. According to Foucault (1972, p. 117), discourse is a system for "knowledge formation" where statements go to the same *discursive formation*. In this *discourse formation,* the statements are reported to have four features as summarized in the following: they signify the same object, are articulated in the same way, have a common system of "conceptualizations", and have similar topics or concepts (Jansen, 2008, p. 109).

Discourse analysis has become an important analytical approach for "capturing the socially and culturally shaped ways of understanding information competencies and information practices" (Limberg et al., 2012, p. 110). The focus of the discourse analysts is on *interpretive repertoires* through which meanings to "information competences and practices" are constructed. As Limberg et al. (2012) point out, this means that discourse as an analytical approach sets out to investigate information literacy discourses rather than having the information competencies unchallenged. Further, studies have shown that discourse analysis functions as an interdisciplinary research tool alongside other research methods to demonstrate different perspectives for studying the underlying meanings of various texts (see Hamdi, 2018; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

By looking at the literature on discourse analysis and information literacy, it can be noted that such studies have different concentrations. Although there is a growing research interest in information literacy discourses (see Haider & Bawden, 2007; Heok & Luyt, 2010; Kapitzke, 2003a, 2003b; Pawley, 2003; Tuominen et al., 2005), many other discourse-analytical studies have focused on topics related to library and information science. Also, there are other areas related to research in information literacy such as information type, information desires, and information and interaction facilities (see Hedemark et al., 2005; Olsson, 2009; Talja, 1997).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in critical discourse analysis (CDA) in English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) studies (Amari, 2015). For instance, Cook (1989) explains in more detail how discourse analysis can be an essential resource for both language teachers and learners. According to Cook (1989), the regularly used language teaching approach is not enough to make language learners aware of critical

components of their discourse community (p. 75). Thus, he contends that doing discourse analysis is like using a "top-down" reading method, which is necessary for making learners aware of critical discourse perspectives related to "textual and social context" (p. 81). Similar conclusions were also reported in other studies in which the use of discourse analysis as an approach in language teaching is found to effect significant shifts "from pure linguistic study of text to the study of language in use, from bottom-up via top-down to interactive approach, from prior knowledge-oriented approach to awareness-oriented approach" (Ivanov, 2009, p. 24).

Furthermore, the situation becomes more problematic in EFL reading classes where students "are often marginalized as readers; their goals in interacting with written texts are perceived to be primarily those of language learners" (Wallace, 1992, p. 62). Likewise, Fairclough (1992) also contends that not enough attention has been given to important social factors in language teaching that are related to language and power. This might be due to the pedagogical practices in EFL reading classes that focus only on "the propositional content" and do not pay attention to the underlying "ideological assumptions" embedded in the texts (Amari, 2015, p. 88).

To bridge the existing gap between theories of learning and CDA, researchers have called for the use of CDA as a practical framework in EFL classrooms for exploring the students' abilities of the inquisitive and reflective skills of the materials they are learning. Thus, like the findings of previous research that have shown the significant role that CDA plays in EFL research (see Al Ghazali, 2007; Hammond, 2006), recent studies have also concluded with the same observations where CDA is found to provide detailed insights into language use that communicate important messages embedded in the texts (see Amari, 2015; Hazaea & Alzubi, 2017). As for the significant impact of CDA on developing EFL students' critical thinking skills, results from EFL classes have reached the same conclusion (see Dar et al., 2010; Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012; Rahimi, 2013).

To sum up, previous studies' findings emphasized the need to develop EFL learners' evaluative skills of online information by raising students' awareness of some critical discursive features. However, when looking at the literature, no study so far has attempted to explore the phenomenon in the Saudi EFL context. The present study addresses this limitation in the literature by investigating social media news stories to enhance Saudi EFL learners' digital awareness and critical reading skills. So, motivated by previous research findings, this study adopted a functional analytical framework to fully understand language in use, demonstrating an analysis that links language use to the elements required for meaning interpretation. These elements are known as the seven building blocks, which are used in this study to explain how misinformation functions in communication.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Gee's (2011, 2010) theory of the Seven Building Tasks. As Gee's theory states, "language-in-use is about saying-doing-being and gains its meaning from the game or practice it is part of and enacts" (2011, p. 11). This means that our understanding as researchers of language in use requires a comprehensive analysis that incorporates "what is being said, who is saying it and what they are trying to be or do", and different types of discourses involved in the process (Jaime, 2014, p. 274). Thus, our argument for the use of Gee's theory is supported by the fact that Gee's method provides a functional framework that connects language use with the factors necessary for the interpretations of the meanings. These factors are presented as seven-building tasks which are employed in this study to explicate the communicative functions of false news.

The seven-building tasks assume that language is used to perform some actions to build things in the world, such as warning and making requests. These tasks include *significance*, *practice*, *identity*, *relationships*, *politics*, *connection*, and *sign system and knowledge*. One or more of the seven-building tasks are assumed to be present in every actual language use.

Accordingly, a set of questions adapted from Gee's seven-building tasks (2010, 2011) to analyze discourse was designed. The questions were used to draw participants' attention to the discursive features of real language use of misinformation. Four multiple answers-questions were designed based on only four tasks: *significance*, *practice*, *identity,* and *relationships*. These tasks were thought more relevant to the readings since they were identified based on the subject matter of the readings. The researchers simplified the format and language of the questions so that participants could understand them.

Methods

Study Design

An experimental pre-post-test design was used in which an experimental and a control group participated before and after treatment. The participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. To examine if the participants exercise a critical approach toward the credibility of social media information, a reading test comprising false news stories was prepared. The reading test was projected on a smartboard; then, the participants were given the following instructions: (1) this is a reading test but is not graded, (2) the reading was taken from one of the messages exchanged on social media, (3) the participant has 45 minutes to finish the test. Following the pre-test, the participants attended a training program on critical reading of information on social media and they were tested again on the

same experiment to check if their reading skills improved. The control group did not receive any treatment and was tested again to compare their scores with the experimental group.

Research Context

The study was conducted in a public university setting located in the southern part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where EFL undergraduates take a compulsory fifteen-weekly hour English course. The course aims to develop core language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to enable EFL undergraduates to communicate successfully with an emphasis on academic purposes.

Participants

The participants were about sixty male undergraduates studying English as a foreign language at the intermediate level based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR- level B1). They were first-year college students whose ages were between 18 and 20 with Arabic as their first language. These students share similar characteristics: gender, age, and linguistic and cultural background. Two classes of 30 students each were conveniently selected. The two classes had the same instructor, course plan, and teaching hours. All participants consented before the experiment.

Intervention

The experimental group participated in a training program of 12 sessions over six weeks before the post-test. The program trained the participants in evaluating the news stories on social media. To check the source of the news/information, the researcher would ask and guide participants to verify if the news was published on other websites or platforms and whether such websites are run by institutions, organizations, or business entities. The participants were encouraged to see if the news was published professionally in which sufficient information about the source was given and if there were grammatical or spelling mistakes. The readings selected for the training comprised false information like those used for the reading test.

The researchers explained the four building tasks in more detail. For the significance-building task, the participants' attention was drawn to the words and phrases used to increase or decrease the significance of information, e.g., *apparently* and *of course*. The identity-building task introduced the participants to the use of language to enact or exhibit varying social identities, such as a doctor and journalist. Also, the practice-building task was explained, emphasizing training the participants on using language to enact several practices or activities such as writing and publishing news. Finally, the participants were familiarized with the

relationship-building task such as using language to project social relationships in formal and informal contexts.

The participants were also encouraged to go beyond the texts and think about social practices and relationships that authors of the false news exploit to get their message across. Furthermore, the participants were guided and reminded to use the worksheet's recommended procedures such as identifying the source information and the writer and whether the same information is published on other websites or platforms.

The program included further discussion to raise awareness about social media and the need to evaluate its content before using or sharing it. The researchers interacted with the participants and engaged in their learning, encouraging them to be independent, responsible, and more critical about unauthentic information on social media as informed citizens incorporating examples of issues and problems from different parts of the world.

Data Sources

The data were collected from pre- and post-reading tests. The reading test used in the experiment consisted of two parts: the first part comprised ten false news messages circulating on social media platforms (Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram). The second part of the reading test was a short false news story of approximately 80 words debunked by Snopse.com (a fact-checking website). The selection of the materials in the reading test was based on whether it is widely circulated on social media and has a simple, straightforward language for EFL learners. As stated before, the participants in the two groups were not aware if the news was false or not.

A lesson plan (on teaching English) and a worksheet on identifying fake news adapted from the British Council (2019) were utilized along with the seven-building tasks (Gee, 2010, 2011). This lesson plan does not follow a specific model of information literacy but rather is concerned with the practical aspects (e.g., evaluating information and identifying/using reliable search tools) that are commonly addressed by several models. However, the focus was on the web and social media environments, including access, use, and share functionalities. The worksheet encouraged the participants to check the validity of the website or platform by asking five major questions such as "Where does the information come from?" and "When was the post put online?"

The statistic t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups before and after the treatment. A paired-samples *t*-test was employed to get means, standard deviations, and significances. The collected data from the pre- and post-reading tests were analyzed. For triangulation purposes, the paired-samples *t*-test was also used to compare the data and correlate the results. So, to decide whether there

are statically significant differences between the two groups before and after treatment, the paired-samples pre- and post-*t*-tests were conducted to the two groups at the four tasks (significance, activity, identity, and relationship).

Data Analysis & Results

The pre-reading tests were conducted on the experimental and control groups separately administered by the researchers. The participants' responses and scores were saved in tabular forms in a spreadsheet software. The same procedures were followed for the post-reading test. Descriptive statistics were performed using the software. Regarding the first part of the reading test, identifying ten news messages as true or false, the results showed that the participants of the experimental and control groups had difficulty identifying false news in the pre-test. However, the experimental group participants achieved significant progress in recognizing false news and applying all four tasks (significance, activity, identity, and relationship) in the post-test. On the other hand, the participants of the control group were generally unable to recognize false news in the post-test, though they improved in using the identity and relationship tasks. Table 1 below summarizes in percentages the participants' failure to identify false news before treatment, whereas Table 2 shows their progress after treatment.

Table 1. The Participants' Failure to Identify False News Pre-treatment

News #	Experimental Group	Control Group
N1	95%	92%
N2	80%	83%
N3	79%	77%
N4	57%	67%
N5	70%	75%
N6	84%	84%
N7	80%	84%
N8	84%	75%
N9	84%	84%
N10	84%	84%

Table 2. The Participants' Failure to Identify False News Post-treatment

News #	Experimental Group	Control Group
N1	25%	92%
N2	30%	60%
N3	25%	84%
N4	25%	84%
N5	30%	59%
N6	7%	92%
N7	30%	35%
N8	30%	25%
N9	50%	58%
N10	20%	60%

As to applying the four tasks (significance, activity, identity, and relationship) from the seven building tasks, both experimental and control groups were roughly homogenous in their lack of critical reading skills before the intervention. The participants responded to the questions of the second part of the reading test. These questions corresponded to the four building tasks; each of which was assigned one point. The participants' scores in the pre-tests and post-tests were recorded and saved. The statistical analysis was performed, and the following is a breakout of the participants' scores which *effective* indicates students' ability to apply the task.

Significance Task Pre-treatment

The paired-samples pre-*t*-test shows that both groups had similar mean scores. The standard deviation was also the same (1.31) for both groups and there was no statistically significant difference as demonstrated in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Significance Task Paired-samples Pre-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	2.00	1.31	0.16
Control Group	Effective	2.00		

Significance Task Post-treatment

The significance task paired-samples post-*t*-test demonstrates that the experimental group's participants achieved better progress than the control group. The experimental group's mean score was 5.50, while the control group's mean score was 2.50. The standard deviation was 3.50 and there was a significant difference between both groups in favor of the experimental group at a significance rate of 2.50 (see Table 4).

Table 4. Significance Task Paired-samples Post-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	5.50	3.54	2.50
Control Group	Effective	2.50		

Activity Task Pre-treatment

The paired-samples pre-*t*-test shows that both groups had similar mean scores. The standard deviation was also the same (1.41) for both groups and there was no statistically significant difference as demonstrated in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Activity Task Paired-samples Pre-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	2.30	1.41	0.16
Control Group	Effective	2.30		

Activity Task Post-treatment

The activity paired-samples post-*t*-test shows that the experimental group achieved noticeable progress in applying the activity-building task. There were significant differences between both groups in the post-test in favor of the experimental group where the significance rate was 4.00, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Activity Task Paired-samples Post-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	7.00	5.66	4.00
Control Group	Effective	5.00		

Identity Task Pre-treatment

The paired-samples pre-*t*-test shows that both groups had similar mean scores. The standard deviation was also the same 0.71 for both groups and there was no statistically significant difference as demonstrated in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Identity Task Paired-samples Pre-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	3.50	0.71	0.13
Control Group	Effective	3.50		

Identity Task Post-treatment

The paired-samples post-*t*-test of both groups shows little progress in favor of the experimental group, but this difference was not significant as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Identity Task Paired-samples Post-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	6.50	0.71	0.50
Control Group	Effective	5.50		

Relationship Task Pre-treatment

Both the experimental and control groups were homogenous in the mean scores of the relationship-building task paired-samples pre-test. They were also similar in the standard deviation and there was no statistically significant difference between both groups (see Table 9).

Table 9. Relationship Task Paired-samples Pre-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	3.50	0.71	0.13
Control Group	Effective	3.50		

Relationship Task Post-treatment

As to the relationship paired-samples post-*t*-test, both groups achieved progress but the students in the experimental group advanced the control group participants as illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10. Relationship Task Paired-samples Post-t-test

Treatment		Mean	SD	SE
Experimental Group	Effective	9.00	2.83	2.00
Control Group	Effective	4.00		

The findings from the paired-samples pre-*t*-test at the four skills demonstrate that both experimental and control groups lack the critical reading skills needed when accessing news stories on social media. Before the treatment, the participants were not aware of the manipulated content as their main goal was to understand the text rather than to evaluate its content. However, there was an overall satisfactory level of improvement among the experimental-group participants to evaluate the credibility of social media news after the treatment compared to the control group. This improvement in the critical reading practices of these participants explicitly communicates to us as researchers and language teachers the significant role of effective classroom pedagogy in fostering critical thinking and critical reading skills in EFL classrooms. These participants developed critical perspectives to evaluate the text instead of accepting it as it is.

The differences between the experimental and control groups can be attributed to three factors: Language proficiency in which EFL learners in both groups vary in their reading skills which, consequently, accounts for their comprehension. The teaching methods during the intervention might not be effective for some participants. Naturally, some participants are not active in social life and social media, and thus, may not be interested in critical issues or trending topics. Additionally, other possible factors can be related to the fact that the participants in the two groups may not be aware of the format of the posts, which makes them more susceptible to being misinformed.

Discussion

Throughout the intervention, the participants were responsive and interactive in learning the strategies and techniques to check the validity of news stories. Their attachment to social

media attracted them to participate in this study actively and learn something new while, at the same time, allowing their digital literacies, voices, and ideas to grow (Jerasa & Boffone, 2021). They were aware of the spread of false news on social media, but they thought it was too difficult to recognize and that such topics were not part of their academic studies. This reaction was not unexpected since most undergraduates' familiarity with information literacy is confined to study skills (e.g., using libraries and online resources for academic purposes). Thus, it may be wise to adopt a more comprehensive model of information literacy that acknowledges the innovations of Web 2.0 and social media (Arafah & Hasyim, 2022; Karman, 2014; Mackey & Jacobson, 2011) and train individuals on a range of literacy perspectives.

One of the significant benefits of empowering students to evaluate news and information is maintaining responsible citizenship (Craft et al., 2016), and empowering students to act and make a difference (Delaney et al., 2022) which this study is thought to achieve. Similarly, the findings of this study call for incorporating critical media literacy pedagogy in classroom practices in which "media representation, power, and ideology" are important concepts to be integrated into teaching (Garcia et al., 2013, p. 110). In such classroom practices, teachers should encourage students to raise inquiries about media content and "to evaluate and analyze media messages, to reflect on the media they create, and to remain open to changing their minds as they take in new information and hear others' perspectives" (Rogow, 2011, p. 18).

Training students on the four building tasks complemented their learning to check the validity of news published on social media platforms. By asking questions from the worksheet about the source, date of publishing, and the writer/author, a reasonable amount of contextual information is created making it easier for subsequent discourse analysis using Gee's (2010, 2011) building tasks. Since the building tasks adopt a functional approach to language that prioritizes communication and social interaction, such as Halliday's (see Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014), emphasis was placed on the meanings expressed by false news. Thus, engaging students in the larger social context by discussing current issues and trending topics at the local and international levels spark their enthusiasm to assume a more active role in evaluating news stories in circulation. It was remarkable to see improvement in using the post-test relationship task among the experimental and control groups. This improvement may be referred to memory effect "observer memory" and partly due to the students' efforts to carefully seek a better answer to the question.

Investigating the impact of information literacy and discourse analysis skills on EFL students' ability to verify social media information has provided us, as researchers and teachers, with important insights into EFL classroom pedagogy that need to be highlighted in EFL classroom research. Accordingly, results have shown that incorporating important pedagogical concepts in classroom practices such as critical media literacy can raise students' awareness and make them more prepared to evaluate textual materials with conceptual and

critical acumen. Like the findings of previous research (Amari, 2015; Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012; Hazaea & Alzubi, 2017; Rahimi, 2013), incorporating skills from discourse analysis in classroom pedagogy can help to make students more active language learners to inquire about the credibility of knowledge instead of being passive learners.

There are two limitations to this study. Although the findings of this study show how EFL students' critical reading skills developed with the necessary training, they did not reveal what general evaluative skills students had before the intervention. A critical viewpoint was exhibited as a set of behavioral conditions toward the knowledge as it may have affected how the students approached the information. Yet, further research is needed to confirm whether the conceptual, more cognitive work was changed because of this intervention.

Conclusion

Recent advances in information and media have made it challenging to analyze and explore the validity and reliability of online texts as the authenticity of knowledge has become highly questionable. This study used information literacy and discourse analysis skills to improve EFL learners' critical reading skills to verify social media information. A reading test including false news was used to evaluate students' awareness of the credibility of social media information. The participants were divided into experimental and control groups. Although the results showed that the experimental and control groups' participants had difficulty identifying false news in the pre-test, the experimental group improved in applying all four tasks (significance, activity, identity, and relationship) in the post-test. The results reflect an urgent need to empower undergraduate students with information literacy and discourse analysis skills to deal with an ongoing flow of information online. Educational institutions should assume the responsibility of designing training programs on information literacy and discourse analysis skills for undergraduate students. A critical perspective of language use, through information literacy and discourse analysis skills, should help students respond to evolving world events and make informed decisions. Based on the results of this study, further research on digital discourse analysis should be encouraged.

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Addressing Emotional Aspects in the Second Language Learning Processes

Aspectos Emocionales en los Procesos de Aprendizaje de Segunda Lengua

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language incorporates cognitive, communicative, emotional, and social aspects. Some of these aspects have to do with the structure of the language being studied; some others deal with social and psychological issues that influence the environment where the learning process takes place. This reflection paper addresses various emotional aspects that can bring up positive outcomes along the foreign language learning stages. Elements such as motivation, attitudes, levels of anxiety, acculturation, ethnicity, and personality are considered for this work. Readers should be able to find useful ideas for their ESL/EFL classes.

Keywords: acculturation, affective filter, anxiety, ethnicity, motivation

Resumen

El aprendizaje de una segunda lengua implica asuntos cognitivos, comunicativos, emocionales y sociales. Algunos de ellos tienen que ver con la estructura de la lengua; algunos otros tratan con asuntos sociales y psicológicos que afectan el medio donde sucede el aprendizaje. Este trabajo de reflexión se enfoca en presentar algunos aspectos emocionales que pueden hacer más eficaz el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Entre los aspectos a considerar, se tendrán en cuenta elementos tales como la motivación, actitudes, aculturación, niveles de ansiedad, etnicidad y personalidad. Este artículo presenta ideas aplicables en las clases de inglés como segunda lengua, o como lengua extranjera.

Palabras Clave: aculturación, ansiedad, etnicidad, filtro afectivo, motivación

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Introduction

Globalization integrates languages and cultures throughout the world; this integration implies the acquisition and use of foreign languages in different scenarios. Teaching a foreign language, particularly in the academic context of school or college addressed in this reflection paper, is a process that involves several stages for learners to reach proficiency, aiming ultimately at the consolidation of communicative and cultural competence. Different teaching methodologies can have a definite impact on the learning processes of students, regardless of their academic context (school or college). Effective foreign language competence brings about a sense of adequacy and ability when interacting in the global village.

There are fair differences between learning a foreign language at school or college. Nevertheless, for this reflection paper, the learning of the target language is approached considering both contexts, since both settings involve cognitive, communicative, and affective factors. The concepts presented throughout this paper can be considered within the context of school or college ESL/EFL lessons equally. It is important to mention that, although students are regularly engaged in formal academic contexts and learners may not, for this paper the concepts of students and learners will be used equivalently.

Learning a language implies a chain of steps that encompass the development of linguistic consciousness and communicative skills, as well as the realization of language and culture differences. Learning another language is much more than a cognitive/memory process that enables students to obtain passing scores in exams. Krashen (1982) suggests that practice for exams does not necessarily lead to deeper acquisition of the second language. Testing, from his perspective, aims at measuring language or course requirements; it does not always demonstrate linguistic and communicative competence.

What happens inside the classroom is mediated by factors like group size, adequate resources, teacher-student ratio, fitting locations, and the learners' emotional conditions (among others). The considerations presented in this paper mainly approach some emotional and cultural aspects associated with the ESL/EFL classroom. Although this reflection paper is presented within the context of teaching English as a foreign language, the emotional aspects developed here apply to any target language learning process as well.

Going back in time, constructivism was considered one of the most embraced educational insights for teaching languages. Szabo (2023), mentions Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Gardner as early scholars who set the foundations for this approach, in which students actively construct meaning by interacting with knowledge. Constructivism is a theory developed in the late 70s and early 80s, and it sets up a specific framework for student-teacher roles: teachers facilitate the building blocks for students to actively build up their knowledge. Although its origins date from a long time ago, the core concepts of constructivism still

apply to the ESL/EFL classroom today. The essentials of the constructivist theory are well summarized by Bodner (1986), concluding that constructivism requires a shift from being passive learners (students) to active learners.

Constructivism sees students as the main, active participants in the learning process; they build their knowledge as they progress through different stages. Teachers are the facilitators, who in turn provide students with the 'building blocks' that they need to develop their knowledge. This approach also revamps educators with a shift from teaching a one-way lesson (lecturing) to facilitating learning.

Constructivism implies a reformulation of the teachers´ role, giving them a high sensitivity to meet their students' needs, not only in terms of concepts being "acquired", but also dealing with internal and external factors that could affect the language acquisition process. Teachers are expected to observe the stages in the learning process that students engage in, and to pace the delivery of the learning 'building blocks.' This idea assumes a class environment where teachers can check how students regularly progress to assess the new elements that they can incorporate into the language consolidation processes.

Another important characteristic of a constructivist class is that teachers consider students' feelings as they acquire and consolidate the target language. Students' feelings inside the classroom relate to the concept of the affective filter hypothesis, one of the variables that Krashen (1982) includes in his research about second language acquisition. Krashen considers that there are several affective variables related to language learning, in which motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety stand out.

The affective filter, as one of the items related to language learning, can be defined as the emotional stress produced when learning a new concept. The awareness about this affective filter implies, for teachers, understanding that the amounts of stress that learners may experience when approaching new concepts/tasks can vary from person to person. Teachers' goal is to lower students' affective filter - level of stress - to have a more relaxed environment, where the different learning stages can happen easily. Addressing the variables of motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety properly can foster better learning processes as well.

The reflections shared in this paper focus on learners' emotional state as a prevailing element that influences the effective acquisition of any language. A high affective filter creates barriers in students and consequently hinders their learning processes. Similarly, a low affective filter relaxes the class environment, and it allows students to learn naturally and without stress. To expand on this idea, this paper explores the concepts of motivation, attitudes, acculturation, levels of anxiety, and personality. These concepts are developed in this paper since they have a significant impact on students' language learning processes. Closing reflections present several ideas related to ethnicity providing useful strategies

to address emotional and cultural factors related to the second language acquisition and consolidation processes.

Motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1972) are researchers frequently associated with the concept of motivation in the ESL/EFL classroom. Their early findings present two kinds of motivation: integrative motivation, defined as a desire to identify with the target language group, and instrumental motivation, which is a desire to use the language to obtain practical skills to communicate effectively. Gardner and Lambert's considerations have been quoted in education several times, validating the theory of motivation as a crucial element in the second or foreign language learning process.

Brown (2000) quotes researchers such as Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) approaching these types of motivation. He notes that, for learners who want to live abroad, integrative motivation is generally stronger than instrumental; integrative motivation is a powerful influence in opening the student's mind to new linguistic and cultural aspects. However, in the last decades, the interest in foreign languages as a work tool has increased; therefore, better job openings validate instrumental motivation for learning another language. In addition to being an asset for better job opportunities, the ability to use a foreign language competently has had an impact on the person's social and cultural contexts.

MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) indicate that:

> Many language educators are aware of the importance of improving individual learners' experiences of language learning by helping them to develop and maintain their motivation, perseverance, and resiliency, as well as positive emotions necessary for the long-term undertaking of learning a foreign language. (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 156)

These authors concur that learning a foreign language is not an easy task, and it takes time and consistency to attain competence; similarly, they validate the importance of motivation and resilience throughout the process. They also state that motivation needs to be developed and maintained if students are engaged in learning or consolidating their foreign language.

The benefits coming from consistent drive and continuous effort help learners balance their emotional condition, knowing that they are building up their communicative competence. This realization helps them understand that it could be acceptable to make mistakes while language consolidates and keeps their eyes on the goal: language attainment. Consistency and effort are the key.

These insights show that integrating both motivation and resilience is important as part of the student's emotional components in the ESL/EFL classroom. Either the motivation

derived from the identification with the target culture, or the professionally oriented motivation will encourage learners along their second language processes. Teachers could use generating questions that not only bring learning down to the students' real life but also motivate them in their academic journey. Once students engage, it is highly possible that they feel at ease with the topic of conversation, thus reducing anxiety. Likewise, and along the lines of the constructivist theory, having students participate actively in the selection of class material can increase their motivation.

Students feel more willing to interact in class if the topics relate to personal experience, or if they carry a positive emotional connotation for them. Once teachers are aware of elements that can stir up their students' motivation (integrative or instrumental), they can focus on one or the other, accordingly. Integrative motivation can be used within the context of multicultural awareness, helping students understand the benefits of integration with the target culture, while they appreciate specific aspects of both local and foreign cultures. Instrumental motivation can also help students set specific goals, like elaborating academic papers, crafting personal statements for college, or obtaining passing scores in international certifications. Preparation towards that specific goal, along with a sense of adequacy, can motivate learners to make the most out of their target language lessons.

Attitudes

The second element to consider when learning languages is the attitude of learners toward different aspects associated with the process: attitudes toward themselves, attitudes toward teachers and the class, and attitudes toward the target language and its culture. They all have an impact on the consolidation and use of the language. Consequently, they can affect learners' emotional condition. Each one of these elements is approached separately as follows.

Attitudes toward the Learner

Brown (2000) presents three levels of self-esteem resulting from learners' attitudes and experiences towards themselves. These levels have to do with global, situational, and task-oriented self-esteem. Brown (2000) notes that self-esteem appears to be an important variable in second language acquisition. Addressing each one of these levels positively can have a supportive impact on learners' emotional condition when consolidating a foreign language.

Global self-esteem comes from the awareness of students' value within the context of a family, classroom, social group, etc. Concepts such as self-value, self-competence, and adequacy need to be incorporated by teachers in their classes regularly. Considering school

and college as the context of this paper, self-value can be understood as the person's sense of personal worth. Likewise, self-competence refers to the balance between self-awareness and efficacy. Adequacy has to do with being capable of doing something. If ESL/EFL students understand these concepts and assess themselves taking them into account, self-value, self-competence, and adequacy can play a positive role in the learning process. Students can identify how effective or competent they are, and how capable they feel when using the target language.

In addition to global self-esteem, promoting a safe learning environment policy inside the classroom benefits all students; they realize that they are active participants in the processes that take place in their classes. They feel less shy, and more relaxed to use the language in different contexts. This situation, in turn, generates stronger bonds among them, who realize that they are in the same conditions. A safe learning environment reduces anxiety and encourages competence, not perfection (although linguistic and communicative accuracy need to be kept in perspective).

Situational self-esteem is a concept derived from the assertiveness with which students can manage different learning contexts. It might be useful to start with familiar, informal environments to consolidate the earlier stages of the target language use so that they can increase their situational self-esteem when interacting in those situations appropriately. Once they feel competent enough to communicate in informal environments, they challenge their language competence to engage in more serious (formal/demanding) contexts. Progressive attainment, and the feeling of adequacy while facing new situations, empower students, reducing their emotional distress.

The reader can take as an example of this concept of accomplishment the progression in the overall descriptors presented in the Common European Framework of Reference, CEFR (originally published in 2001 and expanded in 2018), which starts from basic, immediate contexts of communication, increasing their levels of complexity towards academic, work-oriented contexts. The updated version of the CEFR, released in 2018, provides further descriptions of each competence descriptor, ranging from breakthrough levels up to mastery. These descriptors can be used informally in class so that each student can self-assess their competence in each one of the skills. The feeling of attainment after evaluating each person's competence will have a positive impact on self-esteem by helping them understand what has been achieved so far while motivating them to move forward.

Task-oriented self-esteem is directly related to the levels of confidence that students experience when engaging successfully in specific classroom tasks. For instance, some students might feel that they have stronger writing skills and weaker listening comprehension skills, and this awareness affects how they face specific classroom activities. Consistent, authentic practice in multiple contexts can help students get more and more familiar with

specific tasks, empowering them to engage with lower levels of stress. First, students should be able to feel comfortable interacting with the language, and then confidence will start to be consolidated.

Identifying where students stand regarding self-esteem can help them better assess how a positive approach to themselves might boost their confidence in learning. Teachers should be able to identify students' attitudes and self-esteem concepts inside and outside the language classroom; these feelings can be addressed in class by generating (meaningful) questions before engaging in specific classroom activities. Likewise, self-esteem and its implications for a particular student can be addressed within the context of informal teacher-student conversations.

If students possess high self-esteem, this feeling may lead to a better performance in languages. This happens because, in most cases, self-esteem leads to self-confidence. Alam et al. (2021) consider that self-confidence and foreign/second language acquisition are deeply connected; their studies assume that any kind of learning, success, and achievement, are influenced by self-confidence. This reflection agrees with individual perspectives that come up after having shared with school and college students in different ESL/EFL classrooms for almost thirty years.

Furthermore, Brown (2000) implies that teachers can have a positive influence on students' linguistic performance and emotional well-being. When students see that they can communicate effectively in the target language, their self-esteem grows stronger, and it encourages them to continue working on their skills. A positive attitude can surely result in a more positive performance, thus reducing anxiety.

Self-confidence is another aspect that influences the development of students' linguistic knowledge. They need to realize that a language is acquired progressively; it is a chain of steps that requires time and reinforcement to be internalized in terms of new linguistic patterns and structures. Once they feel that they have acquired new grammar/vocabulary, and they see using them effectively, their self-confidence levels make them feel that second language proficiency arises. Linguistic empowerment can reduce levels of stress when using the language.

Mechanization, perceived as drilling and repetition of specific grammatical structures, could be considered useful here if it aims at accuracy in the use of the target language. Drilling has had negative connotations when approached as the useless completion of grammar and vocabulary exercises out of context. Needless to mention, mechanization processes are not the core of the ESL/EFL lesson, since teachers should aim at competence and real-life language, going beyond repetition and mechanical application of structures. Gamification and interactive strategies can make the consolidation of grammar and vocabulary friendlier, and

consequently, more engaging. Once structures are mastered, the feeling of self-confidence empowers students to go further in communication.

Once students see that they can manage specific grammatical structures efficiently when sharing their own life experiences in the target language, they understand that practice ´pays off´. The effort and time involved in language consolidation activities have enabled them with strong foundations to face real-life situations with confidence. In this way, self-confidence can increase students' willingness to communicate while decreasing levels of anxiety.

Attitudes toward the Teacher and the Class

A second relevant aspect in the processes of language development is the learner's attitude toward the teacher and the classroom. As stated by Ha Thi Yen Nhi et al. (2022), internal and external factors contribute to speaking anxiety. Thus, a negative classroom environment can make learners uneasy, leading to drawbacks in communication. Consequently, if learners feel comfortable with their teachers (and classmates) and if they trust them, they will feel free to ask any type of questions and to make mistakes.

This is a major goal for teachers: to create an environment where the learning process takes place in a comfortable -though encouraging- way. A key element here is teachers' attitude because their examples can set the tone for the class. If teachers deal with learners' attitudes and mistakes, and if they take those mishaps as starting points for new learning opportunities, language development will be easier, and anxiety will decrease. Learning from mistakes benefits not only an individual but also the whole class.

When considering a positive classroom environment, my teaching experience underscores several considerations based on regular interaction with learners. In the first place, foreign language classrooms should be places where the stories, interests, skills, and goals of every classroom member are all used for the benefit of the group. This perspective implies validating individualities equally and making sure that all voices are often heard. Inclusion, understood as one classroom for all students, with equal access and opportunities, needs to be part of any classroom, especially ESL/EFL classrooms.

Secondly, teachers need to help students understand that communication styles vary from person to person, and this phenomenon carries both positive and negative connotations inside the classroom, and in real life. Some communication styles can be misinterpreted, and this is a valuable opportunity for teachers to help them overcome these confusions in a timely way. Correspondingly, introducing an awareness of register and formal or informal contexts becomes another useful tool for this purpose. Continuous feedback at the end of specific classroom activities also contributes to the identification and solution of potential confusion.

Additionally, we as language teachers, have the chance to encourage the development of friendship among students with whom we share our daily lessons. It is a fact that communication does not happen in isolation; life does not happen in isolation either. Students already spend a significant part of their lives under the school roof, which allows them to find or strengthen common interests. The closer they feel among themselves, the more willing they will be to build up their language. In like manner, if they feel that there is no barrier between them and teachers, a more positive classroom environment will be created.

Besides, across our classroom activities, we as language teachers should be able to help students find commonalities (similar national and/or cultural patterns); this needs to be done among each group or class since there are similarities among each specific class. Activities that promote sharing each person's experiences, ideas, and likes, help students identify common grounds. It can happen that students have shared the same course for weeks, or even months, but there has not been a clear, intentional opportunity to share what makes each person unique. Our ESL/EFL classes can create chances for that purpose, all of them mediated by the practice of the language.

Attitudes toward the Target Language and its Culture

A third element that affects the language learning process is the attitudes toward the target language and its culture. If students have good knowledge of the cultural elements related to the target language being learned, they will understand how the language operates in both formal and informal contexts. Similarly, students will not misjudge people from different ethnic backgrounds, because they understand cultural differences. An awareness of the culture associated with the target language will also help when it comes to understanding specific norms in their natural context. Communication is much more than sending or receiving information; awareness of cultural elements associated with the target language will reduce the risks of misinterpretation in different contexts.

Recognizing and investigating stereotypes is an important step toward developing a cooperative attitude about the target language and its culture. Students' ethnic predilections and their attitudes towards the members of the other group can influence their performance in the classroom, and real life. Going beyond stereotypes and revealing the truth about the target language culture and its individuals is a useful tool for identifying the core cultural issues embedded in the language being learned (Brown, 2000). Similarly, discarding wrong perceptions about members of the target language culture will provide a clearer picture of the real world. Teachers should help students self-assess their stereotypes, and how these can affect interaction in different contexts.

If students appreciate the relevance of learning a foreign language because of positive interaction with the culture embedded, it will be easier for them to have an open attitude toward the new culture. This cultural understanding will break down any knowledge barriers that might hinder their use of that language. Once the bias is reduced, it will be easier for students to approach both the language and the culture without any apprehension. Likewise, understanding, and eventually incorporating, specific aspects of the target language culture will provide students with appropriate tools for their interaction in the global village (Brown, 2000).

Acculturation

Early research on ESL/EFL states that learners succeed to the degree that they acculturate to the target language group (Schumann, 1986). Acculturation, viewed as the assimilation of the target language culture, can foster suitable conditions for the learning and consolidation of the target language. Furthermore, acculturation can help create a new cultural identity that results from the interaction with the target language and its embedded culture.

Aoyama and Takahashi (2020), as part of their research on effective communication in L2 and acculturation, state that "As a significant predictor of L2 WTC, acculturation contributes to L2 WTC for a reason other than enhancing the learners' L2 self-confidence" (p. 712). This statement implies that acculturation promotes the willingness to communicate ("WTC") in the second language in direct relation to confidence. The more comfortable students feel with the target language culture, the more willing to interact they will be. Therefore, an appropriate acculturation strategy (going from assimilation to separation, aiming at integration), may reduce anxiety among students.

Acculturation can help learners regulate their emotions, thus promoting successful intercultural effectiveness. Emotion regulation, critical thinking, and flexibility are key elements that can play an important role in acculturation. Should teachers be able to help learners regulate their emotions, while analyzing information critically, they will foster flexibility and adaptability when approaching new cultures. In the first place, teachers can guide assimilation, where learners understand and adopt elements from the new culture progressively. Secondly, there will be moments when learners' heritage may clash with the target culture, making it necessary to address this conflict as part of the learning process. Ultimately, the goal should be integration, where learners adopt some elements of the new culture while retaining their heritage.

Savicki et al. (2008) also address acculturation as an important element related to the language consolidation process. In sum, they say that high levels of anxiety resulting from ethnic differences affect effective communication; likewise, mishaps in communication

because of high apprehensiveness can perpetuate anxiety. The awkwardness resulting from this cycle of anxiety – miscommunication – inadequacy – anxiety does not contribute to any second/foreign language consolidation. Teachers need to be aware of this awkwardness and address it properly.

Zaker (2016) also refers to existing theories about an acculturation model and its effect on the language learning process. Zaker considers, essentially, that a learner's success in language learning is dependent on the amount of acculturation. When teachers accompany the language learning processes actively, they are more likely to pace language acquisition/learning and proximity to the target group. This pacing also includes the adequate incorporation of cultural "building blocks" that go together with language acquisition/learning.

This perception about acculturation supports the idea that second-language acquisition/learning depends on the amount of social and psychological distance that exists between learners and the second-language culture. The more a learner is exposed to the target language, and the better this exposure is handled, the smaller this psychological distance will be. As learners become more and more familiar with the target language culture, they can understand it, and relate to it in a better way. The sooner the gap is filled, the better.

This aspect must be considered, particularly, by language teachers when planning their class activities and being intentional about opportunities to deliver 'cultural building blocks.' These 'blocks' become a part of the learning process, and they will introduce cultural differences, as well as the respect and value of the different ways to express the world through language. For instance, when warming up with a song at the beginning of a lesson, teachers can incorporate a ´cultural building block´ to share with students general information about the singer or band, their country of origin, and specific concepts from the song. Similarly, typical holidays such as St. Valentine´s, St. Patrick's Day, and others, can be brought to the ESL/EFL lessons as cultural building blocks that will help students connect the language, the culture, and today´s multicultural world. Teachers should be intentional when delivering these cultural building blocks, aiming at an acculturation that enriches learners' experience. Students are not only acquiring a target language but also getting the culture embedded within.

Acculturation involves a first stage in which students understand and develop a conscience of their culture. Once this is attained, they will be able to identify the main traits of the target language - culture. This realization does not mean denying or undermining their mother language culture, but just the opposite. There is a significant profit in understanding and giving value to core elements of the mother language culture as the basis for understanding other cultures.

Once there is a cultural identity firmly established, it is easier to understand and cope with cultural elements belonging to the second language and its ways. This vision does not mean a blind acceptance of foreign cultural elements, but it means having a mindset that can function properly within the contexts of both the mother and target language/cultures. This reflection can be a valuable chance to promote higher-order thinking, leading students to compare mother versus target language cultures.

Levels of Anxiety

Levels of anxiety can be defined as the stress produced as a reaction to a particular situation. These levels can be understood as a normal reaction when people are exposed to unknown or new concepts. Anxiety can result from psychological or socio-affective factors. Malik et al. (2021) address social and cultural factors associated with language acquisition processes (anxiety, restlessness, and apprehension among others). Their studies reveal that elements associated with the target culture can have a positive/negative effect on the second language acquisition/learning processes.

Among their considerations, Malik et al. (2021) state that elements such as learners' background, possible lack of exposure to a foreign language/culture, social status, self-identity, and family background can trigger anxiety. Based on this concept, it can be suggested that a holistic approach that considers those aspects might help reduce stress among learners. A teacher's positive attitude, along with a constructive classroom environment can help learners reduce their levels of anxiety. This is where teacher sensitivity plays a determining role in assessing students' emotional conditions. In turn, the assessment of the elements mentioned above can make a difference between students' engagement or detachment. Validating the impact of these elements can be done either formally through questionnaires/forms, or informally through periodical class talks.

Brown (2000) refers to the concept of anxiety when learning a second language, describing two types of anxiety among learners: debilitative and facilitative. The first one refers to the feeling of incompetence or inadequacy that learners experience when facing contexts that require the use of the target language, making them unable to use it adequately. On the other hand, facilitative anxiety is presented as the apprehension that leads to readiness when using the target language.

Anxiety, when approached as facilitative, presents a good opportunity for teachers to provide small 'building blocks' that can be easily articulated and used by students, an attainable challenge. This implies teacher sensitivity to identify the feelings that a particular class activity might raise, and the connection to recognize students' potential levels of anxiety, adapting to them accordingly. The teacher-sensitive role can lower this anxiety by

checking the understanding of a specific topic before introducing a new one. This is known in pedagogy as *input + 1 (i +1),* where the old knowledge is the foundation for building new knowledge.

The implementation of this *i + 1* concept can be relevant for the design and implementation of entry tests that students would have to take at the beginning of a school year. These tests can not only give hints about students' competence but also reveal the potential levels of anxiety among a class when facing specific tasks (i.e., oral presentations and interviews, listening comprehension tests, standardized proficiency tests, etc.). Teachers should aim at measuring students' previous knowledge without stirring any anxiety, while simultaneously assessing any possible emotional distress. The more relaxed learners feel while facing the diagnostic test, the easier it will be for them to complete the activities without worrying about the results being achieved.

When students' anxiety is correctly handled in the classroom, it can work as an inciting feeling that produces a constant alertness in learners (helpful or facilitative anxiety); students can now give their undivided attention to the classroom activities because they do not want to miss anything. It is usually healthier to address debilitative anxiety outside the classroom, within the context of a student-teacher conference. Exposing or addressing a student's debilitative anxiety in the middle of a lesson will not help the individual at all. After all, a teacher's goal is to `facilitate' an environment that will consolidate each student's process, and this goal includes identifying and addressing anxiety (or any other issue) effectively.

In the context of second or foreign language acquisition/learning, both teachers and students can foster lower levels of anxiety by providing a sort of 'family' environment to serve as a shelter where independence and mistakes are accepted and addressed adequately. Teachers are expected to model the appropriate response when mistakes in the use of the language happen in their classes. Validating students' participation, despite grammatical inaccuracies, is the first step towards overcoming apprehension; acceptance should be evident to any student who might try to criticize a partner's outcome. The Communicative Approach encourages learners to prioritize communication over accuracy in the early stages.

Jabeen (2014) considers that what matters the most in the early stages of the second language acquisition/learning process is being able to communicate, despite inaccuracies. One of the best ways to correct a student's mistake is to repeat the phrase that the student said, emphasizing the words that the teacher wants to correct. For instance, if a student says, 'he eat pizza for dinner on Fridays", the teacher can repeat that statement with the corresponding correction "he eats pizza for dinner... correct!". In this way, the mistake is corrected for the student´s and the class's effective consolidation, while there is positive reinforcement for individual participation in class.

Another example can be school campaigns supported by visual aids and posters that can contribute positively toward the concept of a friendly learning environment. The use of posters and visuals that reinforce the "safe learning environment" spirit around the classroom is highly recommended as well. Upon arrival to my classroom some years ago, I observed situations in which students refrained from participating in class because they were afraid of being mocked or judged. I decided to print out phrases like "feel free to say it", "mistakes won´t matter here", and "communication rather than perfection". As the lessons progressed through the school year, shy students were able to participate more often, and they even said that those posters encouraged them to engage more and more.

Personality

Personality traits are also a relevant factor in foreign or second-language acquisition, and they can eventually trigger or lower anxiety. The willingness to take risks and the lack of inhibition could help individuals learn a language effectively. Regarding risk-taking, Brown (2000) considers that "learners have to be able to gamble a bit […] to take the risk of being wrong" (p. 149). Teachers can use students who are more willing to take risks as models to encourage the rest of the class to participate more actively when a new challenge arises. Peer work is also a useful tool to mix individuals with different personalities so that they can complement each other for specific class activities. What is more, walking towards everybody´s inclusion, and incorporating and validating different personalities inside the classroom are important in fostering a team spirit.

Another characteristic that helps create a good classroom environment is empathy. Being able to understand members of the target language, and identifying with them, is important for communication, and so is establishing a common link among all students: the desire to learn another language. Empathy is essential to remove the ego (understood as pride), and it opens people to the possibilities of a new language and a new culture. Empathy can be promoted starting from various communicative, real-life contexts where students can find common interests, likes, and experiences that create links among them. Commonalities can strengthen bonds between individuals, as they share different aspects of their lives while using the target language.

This common link where all students approach their language learning processes with empathy can be strengthened by developing group activities that allow student-student interaction regularly. After all, language presupposes human-to-human collaboration. In this mindset, students can share their lives and develop partnerships with their classmates on common grounds. This concept of commonalities also focuses on identifying the different personalities that each person has, validating their influence in the process of learning a second language.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment through Ethnicity

Ethnicity can be useful when it comes to addressing emotional aspects in the ESL/EFL classroom. Handling cultural aspects associated with the language processes assertively, as well as fostering interaction in class will empower students when it comes to interaction with the target language/culture. These strategies also reduce levels of stress or anxiety when using the target language. Brown (2000) considers that a positive attitude about the learner's self, the target language group, and proficiency can reduce bias. Bias and negative attitudes can be changed, for instance, by exposure to good language model speakers (not exclusively native speakers, but also competent users of the second/foreign language). There is a connection between students' cultural awareness and their emotional responses in contexts where the target language is used: the more multicultural learners are, the better equipped they feel to understand situations and to act accordingly.

One of the best ways to promote this cultural awareness is ethnicity. Kustati et al. (2020) mention that teachers gave their students tools for understanding and guidance to increase their tolerance of ethnic diversity, and this increased their tolerance towards cultures in the classroom. This strategy promoted communication and reduced anxiety. Ethnicity considers the specific identity of a group, based on distinctive traits (e.g., language, music, literature, religion, among others). Incorporating the defining traits of the target language culture into the language learning processes results in a broader understanding of the new culture. It helps students feel comfortable, better equipped, and less anxious when facing the challenges that new contexts may present.

Understanding ethnic awareness enables teachers to implement tools that help attain multicultural awareness in their students. This attainment prepares students to cope with situations that involve both the target language and culture. Learners can obtain resources to feel at ease with cultural differences so they can cope with potential negative emotional loads. Among the stages for creating diverse ethnic awareness, the following stand out:

In the first place, ethnic psychological captivity needs to be addressed. It presupposes involving people who feel rejected for any reason, regardless of the reality of this rejection. The goal is not to ignore reality but to help students overcome rejection by empowering them with linguistic and communicative tools that broaden their chances in life. In doing this, students' levels of stress will be lower because the feeling of confinement no longer blocks them; students feel liberated and free to use the target language in different contexts.

When a person feels rejected, they can turn inward to their ethnic group and reject foreign groups. Identifying this behavior is a key element when teachers and students interact inside the classroom. Teachers should be sensitive enough to identify behaviors and reactions that can be evidence of rejection of elements belonging to the foreign language culture, and

to address those behaviors accordingly. Adequate guidance and support can help students not to turn inwards, but to implement strategies that make them function effectively. When this happens, and students do not turn inwards anymore, acculturation can take place more easily.

The second stage for creating a diverse ethnic consciousness has to do with ethnic identity clarification. Learners can clarify their identity about their own culture. This stage allows them to see both positive and negative aspects of their ethnic group, as well as of other cultures. This analysis can stir up feelings of self-confidence, in which learners appreciate the good things about their mother language culture and use them for their benefit. In doing so, learners can see where they stand regarding their ethnic group, and regarding the target language ethnic group. This ethnic clarification provides opportunities for conversation about learners' mother language culture versus the target language culture.

Another stage in the progression toward ethnic awareness is bioethnicity. This concept allows an individual to function successfully in two cultural groups; it leads to a multicultural and metalinguistic awareness of the elements that make part of both the native and target language. Bioethnicity involves higher-thinking processes where learners assess contexts and put into practice intercultural sensitivity, which can be seen in the pragmatic use of the mother and second language. Bioethnicity guides learners toward the implementation of specific social, cultural, and linguistic codes that will favor clear interaction, either using the mother or foreign languages.

Learners can feel adapted to diverse ethnicities, depending on the context they are living in. If the context requires learners to use the native language, they can use this language with all the social, psychological, and cultural background that belongs to it. On the other hand, when interacting in contexts where the target language is being used, learners can function effectively without leaving behind their native ethnic group background. Multiculturally competent learners can feel better equipped to take on new challenges without major stressors.

Ethnic awareness also fosters global competency. Learners achieve an ideal balance of their primary group, national, and global identifications. The person can function successfully within the contexts of the mother language, target language, and their role in the globalized world. Global competency is becoming more and more important in today's world, not only for professionals but also for students in different academic contexts. Feeling competent in global contexts can help them feel more confident and less anxious.

All these concepts associated with the ethnic awareness process help learners understand their own culture and identify the positive and negative aspects of it. Consequently, they can recognize foreign cultural patterns and understand the differences between their culture versus the target language culture. As a result, they will feel emotionally fit to engage in

situations that require the use of the target language and its embedded culture. A multi-ethnic awareness helps them reduce stressors and anxiety.

This awareness implies that, for second/foreign language learners, a situation that might seem odd in the context of the mother language can be perfectly normal for the target language culture. This realization implies a compare-and-contrast process in which they act upon the basis of similarities and differences between mother and second/foreign language patterns and cultural elements. Teachers play a key role in helping learners understand and implement these behavior adaptations. When learners can switch between languages (and cultures) without major hindrances, feelings of confidence and adequacy will reduce anxiety.

The multicultural considerations presented above should be intentionally addressed in the learning process of any language since they increase learners' general knowledge and create an environment in which they can learn a second/foreign language more effectively. Some foreign language textbooks and written materials include these concepts in their scope and sequence, while others do not. It is teachers' duty to create the space in their classes to introduce the concepts of cultural diversity in case there is none in their classes´ textbooks.

Reading Selections and Literature Anthologies for schools can also be a very effective tool in the incorporation of knowledge coming from other cultures and in the development of multicultural thinking. Literature brings along diverse elements related to ethnicities and cultures, which can broaden learners' minds. Syllabi should go past the goals of English courses as Grammar and structure, towards courses that cover both language competence and the culture of the language being learned. Similarly, literature and its connections among different cultures promote critical thinking in the classroom.

Conclusion

In sum, the reflections shared in this reflection paper suggest that reducing the levels of anxiety and discomfort that students may experience when learning a second/foreign language is possible. It may not seem to be an easy task, but it is an attainable goal that requires, from the teachers' perspective, an awareness of the elements that affect learners' intellect, emotions, and willingness to engage. By paying attention to learners' attitudes, motivation, levels of anxiety, acculturation, and personalities, teachers can lower their learners' emotional distress.

Once learners understand the reason why a specific culture sees the world in a certain way, they can recognize the differences between their mother and target language environments. This realization gives a clear perception of each environment, and it raises learners' self-esteem, making them feel prepared to interact with the target language/culture. In other words, when learners understand how the target language culture works, and when

they possess adequate linguistic, communicative, and cultural tools, they feel comfortable interacting in new contexts. This feeling of competence fosters communication, reduces bias and anxiety, and favors a smooth adaptation to second/foreign language contexts.

Additionally, this feeling of adequacy makes the process of a second/foreign language acquisition easier since learners' emotional conditions are not threatened by cultural factors. Learners can resort to their ´cultural awareness toolbox´ and use the resources they deem most suitable for specific situations. They will understand which linguistic structures, combined with appropriate register and cultural elements, can guarantee clear communication. This grasp can be a good way to reduce awkwardness while boosting self-esteem when interacting in any target language context.

The challenge for teachers is being able to create and keep a safe, engaging environment where individual traits are understood and valued. Once a continuous encouragement to understand language and its cultural implications in different languages is achieved, learners will feel more comfortable, and more confident. Dealing with linguistic and cultural differences embedded in both native and target languages is a must in today's ESL/EFL classrooms.

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