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Welcome to a new edition of Gist Journal. The collection of research articles for this edition show very clearly what the concerns are for education and the role we are to play as teachers in the current world. It is key as educators that we start fostering in students skills in critical thinking and critical literacy, especially in a world embedded in fake news and extreme polarisation. In this line of thought, **Luis Fernando Gómez** contributes a case study in which news are used as a means to develop students' critical intercultural competence in relation to different cultural communities.

Teachers understand that literacy nowadays imply more than just decoding or encoding written messages. Literacy implies being able to read implicit messages in text, to read images, such as ads, cartoons, or online images such as memes. In this area, **Fredy Alexander Giraldo** contributes a study aiming to develop critical literacy at an undergraduate programme in Ibagué; also, **María Teresa Esteban, Adriana Márquez** and **Jhon Everth Ortíz** explored how political cartoons could serve the purpose of enhancing critical thinking in an English teacher preparation program, raising awareness about the need to become committed and active citizens.

The development of skills has always been a concern for language teachers in the country, and we continue to explore different ways in which they can be strengthened. **Gladis Arias** and **Eliana Roberto** delved into how abridged novels could not only help students' oral and written production, but also expose them to other cultural worlds. **Odilia Ramírez** and **Wilfrido Muñoz** decided to investigate about the way in which transactional communication strategies could boost elementary school pre-service teachers' in Sincelejo. Also, in the field of teacher preparation, **Frank Giraldo** and **Daniel Murcia** decided to approach how pre-service teachers are learning about assessment with an emphasis on the link between theory and practice, assessment of bilingual processes, and knowledge of local policies related to this issue.

Diana Durango, Clara González and **Enrique Arias'** concern about inequalities in education for upper and lower classes motivated them to investigate about how audiovisual material could help in the implementation of an early bilingual program for pre-school age children of low socioeconomic background. Additionally, we have a very timely reflection paper about self-plagiarism by **Sergio Lopera** which calls for a joint effort between editors and writers in the interest of maintaining the quality of our publications.

We expect our readers find our contributors' experiences valuable to probably implement similar studies in their own context and also to share with us the results of their current studies to continue building a community of learning and teaching in the fields of bilingual education and foreign language teaching.

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Using the Abridged Version of some Novels as a way to Encourage Students' Written and Oral Production¹

Uso de versiones reducidas de algunas novelas como
medio para fomentar la producción escrita y oral en
estudiantes

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Abstract

This article analyzes the effect of working with the abridged version of some novels in order to promote students' communication in English. Two fourth semester English courses, from a private university, were randomly chosen to develop the different activities during one semester. The data was collected through students' written papers, the researchers' journal and a questionnaire. The findings show that students' constant work with this kind of literature, as well as the teachers' feedback, were factors that motivated their language use improvement; thus, they learned new expressions, did written and oral training, and acquired knowledge thanks to the contact with other cultures through literature.

Key words: action research, abridged novels, listening exercise, written and oral practice

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza los efectos de trabajar con la versión corta de algunas novelas con el fin de promover las habilidades escritas y orales de los estudiantes. Dos cursos de inglés de cuarto semestre, de la Universidad Santo Tomás

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Tunja (USTA Tunja), fueron escogidos al azar para desarrollar las diferentes actividades durante un semestre. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de las composiciones escritas de los estudiantes, el diario de las investigadoras y una encuesta. Los resultados muestran que el trabajo constante de los estudiantes con este tipo de literatura, así como la retroalimentación de las profesoras, motivó el mejoramiento del uso de la lengua; de esta manera, ellos aprendieron nuevas expresiones, hicieron ejercicios orales y escritos, y adquirieron conocimiento gracias al contacto con otras culturas a través de la literatura.

Palabras clave: investigación-acción, novelas abreviadas, ejercicio de escucha, producción escrita y oral.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa os efeitos de trabalhar com a versão curta de algumas novelas com o fim de promover as habilidades escritas e orais dos estudantes. Dois cursos de inglês de quarto semestre, da Universidade particular em Tunja, foram escolhidos por acaso para desenvolver as diferentes atividades durante um semestre. Os dados foram coletados através das composições escritas dos estudantes, o diário das pesquisadoras e uma enquete. Os resultados mostram que o trabalho constante dos estudantes com este tipo de literatura, bem como a retroalimentação das professoras, motivou o aprimoramento do uso da língua; desta maneira, eles aprenderam novas expressões, fizeram exercícios orais e escritos, e adquiriram conhecimento graças ao contato com outras culturas através da literatura.

Palavras chave: pesquisa-ação, novelas abreviadas, exercício de escuta, produção escrita e oral.

Introduction

This article aims to share the results of some research procedures under the collaborative action research as a way to describe the effects of working with the abridged version of some novels with listening support to encourage students' written and oral production in fourth semester at a private university in Tunja, Colombia. It was developed during the second semester 2016.

There are many activities teachers develop in the classrooms, but they are not always enough to motivate students' language acquisition. Thus, during this study, it was necessary to change the traditional class material (the textbook) and the syllabus in order to develop a pedagogical intervention based on the abridged version of some novels. It permitted teachers to use different activities, materials and strategies which had a great impact on students because learning became an amazing task for them.

This study was conducted based on a pedagogical intervention in which teachers and students interacted in order to generate some changes in the dynamics of the class; thus, students could be exposed to the language use through listening, writing and speaking, activities that permitted students to practice language and improve their capacity for communicating their ideas with fluency and accuracy.

Statement of the problem

The interest behind developing this research was born when the researchers verified that despite their constant work guiding students in the acquisition of the English language with the use of textbooks, they presented deficiencies when communicating ideas in different contexts. For example, after reading short texts in the class, the teachers asked students to speak about their understanding of things like general ideas or specific details of the text, but only few students used to answer; before starting a new topic, the teachers usually do some brainstorming or ask a few questions about the pictures, titles or subtitles of the book; again, only few students used to participate. It made the researchers think that the students' English lack of enough language tools to participate and express their ideas.

In order to verify these perceptions, the researchers developed a diagnostic procedure based on the abridged version of the novel; accordingly, students listened to the first chapter of the abridged version of the novel: "The Phantom of The Opera", after that, students had to

write a paragraph with their own words about the main idea and share it with the class orally; this is one the samples:

Cristina the girl sing the opera. A monster in the dark. Girl beautiful sing.

Raul is the friend. He is a friend child but Cristina not recognize Raul.

A monster; a man strange in the corridor.

The girls see the ghost. The girls afraid. (students' written composition)

Analysis of the previous excerpt: the student wrote a very short composition, it evidences his poor understanding and lack of vocabulary to express his ideas, it contains some mistakes in coherence and syntax; additionally, in the speaking activity, which was done after the paper composition, only two students participated, their interventions were very short and not clear enough to understand their message, some of them said they did not know how to express their understanding of the novel and just stayed silent. Considering this diagnostic exercise which evidenced students' problems to communicate, the following main research question was proposed: What are the effects of working with the abridged version of some novels with listening support in order to encourage students' written and oral production in fourth semester at a private university in Tunja?

Theoretical Framework

Teaching English through the abridged version of novels

The implementation of novels for teaching have been regularly used for teaching English due to the benefits they present, Hişmanoğlu (2005) said, "The use of a novel is a beneficial technique for mastering not only linguistic system but also life in relation to the target language". (p. 63); nevertheless, due to their length, it is not easy to read this kind of material in class. The use of abridged versions of novels is an option teachers have to motivate the acquisition of the target language because they can be adjusted to the conditions of the class, for example the students' likes or their English level.

These kinds of novels are totally accessible in the teaching context due to the characteristics they have: there is a great variety of topics (adventure, love, comedy, fiction, among others); Beach, Appleman, Hynds & Wildhelm (2006) state that it is important to select topics students have some familiarity or interest with, or that may engage

them. Additionally, the abridged versions of novels with listening support are usually classified according to the students' age and level of language, (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001): elementary, intermediate and advanced levels), publishers offer a wide variety of them which teachers can choose from, based on the students' interests or the purpose of the class.

Additionally, the listening support is a factor that contributes to make the act of reading more multi-faceted and serves as a language model with regards to pronunciation, intonation, fluency and comprehension. Chen (2014) argues that listening provides a positive experience using the target language; it helps students develop vocabulary and understanding of literary issues. Besides, the use of the abridged versions of some novels is an important literary resource to teach in class; some authors think that this material conserves the characteristics of the original versions, they have the same benefits of the original books full versions; moreover, Yeo (1986) asserts: "People who abridge stories assume that the plot is the most important aspect of a classic. A classic, to them, is essentially a classic story and this they want to convey, albeit in its reduced form, to school students". (p. 23). Hişmanoğlu (2005) states: "Using novels makes the students' reading lesson motivating interesting and entertaining" (p. 64). In fact, this kind of material is both enjoyable and understandable for students; it enhances students' habit for reading and increases their speaking skills.

While listening to the abridged versions of novels students can develop their listening skills, which are necessary as an input in order to develop the other three skills (reading, writing and speaking). Renukadevi (2014) argues: "... listening contributes primarily for language expertise. Listening awakens awareness of the language, as it is a receptive skill that first develops in a human being. Learning to listen to the target language improves language ability" (p. 59). The previous statements show how necessary it is to include materials that involve listening activities in language acquisition.

One of the most important benefits of using literature for teaching English is the great amount of communicative and interactive activities that can be done in the classroom; thus, students gain in practice and surpass their difficulties in the process of acquiring the language; Koutsompou (2015) argues: "The purpose of using literature in a language classroom is to make the class interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competence of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind" (p. 75). In addition to the contributions of literature for teaching, the

listening support of the books calls students' attention because they can listen to the characters and make a mental picture about the situation which is a factor that motivates students learning and understanding.

As a cultural aspect, literature offers teachers and students the possibility to acquire knowledge about human customs and evolution including social advances and problems, about it, Koutsompou (2015) states "Through literature students get to know the background not only of the particular novel but also, they learn about history, society, and politics of the country described in the novel or story" (p. 75). Knowledge acquisition and language learning are two purposes coherent with the education in teaching a foreign language; hence, this is complete material that cultivates students' feelings and perception of the life in different contexts.

Literature, represented in abridged novels, makes a very significant contribution towards the exposure of students to language patterns in real life situations, more than an academic language; Koutsompou (2015) argues "The linguistic criterion defends that literature should be used in language teaching, because it provides the learner with genuine, authentic samples of language, and with real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers" (p. 75). This is what some authors consider as authentic language because it is written not with the purposes of teaching but with the objective to tell a story, to evidence the situation of real life or fiction; Berardo (2006) asserts: "One of the main ideas of using authentic materials in the classroom is to "expose" the learner to as much real language as possible. Even if the classroom is not a "real-life" situation, authentic materials do have a very important place within it. (p. 64); consequently, language teachers are required by the education system to propose strategies that approach students to acquire the language in real contexts that really prepare students for real life situations.

Having in mind that listening is one of the first skills man develops to learn a language, the improvement of this ability helps students to comprehend different situations and it is also a base to interact with the context, Renukadevi (2014) notes that when learning a language with a communicative purpose, listening plays a vital role, as it helps the language learner to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax. Thus, the abridged version of novels with listening support helps students to have the opportunity of learning how the comprehension of a message is carried with elements like the tone of voice or the pitch or accent.

Speaking and writing skills development and literature

Speaking and writing are the main skills students have to develop in order to communicate their ideas, feelings, explain their view points, argue, discuss among others; hence, this is very important to motivate them from the classroom. Ritlyavá (2014) asserts: “The reason for learning the language is to be able to use it in practice, to make oneself understood. Thus, the most frequent way of using it is speaking” (p. 99). Likewise; writing is also a way to share ideas, it can be formal or informal, it depends of the purpose of the writer, and both can be developed in the classroom.

Literature is a very wide field that can be linked to speaking and writing as an input to develop these skills, after listening or reading a novel, students are able to communicate their understanding through them. Tehan, Yuksel and Inan (2015) highlight the use of literature in the classroom due to its academic, linguistic and cultural importance and because it encourages students to talk about their opinions and stimulates language acquisition. In fact, it is necessary to give students opportunities to use the foreign language in the classroom or outside in order to practice and acquire it, accompanied by the teachers’ feedback as a support to improve the appropriate language use according to the situation.

Additionally, authors like Sell, Rogers, Harmer, and others, in Tamo (2009) think that literature is an authentic material to be used in the classroom due to the advantages it has in terms of language acquisition and language use. Besides, literature is considered authentic material because it is not written for academic purposes as well as the newspapers, magazines, poems, among others, but it can be used as a teaching resource.

Bringing authentic materials into the classroom can be motivating for the students, as it adds a real-life element to the student’s learning experience. Authentic materials are significant since it increases students’ motivation for learning, makes the learner be exposed to the “real” language” (Tamo, 2009, p. 75)

In the same way, some English teachers have developed research procedures around the implementation of literature in the English classes, about it, Giuria (2015) reports “Even though the four participants have different views on literature, they all recognize three main reasons for teaching it in the English classroom: to improve the language, to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures and to grow as a person” (p. 28). Thus, the previous arguments show the

utility of literature in the English classes and the variety of approaches teachers can do with this material.

Likewise, literature can support the speaking and writing skills taking into account that they require much effort for students and teachers because they evidence the students' learning and real use of the language; hence, literature as an authentic material and accessible source teachers must work in the classroom, stimulates students' communication with activities like: describing places, retelling chapters, criticizing the topics, discussing about social problems, doing role plays, describing the characters' roles, analyzing social problems, economic situation, among others.

Moreover, a way to guarantee students' learning English is by promoting those activities that include students' production due to the fact that they motivate their thinking and communication, Elftorp, (2007) states, "The purpose of everything you do in English classes is to help students to develop their writing and speaking skills, regardless of whether it is grammar, drama or national tests" (p. 5); besides Phat (2013) declares, "I hold a strong belief that literature would be a great potential resource in teaching language and communications skills, especially speaking skills for the language learners." (p. 673); thus, the importance of these skills lies on the need people have to share their feelings, life perceptions, knowledge, events, among others; in this case, literature is favorable to promote students' language learning.

Additionally, culture is an inherent aspect to literature and the English class; it approaches students to the real discourse, social conventions and reflexive issues; thus, literature can be seen as a bridge between students and the real life, full of meaning through the society and their history. Riwes (2010) remarks: "In the end, the role of culture in ELT is crucial, since it will mean the difference between casual speakers who remain outsiders and speakers who understand the meaning behind the words and the world that is constructed by them" (p. 8). In this way, teachers' role is to guide students build their own reflection based on the experience, motivating their critical thinking, focusing students to contrast cultures and learn about the experience of foreign cultures.

The aspects above are reasons and strengths for including the abridged versions of novels in English classes; they contribute to support how meaningful this material is. It only requires teachers to take the risk and change the traditional classes where students just sit down and listen to the teacher; this is a possibility not only to promote students' learning about different topics but also to empower their communicative skills based in real material.

The use of feedback in language learning

Feedback is a common strategy English teachers use to guide students to correct their performance, it can be done individually or in group according to the needs, it allows teachers to understand students' difficulties and strengths in order to follow a process and look for strategies that facilitate learning, according to the individual capacities. Here are some recommendations:

Break down the instructions by using simple sentences so that the students can easily understand, use demonstration whenever possible, not to over correct the errors, avoid giving negative feedback to increase student's self-motivation, provide sufficient independent practice to overcome their errors and re-teach the material when necessary. (Akhter, 2007, p. 10)

The suggestions above evidence the teachers' real role in teaching a foreign language; hence, it is imperative that teachers create an appropriate environment to guide students, for example face to face feedback in a tutoring session close to the class; according to the Department of Education and Communities (2015): "Feedback during learning allows students to take feedback on board immediately and to try to realize improvement during the learning process" (p.1); In fact, the feedback is not a formal activity but a very useful tool to support students in their learning process; during writing, students usually require the teacher's feedback in order to use the appropriate word order, conjugation, connectors or the adequate tense according to the context; during speaking, students usually require feedback in pronunciation and also in the coherence of their ideas with the purpose to express what they really want to say.

During learning another language, it is necessary to create an environment of self-confidence where the students can express their doubts in a spontaneous way, and the teacher can clarify them in the best way. Hattie and Timperley (2007) maintain that an ideal learning environment occurs when both, teacher and student work together to overcome learning difficulties. Besides, Carvajal and Roberto (2014) point out that the constant dialogue and feedback facilitate the work atmosphere without being concerned about mistakes. Thereby, feedback has a positive effect when it impacts the students' behavior and when it helps students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of learning; thus, they are able to take their own decisions to surpass their difficulties.

Methodology

This study used the qualitative approach through the collaborative action research as the method to improve some specific conditions of a group of students because it permits to do changes based on evidences, monitor, refine and adapt new conditions in order to get positive results. Many researchers in education use this method due to its benefits in terms of learning and improvement. Alba (2015) states about the Collaborative Action Research: “CAR is used worldwide as an effective means of lifting the burden of improvement from the shoulders of unsupported individual teachers and enabling them to tap into the collective knowledge and experience of a broader group of practitioners” (p.3). In fact, one of the advantages of this method is the great opportunity for students and teachers to work together in the same learning purposes; besides, Alba (2015) highlights that CAR contributes to: “improving students learning, improving individual professional practice, wider professional development and comparing professional isolation” (p. 3); thus, this is why this method permits to evidence the results in short time, and also joins theory and practice in order to improve results during academic procedures.

Setting and Participants

This study took place at a private university in Tunja Colombia, where there are different programs such as engineering, public accounting, business administration, law, and architecture; students take five mandatory basic English courses: additionally, they come from different municipalities of Boyacá; the students who were involved in this research were about 18 and 19 years old; according to some exams applied by the university, students were between A1 and A2 according to the common European Framework (2011) which are lower than the expected, which was B1.

This study was conducted with a group of thirty-two fourth semester students, and data was collected from fifteen of them who were chosen at random. Two teacher trainers were responsible for planning, implementing and assessing the different activities.

Data Collection Instruments and Data analysis

Data was collected through a questionnaire, students' artifacts and the researchers' diaries:

Questionnaire, it was administered to students at the end of the workshops. According to Abawi (2013), this technique allows the researchers to collect the most complete and accurate data in a logical way. Thus, this instrument enabled researchers to evidence and examine students' work, as well as their personal perceptions about the development of the project.

The artifacts are represented in this study in the students' written and oral production which were the output activities. McGreal, Broderick, and Jones (1984) propose the use of artifacts for teaching in order to facilitate students' learning; thus, these allowed the researchers to identify students' difficulties, mistakes, language improvements, the learning process and they also facilitated the feedback work.

Diaries, these were carried out by researchers during the development of all the different activities; about it, Iida, Shout, Laurenceau, and Bolger (2012) assert: "Diary methods involve intensive, repeated self-reports that aim to capture events, reflections, moods, pains, or interactions near the time they occur" (p. 227). Hence, this instrument allowed the researchers to register the most important moments of the class and kept evidences of all their observations, thoughts and reflections about the English classes as well as the students' performance, reactions and difficulties during the class development.

Data analysis was conducted throughout the grounded theory approach because it provided procedures for analyzing collected data through different instruments. Charmaz (2006) states that grounded theory helps to direct manage and streamline data in order to construct the analysis. Moreover, Glaser and Strauss (2006) argue that grounded theory allows the researchers to move from data and theory with the purpose to create new theories in a specific context. Thus, after collecting data, a coding process was carried with the purpose to look for emerging patterns, issues and ideas; some preliminary categories were formulated; after that, questions, theory and categories were reread; based on the previous exercises, two main categories were established, they involved the most relevant and repetitive information taken from data.

Additionally, triangulation was done in order to validate findings; Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) state: "Triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints

and methods” (p. 156). After collecting, grouping, comparing, coding, labeling data, and establishing categories, the triangulation procedures were implemented with the purpose to analyze, argue, confront and theorize data; thus, new theory emerged in favor to the teaching and learning procedures, by using the abridged version of some novels in the English classes.

Instructional design

For the development of this study, the following procedures were carried out:

First step: the researchers planned the project and collected the material: four abridged version of short novels (Great Expectations, Frankenstein, The Prisoner of Zenda and Oliver Twist), with listening support.

Second step: the researchers elaborated four workshops, one for each novel, they contained different strategies: pre-listening activities, while listening, post-listening activities and oral exercise, as explained in Table 1.

Third step: the researchers shared the current project with the students and started its implementation and data collection; it was done with the purpose to communicate them about the different activities that were going to be developed in those specific English courses.

This study followed Buck’s (2001) suggestions in relation to pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities which are common classroom exercises in language acquisition, each one depends on the teachers’ focus, the students’ interests and the objectives of the class; thus, these workshops were focused to listen to the abridged version of four novels in order to encourage students’ written and oral production.

Table 1. Workshop development

First workshop
<p><i>Novel:</i> “<i>Great Expectations</i>”³</p> <p><i>Pre-listening activities:</i> Students looked at and analyzed pictures of the novel to predict the content.</p> <p><i>While listening:</i> students listened to the book; next, researchers and students did a brainstorming about the general understanding of the novel.</p> <p><i>Post-listening activities:</i> the students were divided up according to the number of chapters (13); each group checked a specific chapter and produced a written summary.</p> <p><i>Language function:</i> summarizing with the students’ own words, using appropriate verbal tenses and connectors as needed.</p> <p><i>Oral exercise:</i> students prepared an oral presentation about their understanding of each chapter, based on their own summary.</p>
Second workshop
<p><i>Novel:</i> “<i>Frankenstein</i>”⁴</p> <p><i>Pre-listening activities:</i> the researchers asked students some questions about the novel to get them familiar with the content.</p> <p><i>While listening:</i> students listened to the novel, after that, they exchanged ideas about it.</p> <p><i>Post-listening activities:</i> in small groups, students chose a specific character of the novel and produced a written description about them including features, values, weaknesses, strengths, physical and emotional description and his/her role in the novel.</p> <p><i>Language function:</i> Describing characters by using the appropriate adjectives and verbal tenses according to the context of the novel.</p> <p><i>Oral exercise:</i> students talked about the different characters based on their own papers, with the aid of pictures.</p>
Third workshop
<p><i>Novel:</i> “<i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i>”⁵</p> <p><i>Pre-reading activity:</i> Students analyzed the heading and the title of the different chapters to infer what the book was about.</p>

³ Dickens, Ch., adapted by Evans, V. & Dooley, J. (2002). *Great Expectations USA*: Express Publishing.

⁴ Shelley, M., adapted by H, Q. Mitchell (1994). *USA*: mm publications.

⁵ Hope, A., adapted by Evans, V. & Dooley, J. (2002). *The Prisoner of Zenda. USA*: Express Publishing

While listening: students listened to the novel, subsequently, some of them talked about their general perceptions of the novel.

Post-listening activities: in small groups, students chose a specific scene from the novel, then, they did an exhaustive written description about it.

Language function: Describing specific events, use of appropriate time expressions, verbal tenses and adjectives.

Oral exercise: students explained the different scenes in oral way.

Fourth workshop

Novel: “*Oliver Twist*”⁶

Pre-reading activity: students looked at the pictures to predict the content of the novel.

While listening: students listened to the novel, except the last chapter. Then, the researchers asked students about their general understanding of the novel.

Post-listening activities: in small groups, students wrote an alternative ending to the novel.

Language function: use of appropriate time expressions, verbal tenses, connectors, adverbs and adjectives as needed.

Oral exercise: students presented an oral presentation on their ending with the aid of pictures.

⁶ Dickens. Ch., adapted by Evans, V. & Dooley, J. (2002). *Oliver Twist*. USA: Express Publishing.

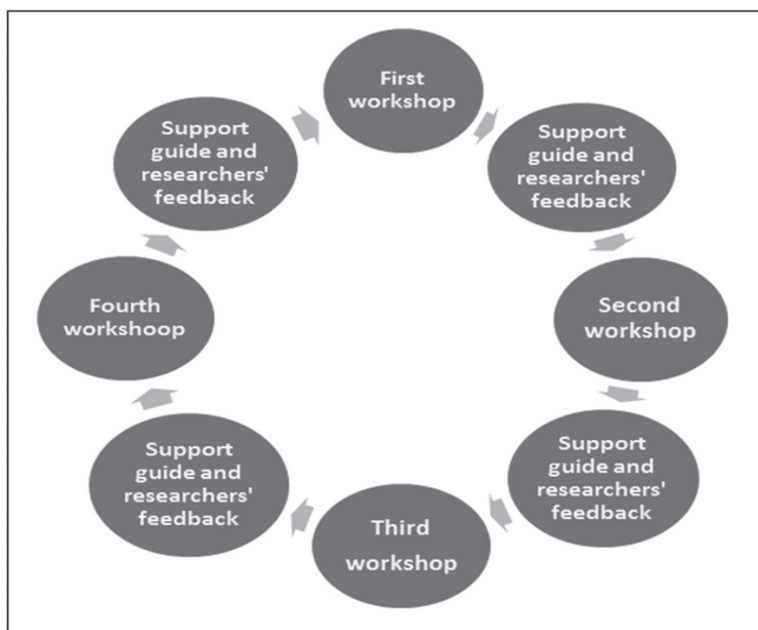


Figure 1. Collaborative action research cycles

Additionally, the researchers did constant corrections throughout the different stages of the investigation in order to correct grammar mistakes, punctuation, coherence, and pronunciation. After the development of each workshop, the researchers met and analyzed students' performance (difficulties, progress and needs), thus they planed additional guides (about the use of conjugation, punctuation, adjectives and connectors) in order to support and improve students' written and oral production. During all the activities, students worked in groups of two or three. When carrying out oral presentations, students used pictures, posters and graphic organizers as aids.

Findings

According to data collection analysis, and focused to answer the research questions, there are some findings that evidence advantages, improvements and difficulties while working with literature material; first, listening to the abridged version of some novels was a factor

that motivated students' written and oral production in the English classroom; second, there are inherent aspects that literature presents to students such as knowledge acquisition, cultural enrichment and personal interest for literature topics; these topics are represented in two main categories as follows:

First category: students' writing and oral development through listening to the abridged version of some novels

This category evidences how the exposure students had to the abridged version of short novels, with listening support, enhanced their written and oral production. First, during the listening sessions, the voice and the intonation of characters, as well as the plot were aspects that motivated students to be involved in the activities. However, in the first novel, students had some difficulties understanding the complete development of events, especially because they did not use to work with this kind of material and they did not understand some new vocabulary, the pronunciation of some phrases as well as the speed at which the students had to listen. Some students said:

I had problems with the vocabulary in the listening work, because the characters did not speak slowly and it was difficult for me to understand. (Questionnaire, question 3, student 7)

Considering that students had some difficulties to fully understand the content of the novel before the written and oral production, the researchers organized the students by couples in order to check the novel again, then, they proceeded to write their own summary and prepare their oral report. At this stage, the researchers' support for making feedback in the corrections of the papers and in the oral preparation, especially in pronunciation corrections, was very important to accomplish with the first workshop. Su & Tian (2016) state "In second language learning and teaching, feedback refers to any commentary information to learners' performance" (p. 440). Thus, accompanied by the feedback, the support guides helped students to correct and improve their written or oral problems along the different activities. About it, one of the researchers argued:

"There were some difficulties to start motivating students' written and oral production, especially at the beginning; they required explanations about aspects like conjugation, use of appropriate connectors, and others, to produce paragraphs on only single sentences; and in the pronunciation of some phrases." (Researcher 2, diary)

Moreover, about the 4th question, “What difficulties did you have during your oral and written production?”, one of the students answered:

“My principal problem is the use of connectors, I don’t know what is the appropriate according to the context, I have also some difficulties in speaking with fluency, and sometimes I forget the words I need to communicate my ideas.” (Questionnaire, question 4, student 5)

In fact, during the development of the different workshops, the students’ written production evidenced the existence of some difficulties in the use of the appropriate conjugation according to the context, word order, connectors, and others; in that moment, the researchers implemented strategies to help students improving their language mistakes, the most important was the constant feedback (individually and in group), and the application of the supported guides, as explained in the instructional design. In studies done by Vasu, Hui Lin & Nimehchisalem (2016), they report that most of the students prefer teachers’ written feedback because it helps them a lot to improve their performance in writing and through time students become autonomous according to their own capacities to interiorize the language. As a matter of fact, this research project evidences that an effective written feedback helps students build the necessary language tools to improve their communication not only in written way but also in the oral performance along time.

The abridged version of some novels with listening support as well as the written activities developed along this research focused students to engage and improve their oral production. Thus, the students’ written production was the previous step students did before their oral performance; they also used their papers as the base to present their oral reports. Previously the final oral report, students carried out some oral training to get fluency, improve pronunciation, correct pronunciation and prepare the final oral presentation; this activity was supervised by the researchers in order to give students feedback when necessary.

During the oral presentations, students passed by a process of constant progress; the work they developed in each workshop contributed with the students’ self-improvement. About it, one of the researchers argued:

“Some students show more difficulties that other during their oral presentations basically in pronunciation and fluency, but it is perceived that most of them try to do their best, there is certain competition among them because they have to expose their own

production in front of the group, during their presentations they prepare pictures and power point presentations to have some visual aids during their oral performance.” (Researcher 2, diary)

Likewise, about their English oral performance during the classwork, one of the students asserts:

“For me, the most difficult is to speak with fluency, I feel I need more vocabulary and practice; I think that the work we have done this semester, studying with novels not with textbooks as usually, has been a good idea for helping me to practice my English, I have had the opportunity to write and speak a lot. It is not easy for me, but it is a good exercise to improve my English.” (Questionnaire, student 4)

The English oral practice in the classroom is very important for students because they learn how to use the language in real situations; in this research, literature was a great source for guiding different activities in order to motivate students’ speaking. Hişmanoğlu (2015) declares that literature develops oral and written skills, it helps students understand the English linguistic system, and the students also can acquire idiomatic expressions that help them speak clearly; thus, the use of the abridged version of novels motivate students oral practice due to their wide variety of topics and activities teachers can develop in the classroom.

Subsequently, the constant listening, oral and written training, accompanied by the researchers’ feedback as well as the support guides, contributed to improve students’ communication. It was demonstrated in the latest reports students presented, thus, one of the groups wrote their own version for the end of *Oliver Twist*:

When *Oliver Twist* went to live with Mr. Brownlow, he started to study philosophy because he loved reading. He lived so happy with his new family and helped MR. Brownlow with the library. When he finished the university, he married a beautiful girl he met at the university, they had three children and created an institution to help children in need, it was his best satisfaction with the life and he lived happy for ever. (Fourth workshop, group 2, students’ written artifact)

The previous excerpt evidences the students’ improvement in comparison to the first papers; besides, while students improved their written compositions, their oral production was better too. To have these results, students and researchers had to work so hard in doing the corrections and practicing the oral presentations, as it was confirmed by

the researchers' observations in their diary:

Students written and oral corrections was a tiring work, but the enthusiasm they showed in the moment to present their oral reports and their concern to do their best, was really a good experience. (Researcher 1, journal)

I think that it was not easy for students because they worked very hard, they had to understand the novels, when they did not, they asked their partners or the researchers about it. In the compositions, they had to include new expressions and vocabulary, take care with conjugation, be coherent, use connectors, among others; additionally, when speaking, they had to express their oral report in the way that the researchers and their partners understood them in the best way. It was a challenge for them. (Researcher 2, journal)

Likewise, some students stated they did not have much difficulty with the comprehension, they enjoyed the novels, took advantage of the different workshops and improved their written and oral production thanks to the emphasis the workshops had for developing these skills. About, a student argued:

I believe that these types of activities should be implemented for teaching English because we learn vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and it takes away the fear of speaking. (Questionnaire, question 7)

Finally, the students' opinions, their written and oral performance as well as the researchers' views about the development of the different workshops, evidence the advantages of using literature in the English classes to enhance students' written and oral communication. Additionally, the researchers' support through the feedback helped students improve their language use and promoted students' self-confidence to overcome their difficulties in terms of language acquisition.

Second category: students' involvement in knowledge acquisition and cultural enrichment

The development of different workshops based on the abridged version of some novels, permitted students to be involved in particular aspects inherent to people's life and development such as knowledge acquisition and cultural aspects. In fact, the classic books of literature (Great Expectations, Frankenstein, The Prisoner of Zenda and Oliver

Twist) selected for this research project give testimony of specific moments in the history of towns, about people customs, social problems, among others; additionally, they include the fantasy and fun of literature which make them enjoyable and interesting for students.

Likewise, one of the characteristics of literature is to evidence people's customs and history; for example one of the novels students listened to was "The prisoner of Zenda", it took place in a central European Country named Ruritania, during the kingdom of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), it was a story of love and honor that implicated students in learning about relevant aspects of people from that age, such as the conflicts of a real family who had to live the desire of power and government and also the emergence of the industrial revolution which was a very important moment in the history of humanity; thus, as students declared about it:

I learned more about the life of people in Europe, the most interesting was the rise of the industrial revolution, when people began to build the great railroads, and the development it produced in the society of that age. (Questionnaire, student 6)

Literature, seen as a cultural manifestation, is full of meaningful contexts, during working with this material, students experimented the contact with other cultures, and they could perceive people's traditions, for example in the novel *Great Expectations* students were immersed in the English society of the nineteenth century, when reality and fiction was not clear enough, people believed in the changes of the weather as signs of good or bad luck, the perceptions of guilty and innocent were manipulated for people according to their personal interests or their social class convenience. About it, one of the teachers wrote in the journal:

During the development of the first workshop, students could be immersed in a different culture and environment; they analyzed English people's customs, their problems, needs and feeling. (Researcher 1, journal)

Moreover, with the *Frankenstein* novel, students felt passion for the class work, its component of fiction, the perspective of science and technology of the nineteenth century as well as the adventures of the leading role (Victor) made students feel passion for literature. Cornillon (2016) argues about this novel: "The work raises questions on the limits of science and the dangers facing humans who want to unravel the mystery of nature" (p. 2), in fact, this book has been one of the classics of literature, it has been translated to different languages and taken to the cinema; in the same way, Hişmanoğlu (2005) affirms,

“In novel, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives. Novels not only portray but also enlighten human lives”. (p.63); thus, it is important that students reach this material as part of their academic life; as one of them argued:

It was a great experience, different to the way we have been working in English. Listening to these novels was pleasant and, at the same time, I learned a lot about people’s lives in other countries for example about the industrial revolution, people’s customs, their difficulties, problems, conflicts, and others. (Questionnaire, student 11)

Furthermore, literature also has the property to sensitize people; novels like *Oliver Twist*, written in 1838, shows the vulnerability of children, it recreates the situation of an orphan from an unknown town in England, but it really reveals the situation of many children who live in many cities and countries around the world, thus, this research evidenced how students were also critical in front of children’s violation of their human rights; besides, when students developed the fourth workshop and wrote the end of this novel, they could express their own thinking and the way to solve real-life problems as follows:

After overcoming a lot of problems in Fagin’s house, Oliver became a great leader with the help of Mr. Brownlow, the man who adopted him. As he had had a childhood full of necessities, he understood what children suffered living at streets on total poorness; so, he created a foundation for giving education and household to poor children; moreover, he worked very hard to create laws for the protection of children... (Fourth workshop, group 3, students’ artifact.)

The excerpt above shows how this activity stimulated students’ analysis of daily life problems which are part people’s culture; likewise, one of the purposes of novels is to show people’s lifestyle and culture from different perspectives. “Novels help students master the skills that will enable them to acquire information, process this knowledge, identify problems, formulate alternatives, and arrive at meaningful, thoughtful, effective decisions and solutions”. Helton, Asamani and Thomas (as cited in Hişmanoğlu 2005, p. 64). In addition, Tsai (2012) regarded that novels have been considered one of the most complete genders to be included in the curriculum for teaching a foreign language; thus, when students were asked to create their own ending to the novel (*Oliver Twist*), they were encouraged to analyze, criticize, evidence problems and propose possible solutions from their own view point.

Finally, according to the previous analysis and the evidences,

the abridged version of novels as an academic support motivated students' enrichment of knowledge and cultural aspects, it aroused students' interest for foreign cultures like the British and the European, places where the novels took place; the historical events as well as the traditions of people increased students' interest in working with this kind of material.

Conclusions

The inclusion of the abridged version of some novels in the English classes permitted researchers to approach students about literature issues that are important to enhance them improve their language use; additionally, students worked with some classic works of literature which guaranteed a good plot and the characters' performance; furthermore, students acquired new vocabulary, expressions, and pronunciation, all essential elements in language communication.

The workshops based on the different novels demanded students total involvement in the activities because at the end of each one, they had to show two products: the students' written paper and the oral reports; thus, students were led to use the language in order to share their summaries, descriptions of characters and events, as well as build their own texts; according to these processes, the results evidence that students gained a lot of practice and improvement basically in writing and speaking as part of their academic growth.

Moreover, the results of this research showed some other relevant benefits for students in terms of knowledge acquisition and cultural enrichment; hence, during the development of the different workshops, the novels allowed students to be immersed in people's development, customs, history, traditions and other aspects that are the legacy of the man's evolutions and progress along time.

Finally, through the development of this study, students experienced some difficulties, especially at the beginning of the activities; they showed problems in understanding the pronunciation of some words and expressions. While speaking, they also presented a lack of fluency and vocabulary. The progress of activities demonstrated that students got self-confidence to understand the material and also express their ideas about it.

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Transactional Communication Strategies to Influence Pre-service Teachers' Speaking Skill¹

Estrategias de comunicación transaccional para influenciar la habilidad del habla de los maestros en formación

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Abstract

This article is about an Action Research project carried out at a public Institution in Sincelejo, Colombia. The research purpose was to determine the effect of transactional communication strategies (TCS) on pre-service teachers' speaking skill. In a diagnostic stage, problems in the speaking skill were identified then an action stage was carried out consisting of six workshops including TCS; a researcher journal, a student self-assessment survey, and a non-participant observation were used for data collection; results suggested a positive impact of TCS on the participants' speaking skill represented in significant progress related to vocabulary, grammar, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, and interaction. Conclusions ratify the importance of TCS in the preparation of future Elementary School teachers in response to national bilingualism policies.

Key words: Attitude, fluency, grammar, interaction, speaking, transactional communication strategies, vocabulary,

Resumen

Este artículo explica un proyecto de investigación acción llevado a cabo en una institución pública en Sincelejo, Colombia. El propósito de la investigación fue determinar el efecto de las estrategias de comunicación transaccional (TCS) en la habilidad del habla de los maestros en formación. En una etapa de

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diagnóstico, se identificaron problemas en la habilidad del habla para los que una etapa de acción de seis talleres incluyendo (TCS) se implementó; un diario de investigación, una encuesta de autoevaluación del estudiante y observación de un externo fueron usadas para la colección de datos. Los resultados sugieren un impacto positivo de TCS en el habla de los participantes representado en progresos significativo relacionado con vocabulario, gramática, fluidez, actitud, pronunciación e interacción. Las conclusiones ratifican la importancia de (TCS) en la preparación de futuros profesores de primaria en repuesta a las políticas nacionales de bilingüismo.

Palabras clave: actitud, interacción, habla, estrategias de comunicación transaccional, vocabulario.

Resumo

Este artigo explica um projeto de pesquisa ação realizado em uma instituição pública em Sincelejo, Colômbia. O propósito da pesquisa foi determinar o efeito das estratégias de comunicação transaccional (TCS) na habilidade da fala dos mestres em formação. Em uma etapa de diagnóstico, foram identificados problemas na habilidade da fala para os que uma etapa de ação de seis oficinas incluindo (TCS) foi implementado; um diário de pesquisa, uma enquete de autoavaliação do estudante e observação de um externo foram usadas para a coleta de dados. Os resultados sugerem um impacto positivo de TCS na fala dos participantes, representado em progressos significativos relacionados com o vocabulário, gramática, fluidez, atitude, pronúncia e interação. As conclusões retificam a importância de (TCS) na preparação de futuros professores de primária em resposta às políticas nacionais de bilinguismo.

Palavras chave: atitude, interação, fala, estratégias de comunicação transaccional, vocabulário.

Introduction

Current trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Colombia promote the use of varied approaches and strategies to improve the proficiency of learners at all levels (MEN, 2016). This study searches to determine the effect of transactional communication strategies (TCS) in pre-service teachers' speaking skill in the first semester of the complementary cycle of a public Normal³ school in Sincelejo, Sucre. The information collected and analyzed according to (Powell & Renner, 2003) in a diagnostic stage displayed some difficulties in the speaking skill mainly related to fluency, vocabulary and interaction. Participants spoke with long pauses, lacked of vocabulary to express ideas and with unclear pronunciation and some constraints to understand ideas in English that led to the research question. To what extent can transactional communication strategies influence the speaking skill of pre-service teachers at a public school in Sincelejo?

This research was based on the use of transactional communication strategies under the paradigm of a qualitative research and founded on the Action Research method; regarding the learners' language development and the speaking skill the literature review included the teaching-learning principles by Richards (2015), Munro (2011), Louma (2009) and Burns and Joice (1997). Varied data collection instruments were used in the implementation stage that included a student self-assessment form, a journal, and an external observer form; data were submitted to analysis following (Powell & Renner, 2003). Convenience sampling (Cosby, 2008) was the technique to choose the participants who belonged to first semester in the complementary cycle at a public Normal school.

The findings showed that transactional communication strategies positively influenced the speaking skill of the pre-service teachers since vocabulary and grammar were improved. Students learned new words and became better speakers in different contexts, they increased their speaking fluency and reduced their pauses when communicating orally, displayed more positive attitudes, improved their pronunciation and intonation, increased their oral interaction, and most importantly, they fostered their confidence and motivation when performing oral tasks.

Transactional communication strategies also proved to be useful in the pedagogical preparation of future teacher-researchers because

³ Normal schools in Colombia offer a teaching preparation program for future Elementary School teachers; the program corresponds to grades 12 and 13 in High School which are known as *Ciclo Complementario* (Complementary Cycle).

they can implement the strategies carried out in class on their own teaching settings in order to improve the speaking subskills, specifically concerning grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, attitude, motivation, and interaction, to help students be more dynamic and self-confident.

Pedagogical implications are discussed to provide the educational system in general, curriculum designers, and policy-makers with ideas to promote transactional communication strategies in the teaching of EFL to Normal students in order to impact the pre-school and elementary school levels.

Literature Review

The Speaking Skill

When people interact, they use spoken language to express ideas feelings, thoughts, and intentions; this is what we call speaking. In this sense, Louma, (2009) affirms “people may use their speech to create an image of themselves to others by using speed and pausing, and variation of pitch, volume and intonation” (p.10). In addition, the concept of speaking is also stated like “combining sounds in a recognized and systematic way, according to language-specific principles to form meaningful utterances are also named speaking” (Comblet & All, 2001, p. 18).

Components of the Speaking Skill

Pronunciation. It refers to “the way for students to produce the utterance of words clearly when they are speaking” (Kline, 1998, p. 69). In the same manner, “English pronunciation does not amount to mastery of a list of sounds or isolated words. Instead, it amounts to learning and practicing the specifically English way of making a speaker’s thoughts easy to follow” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 1). That is, pronunciation embodies a set of aspects, namely, stress, intonation, volume, and speech-pace that allow communication when two or more speakers interact.

Grammar. It is required for the learners to arrange sentences in an appropriate way when they exchange ideas both in written and oral forms. Williams (2008) states that “grammar is the formal study of the structure of a language and describes how words fit together in meaningful constructions” (p.2). In other words, it is to fulfill with correct patterns of a language to have a clear delivery of the message.

Vocabulary. It is said that, “Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (Lessard, 2013, p. 2). Likewise, vocabulary deals with words we communicate in oral and written form. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words we recognize through reading and listening. Productive vocabulary is related to the words we use to transfer information through writing and speaking (Lehr, Osborn, & Hiebert, 2004). In brief, vocabulary is the lexicon that learners have to transmit and understand communicative intentions.

Fluency. It usually has to do with expressing oral language in a good pace without interruption. In teaching and learning process, if the teacher needs to check students’ fluency, “the teacher allows students to express freely without interruption. The aim is to help students speak fluently and easily. The teacher does not correct immediately whereas the idea being that too much correction interferes with the flow of conversation” (Pollard, 2008, p. 16). This means that there should be a reasonable way to provide learners feedback or correction when speaking not to break the flow of the speech. Equally, in order to communicate fluently, some students pause to avoid grammatical errors, make some false starts, reformulate sentences, construct phrases, and handle exchanges to keep in a reciprocal communication (CEFW, 2016).

Interaction. It plays an important role in communication because students explore various forms to exchange ideas. They analyze, create, dispatch, and interpret verbal and nonverbal messages. Thence, Brown (2007) declares that “interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p.212). In like manner, Rivas (as cited in Brown, 2007): “Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow student in discussion, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals” (p.213). Thus, interaction helps learners swap thoughts, feelings, emotions, and learn new information.

Motivation and Attitudes in the EFL Class

It is said that motivation is a balance between the value accomplished with an activity and one’s expectation of success in doing it. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define motivation as “a combination of the learner’s attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language” (p. 314). Additionally, attitude is a settled

way to think about something. In line with this, Smith (cited in Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011) states that “attitude is a relatively organization of belief around an object or a situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (p, 997).

Micro and Macro Skills of Speaking

Speaking is an activity that takes place in any community. Speakers use language in a variety of events such as at work, in the restaurant, in bus stations, in a shop, in the airport, at the office, on the street, and so on. The aforementioned situations have to do with a transactional language that is to get something done depending on the context of each activity; related to this, micro and macro skills (Brown, 2004) play an important role in oral communication because, on the one hand, “micro-skills of speaking refer to creating the smaller pieces of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units” (p. 142). And macro-skills, on the other hand, help the “speaker’s focus on the larger elements; fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication, and strategic options” (p.142). Additionally, Brown (2007) highlights micro and macro skills stating that “one implication is the importance of focusing on both the forms of language and the functions of the language” (p. 327).

Speaking as Transactional and Interactional Purposes

Talk as interaction. Richards (2008) states that “talk as interaction refers to what we normally mean by ‘conversation’ and describes interaction that serves a primarily social function. When people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, recount recent experiences, and so on” (p. 22). That means that with interaction individuals wish to be part of social situations and feel comfortable in that interaction with each other by means of exchanges that may be either casual or more formal, depending on the circumstances; Richards summarizes the main features of interaction as follows:

Table 1. Features and skills of talk as interaction according to Richards (2008)

Interaction features	Interaction skills
Social function	
Role relationship	Opening and closing conversation
Speaker's identity	Choosing topics -Making small-talk
Formal of casual	Recounting personal incidents and Experiences
Use of conversational conventions	Turn-taking
Politeness	Using adjacency-pair
Use of generic word	Interrupting
Use of conversational register	Reacting to others.
Speaker-constructed	

Table 1 displays features and skills of talk as interaction that fulfill social situations to interchange knowledge, culture, thoughts, feelings, emotions bearing in mind that the context in the action is taken with a purpose of social communication.

Talk as transaction. The message is the most important aspect when a person talks in these kind of circumstances. Richards (2008) confirms this statement when he argues that “Talk as transaction refers to situations where the focus is on what is said or done. The message and making oneself understood clearly and accurately is the central focus, rather than the participants” (p.24). Also, Burns (as cited in Richards, 2015) distinguishes between two different types of talk as transaction:

The first type involves situations where the focus is on giving and receiving information and where the participants focus primarily on what it is said or achieved (e.g., asking someone for directions). Accuracy may not be a priority, as long as information is successfully communicated or understood. The second type focuses on obtaining goods or services, such as checking into a hotel or ordering food in a restaurant (p.3).

It is relevant to say that talk as transaction is easier to plan and more comfortable to the students. These kind of transactions have their particularities as described by Richards (2015):

Table 2. Features and skills of talk as transaction according to Richards (2015)

Transaction features	Transaction skills
	Explaining a need or intention
Primarily information focus	Describing something
Main focus is the message not the participants	Asking questioning
Participants employ communication strategies	Confirming information
Questions, repetitions, and comprehension checks frequently used.	Justifying an opinion
Negotiation and digression	Clarifying understanding
Linguistic accuracy is not always important	Making comparison, Agreeing and disagreeing

The prior table represents talk as a transaction whose main function is to transmit the message in order to obtain something, for instance go to the doctor, register in hotel, order a food in a restaurant etc. Also, when students are implementing this kind of communication, they use fixed sentences to have a clear intention to communicate the message. Moreover, when teachers teach speaking as transaction, they have to take into account that there is a rich source of group activities such as information-gap activities, role-play, simulation, group discussion, and guided dialogue (Richards, 2008). According to the author, it is important that teachers have knowledge about the “what” and “how” of this teaching process to be successful and practice real-world transactions. Table 3 represents the steps typically involved in this model:

Table 3. Model to develop transactional communication strategies (Richards, 2015)

Stages	Concept
Preparing	Reviewing vocabulary, real-word knowledge related to the content, and context of role play (e.g., returning a faulty item to the store)
Modeling and eliciting	Demonstrating the stages that are typically involve in the transaction eliciting suggestions for how each stage can be carried out, and teaching the functional language needed for each stage
Practicing and reviewing	Assigning student's roles and practice role play and provide languages and other support.

The principles that orient the process of transactional communication presented in Table 3 start with a preparation stage in which students receive vocabulary, expressions, and grammar, using drawings or realia to learn content to proceed to the second section that is modeling the previous information, practicing communication drills, exchanging ideas, doing conversations, watching videos, among other activities. The last section is devoted to the practice and review of the learned strategy which includes presentation and feedback on the performance of the students.

Transactional Communication Strategy

When individuals interact with each other, breakdowns might happen, as a result, they use communication strategies to overcome this problem; Richards and Schmidt (2010) state that a "Communication strategy is a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language" (p. 98). In this sense, when learners try to speak, they may have to make up for a lack of knowledge of vocabulary and phrases, so they use transactional communication strategies to help them express better during the communication act. When language is used with a transactional focus the priority is to convey the message and make oneself understood; it is predictable, includes a lot of fixed sentences, functional expressions and communication strategies to make up for limitations presented in oral skill (Richards, 2015).

Assessing Speaking

Speaking is a complex skill demanding the simultaneous use of a different ability which often develops different components. One well known assessment tool is the READI Oral Proficiency Criteria (Finch & Sampson , 2004) adapted from IATEFL criteria and the Canadian Language Benchmarks; this rubric includes the following criteria:

Table 4. Speaking assessment rubric adapted from the READI (Finch & Sampson, 2004)

Aspect of speaking	READI Descriptors	Score	Earned score
Range (vocabulary, grammar)	The student's low range make communication difficult.	1	
	The student's range almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's range supports communication.	3	
	The student's range enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Ease of speech (fluency)	The student's low fluency makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's ease of speech almost support communication.	2	
	The student's ease of speech support communication.	3	
	The student's ease of speech enhance communication.	4	
Comments			
Attitude (motivation)	The student's poor attitude makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's attitude almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's attitude supports communication.	3	
	The student's attitude enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Delivery (pronunciation)	The student's poor delivery makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's delivery almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's delivery supports communication.	3	
	The student's delivery enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Interaction (communication strategies)	The student's poor interaction makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's interaction supports communication.	3	
	The student's interaction enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Transactional strategies (askin for repetition)	The student's poor use of transactional strategy in role-play makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's fair use of the transactional strategy almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's good use of the transactional strateg supports communication.	3	
	The student's excellent use of the transactional strategy enhances communication.	4	

As displayed in Table 4, the READI scheme includes four main aspects related to the oral performance: vocabulary and grammar range, ease of speech, attitude, delivery, and interaction; each component is assessed on the basis of a scale from 1 to 4, whose descriptors indicate the level of achievement on the intended aspect. A last item was added to measure the students' use of the transactional strategy.

Methodology

Type of Study

This research project was developed under the model of qualitative research and has its bases in Action Research because it allows the teacher-researcher to identify their teaching context problems, analyze their own teaching practice, and produce changes in their language teaching and learning (Powell, E & Renner, 2003). It examines and understands the significance individuals or crowds assigned to a social problem (Creswell, 2009), that is to say, a qualitative study helps to understand the social world in which students are immersed and contribute to solve problems in their day-to-day in and out of school.

Participants

This study was carried out at a public school which is located in Sincelejo-Sucre, with a group of 35 pre-service teachers who were exposed to transactional communication strategies as the participants of this study; The group was in the first semester of the complementary cycle corresponding to grades 12 and 13 in the public school system; this course had 11 men and 24 women whose ages ranged between 17 to 20 years old; they came from Sincelejo city; these learners came from different social strata, specifically, strata two and three. This was very important for this study because students had difficulty in speaking skill when they were interacting each other and by means of this project, they had the opportunity to communicate in a second language and improved their competences to be open to the world. The basic English level was evidenced after a diagnostic test, this result was obtained after having taken the oral proficiency exam Cambridge KET in order to know what their English level was, that is targeted at basic level proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Data Collection and Instruments

In this research, different data gathering techniques were used to capture the participants' and some school members' views and perspectives about the EFL learning process, especially the speaking skill; Table 5 summarizes the techniques, respondents and instruments used in the diagnostic and implementation stages of the project:

Table 5. Data collection instruments and techniques in research project

Data collection technique	Respondents	Rational	Data collection instrument
Survey	Content area teachers	To collect data about the content area teachers view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	English teachers	To collect data about the English teacher view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Pre-service teachers	To collect data about the students' insights of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Pre-service teachers	To collect data about teaching- learning process in class.	self-assessment format
Interview	School principal	To collect data about the principal view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Coordinators	To collect data about the coordinators view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
Participant and non-participant observation	Researcher and an English teacher colleague	To collect data about the research's and an English teacher's insight of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Journal and Observation form

Outcomes

The data analysis in the diagnostic stage of this project revealed a problem in the pre-service teachers' speaking skill. Taking into account this problematic issue, the researcher implemented six workshops based on TCS (Richards, 2008) that are listed in the following table:

Table 6. Workshops based on Transactional Communication Strategies

No.	Topic	Transactional Communication Strategies (Richards 2008)	Speaking strategies	Vocabulary	Phrases	Objectives
Workshop 1	Completing a passport	Asking for repetition	Role plays	Name, age, nationality, cellphone number, e-mail address, address	What's your name? How old are you? What is your nationality? What is your cellphone number? etc.	To ask and answer questions in order to obtain personal information.
Workshop 2	Getting to a place in Sincelejo city	Asking for more information	Guided dialogues	Go down the street. Cross the street. Turn left, turn right. Then, next, after that	Excuse me, how do I get to..., please? Excuse me, where is the...? Excuse me, can you tell me the way to...?	To give and follow directions in order to go from one place to another
Workshop 3	Identifying my famous person	Agreeing and disagreeing	Group discussions	Tall, short, fat, slim, young, old, ugly, intelligent, beautiful, handsome, polite.	What do you think about him/her? I agree, I think so, I don't agree, I don't think so, I'm not sure.	To describe people's appearance in their context
Workshop 4	Ordering food in a restaurant	Showing interest	Simulations	Chicken soup, fish soup, roast beef, roast chicken, rice, rice with chicken, salad, omelet, lamb stew, orange juice.	Can I help you? I'd like to have some breakfast. Would you like anything to drink? etc.	To order and express satisfaction with a meal in a restaurant.
Workshop 5	Buying food in a grocery shop	Getting time to think	Role plays	Can of coke, carton of eggs, carton of milk, a bar of butter, a kilo of beef, and a pound of rice so on so forth	I need a bottle of water. How many bottles do you need? How many eggs do you need? etc.	To ask and answer questions getting food in a grocery shop.
Workshop 6	Preparing a dish on a TV program	Asking for clarification	Sketches	Boil, chop, fry, grate, mix, pour, peel, slice, stir, spread, whisk, drain, add, flatten and roast as well as pictures related to them	Cook chicken, boil water, cut onion, peel carrots, wash tomatoes among others	To describe the steps for preparing a dish in a reality show environment

Each one of the workshops listed above followed the next sequence: In the first step a set of objectives was stated, in the second step, the setting stage, vocabulary and phrases related to the topic were presented; in the third step comprehensible input (vocabulary, grammatical structures, and transactional communication strategies) was exemplified and modeled; in the fourth step, the guided practice, role-plays, simulations, sketches, or guided dialogues were performed by using TCS. In the fifth step, independent practice, the main activity of the lesson was performed consisting of a speaking task in which the students were expected to use TCS. The last step was the assessment stage in which the pre-service teachers reflected on their own speaking process in each class by means of a self-assessment form; additionally, to measure the learners' speaking performance an adaptation of the READI Oral proficiency scheme (Finch & Sampson, 2004) was completed by the researcher to gauge the progress of every workshop.

After the completion of each workshop, the researcher submitted to analysis data according to Powell and Renner (2003) using six pre-established categories chosen to assess the students' performance: Vocabulary and grammar, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, interaction, and transactional strategy use that were subsequently classified in sub-categories. Table 7 shows the frequencies reported by each sub-category throughout the implementation of the six workshops:

Table 7 suggests that the objectives appointed in this research project were reached because the categories of analysis representing positive aspects surpassed the ones reporting negative issues implying significant progress in pre-service teachers' speaking skill as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 7. Categories and subcategories of analysis in research project implementation

Category	Subcategories	WKS 1	WKS 2	WKS 3	WKS 4	WKS 5	WKS 6	Frequency totals	%
Vocabulary and Grammar	Limited vocabulary	29	15	14	20	13	7	98	2.95%
	Little control of grammar	14	18	12	13	11	6	74	2.23%
	Good grammar and vocabulary range	54	64	64	60	73	78	393	11.84%
Fluency	Long delays to speak	35	43	29	24	14	10	155	4.67%
	Good speaking pace	48	44	61	66	76	80	375	11.30%
Attitude	Lack of confidence	16	17	13	12	8	7	73	2.20%
	Positive attitude toward communication	82	84	77	79	82	83	487	14.67%
Pronunciation	Poor intonation to express ideas	41	46	25	31	18	11	172	5.18%
	Effective intonation for communication	66	49	65	60	72	79	391	11.78%
Interaction	Limited interaction	11	4	8	14	10	8	55	1.65%
	Effective interaction	74	93	82	77	80	82	488	14.70%
Transactional strategy	Poor transaction communication	24	16	14	18	14	11	97	2.92%
	enhancement with TS	73	84	76	72	76	79	460	13.86%
Frequency totals		567	577	540	546	547	541	3.318	100%

Overcoming Limited Vocabulary and Little Control of Grammar

Limited vocabulary and little control of grammar were challenges students faced throughout the six workshop, but by mean of the use of transactional communication strategies, such as I know what you mean, great, that's interesting etc. They were able to use vocabulary ask for food, they progressively decreased at the end of the implementation stage; this means that the TCS helped the students to fulfill the use of correct patterns of the English language and to know how to transmit ideas in a clearer message (Williams, 2008), for example, in workshop 1 the subcategories *limited vocabulary* with 29 occurrences and *little control of grammar* with 14 went down to only 7 and 6 respectively in the sixth workshop; this suggests that, at the end, students were including more words and connected expressions to their speech, for instance, they said precise instructions to prepare their favorite dishes of the region and the others asked them about ingredients used in the preparation of the food implementing transactional communication strategies effectively like asking for clarification; in fact, the learners spoke with good order in sentences, so that they surpassed the difficulties. It is also extremely important to highlight the subcategory *good grammar and vocabulary range* in an average of 11.84% of the data as evidence of students' good performance during the workshops. As Richards and Renandya, (2002) state, a language speaker who has a good range of lexicon and who continually develops transactional strategies for learning new vocabulary, is a speaker who has more of possibilities to interact and exchange ideas in real language conditions. Accordingly, pupils were engaged in speaking activities and communication was enhanced with transactional strategies use.

Reducing Long Pauses for Better Fluency

Another important outcome in this project relates to the reduction of long pauses when speaking. First of all, the subcategory *long delays to speak* which represented those learners who took long pauses to utter words and expressions represented an improvement because learners' pauses were lessening in workshops 3, 4, 5 and 6; this finding evidenced that the learners ended up displaying few pauses in their speech, that is, communication kept on improving through the use of transactional communication strategies, according to Hughes (2002) who affirmed that, fluency is the ability learners have to speak in an understandable way, with good pace and appropriate strategies in order not to break down communication because listeners may lose their interest in the message. To support what is mentioned above, the subcategory *good*

speaking pace had a percentage of 11.30% in the overall findings which represents an effective use of a connected discourse in a fluent way which signified a positive impact on students' speech in this research.

Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Communication

It is important to say that the subcategory *positive attitude toward communication* had average scores over 80 incidences in workshops 1, 2, 5, and 6, which indicated that pre-service teachers' attitudes were positively influenced by the use of transactional communication strategies; testimonies and observations reported that the learners felt motivated in performing meaningful transactional communication activities from their real context ratifying what Richards and Schmidt (2010) state about motivation which is a combination of the attitudes, desires, and willingness that learners take to achieve an objective. As evidence, the data showed that the students encouraged their peers to fill a form to have a passport, they participated actively giving directions and descriptions of different people including among two or three adjectives to describe them.

Another evidence of the improvement in this attitudinal aspect is the *subcategory lack of confidence* that started with 16 frequencies in the first workshop and in the sixth one ended up with only seven occurrences.

Improving Pronunciation among Pre-Service Teachers

The findings of this study reported that there was an important impact on the pre-service teachers' pronunciation; the subcategory *poor intonation to express ideas* with 5.18% of the collected information proved that this pronunciation difficulty decreased little by little in each workshop; the data showed that the pre-service teachers' intonation when pronouncing some words and expressions led to mispronunciation in a number of cases throughout the proposal, however, with the execution of varied speaking tasks involving transactional strategies their pronunciation was clearer aligning with Hewing's (1995) theory that states that the point is to expose English learners to as many pronunciation activities as possible in order to improve this aspect.

In the implementation of this research project pupils were exposed to several oral tasks, for instance, completing a passport, getting a place in Sincelejo city, ordering food in a restaurant in which they had the opportunity to ask and answer each other's questions through

a good use of the transactional communication strategies; they acted in different settings conveying ideas with appropriate intonation and few pronunciation difficulties. To ratify this progress, the subcategory *effective intonation for communication* with 11.78% of data displayed that some learners uttered their ideas with good stress and pace, they also uttered long sentences and words well to comply with the activity's goals; so, the data showed that this subcategory had a steady progress during the implementation of the workshops.

Reaching an Effective Interaction Level in Speaking Tasks

Another positive impact of the use of transactional communication strategies in the EFL class corresponds to the improvement of the learners' interaction in the speaking tasks. In the implementation stage, the subcategory effective interaction with 14.70% got the highest frequencies among all categories; students spoke with more security having been able to express many words and expressions; this was observed when they interacted and exchanged information asking for repetition, saying instructions in a reality show, giving and asking directions to different places and so on; these findings refer to Brown's (2007) theory which states that interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. In the same manner, the subcategory *limited interaction* with only 1.65% in the final workshops demonstrated the significant impact of the implemented strategies in this research project.

Enhancement of Communication with Transaction Strategies

The findings of this study proved notable that the subcategory *communication enhancement with transactional strategy* got an outstanding percentage of the frequencies with 13.86% of the data; this means that a great number of students displayed an effective use of transactional communication strategies such as *asking for repetition, showing interest, asking for more information, agreeing or disagreeing, asking for clarification* with which they were able to exchange information in varied scenarios; in fact, Richards (2015) claims that focus on transactional communication leads individuals to use communication strategies to make themselves understood and have a better interaction with each other in different scenes. With these strategies, the learners who participated in the study improved their communication skills and were able to give personal information to complete a form, they ordered different kinds of food and they described their favorite famous

person. Nevertheless, the subcategory *poor transaction* in 2.92% of the information dealt with those pre-service teachers who had some difficulties in communication and were confused to deliver the message in the target language. This negative aspect became in fair lessening in workshop 6 with only 11 of the occurrences which was significant at the end of the implementation stage.

To ratify the positive impact of transactional strategies on the pre-service teachers' speaking skill, the teacher's rubric results showed that the students' scores were consistent with the triangulation table, as shown in the following table:

Table 8. Average scores from adapted READI speaking assessment rubric

Assessment criteria	WKS 1	WKS 2	WKS 3	WKS 4	WKS 5	WKS 6
Vocabulary and grammar range	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.9
Fluency	3.5	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.8
Attitude	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.4
Pronunciation	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.8
Interaction	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.1
Transactional strategy	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.0

According to Table 8 the speaking assessment rubric reported that the speaking criteria concerning vocabulary and grammar range, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, interaction, and transactional strategy got averages over 3.8 in the sixth workshop; this information supported the finding that students integrated new vocabulary to their discourse and it was more contextualized grammatically while they were talking in the class events; this permitted them to be more secure to phrase thoughts and feelings in the oral communication act.

Conclusion

This research project was about to what extent transactional strategies can influence the speaking skill of pre-service teachers led to the conclusion that this research reached the proposed objectives.

To begin with, vocabulary and grammar enhancement with the use of transactional communication strategies allow students to recycle more words and improve their speech through the implementation of the transactional speaking range in different settings such as guided dialogues, and meaningful tasks that helped learners to become more confident to convey messages.

Also, the use of transactional communication strategies throughout speaking tasks in the classroom is a good way to better fluency because learners are exposed to the target language, using transactional communication to foster their use of the foreign language in real situations, which enables them to create a connected discourse, exchanging information to reduce long pauses and increase their communication flow at smooth paces.

Similarly, the attitude is essential when learners use the L2 because they need to be motivated to do the speaking task; that is, the use of transactional communication strategies contributes to the enhancement of positive attitudes, improving motivation, confidence, and security when EFL pupils interact in different activities such as role plays, discussions, and simulations that allow them to be immersed in meaningful activities.

Transactional communication strategies make a great contribution to students' pronunciation because if the learners are exposed to transactional speaking tasks, they alleviate their utterance mistakes on reason that this kind of activities are effective and lead to improve stress, intonation, even voice volume to communicate ideas so that pupils get the opportunity to interact with this transactional communication fostering their speaking pronunciation.

Transactional communication strategies are also essential to develop interaction due to the fact that students exchange information every day and with the transactional functions the language learners have clear speech. Consequently, a good interaction through transactional communication strategies builds up a safe learning environment for learners in which they are able to collaborate, exchange information in a transactional way, and communicate successfully with each other and promote speaking skills (Gillies, 2007). Therefore, transactional communication strategies support students' interactions since learners do activities in pairs or in groups in order to fulfill speaking tasks.

Transactional communication strategies reduce negative speaking aspects as limited vocabulary, little control of grammar, long delays to speak, lack of confidence, poor intonation to express ideas that are common when learners are exposed to oral communication; this type of strategies help learners swap information about their daily life making these weaknesses reduce.

Transactional communication strategies are useful in the pedagogical preparation of future teacher-researchers since they can apply this kind of strategy in order to improve speaking skill, specifically in the aspect of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, attitude,

motivation, and interaction. Taking this into account this, teachers in public Normal schools in the region and in Colombia, are advised to incorporate transactional communication strategies in their teaching-learning process in order to comply with current trends in EFL, mainly concerning the suggested curriculum and national standards in order to prepare better elementary school teachers.

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Language Assessment Literacy for Pre-service Teachers: Course Expectations from Different Stakeholders¹

Literacidad en la evaluación de lenguas para futuros
profesores: expectativas de un curso desde diferentes
partes interesadas

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Abstract

In the field of applied linguistics, for the past fifteen years, there have been discussions about language assessment literacy (LAL) —the knowledge, skills, and principles related to assessing language ability— (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012). However, the field lacks research on the professional development of language teachers, particularly pre-service language teachers, through training in language assessment. Our paper focuses on the preliminary findings of an action research study whose goal is to identify the impact of a language assessment course for pre-service teachers in a language teaching program in a state university in Colombia. Data collection for the diagnostic stage of the action research cycle used a multiple-choice questionnaire for student needs and wants, an open questionnaire for professors, an interview with an expert, and researchers' journals. Preliminary findings indicate that there is a need to combine theory and practice of language assessment, with an emphasis on current methodologies for language teaching, assessment in bilingual education, and local policies for assessment. The paper highlights recommendations and challenges when designing a language assessment course based on insights from existing literature and includes implications for professional development.

Keywords: Language assessment literacy, language testing, language policies, bilingual education.

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Resumen

En los últimos quince años, el campo de la lingüística aplicada ha desarrollado una discusión sobre la literacidad en la evaluación de lenguas (LEL) — los conocimientos, destrezas y principios para evaluar la competencia lingüística — (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012). Sin embargo, el campo carece de investigación en el desarrollo profesional de docentes de lenguas, particularmente profesores de lenguas en formación desde la evaluación de lenguas. Este artículo se enfoca en los hallazgos preliminares de una investigación acción que tiene como objetivo identificar el impacto de un curso en evaluación de lenguas para profesores en formación de un programa para docentes en una universidad pública en Colombia. Para la recolección de datos en la fase de diagnóstico como primer ciclo de la investigación acción se utilizó un cuestionario múltiple para las necesidades y expectativas, un cuestionario abierto para profesores, una entrevista con una experta, y diarios de los investigadores. Los resultados preliminares indican que existe una necesidad de combinar teoría y práctica en evaluación de lenguas, enfatizando en metodologías para la enseñanza de lenguas, la evaluación para la educación bilingüe y políticas locales de evaluación. Se resaltan recomendaciones y retos en el diseño de un curso en evaluación de lenguas basados en tendencias del estado del arte y se discuten implicaciones para el desarrollo profesional docente.

Palabras clave: Literacidad en evaluación de lenguas, evaluación de lenguas, políticas lingüísticas, educación bilingüe.

Resumo

Nos últimos quinze anos, a área da linguística aplicada tem desenvolvido uma discussão sobre a literalidade na avaliação de línguas (LAL) — os conhecimentos, destrezas e princípios para avaliar a competência linguística — (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012). Porém, a área carece de pesquisa no desenvolvimento profissional de docentes de línguas, especialmente professores de línguas em formação desde a avaliação de línguas. Este artigo se enfoca nas descobertas preliminares de uma pesquisa ação que tem como objetivo identificar o impacto de um curso em avaliação de línguas para professores em formação de um programa para docentes em uma universidade pública na Colômbia. Para a coleta de dados na fase de diagnóstico como primeiro ciclo da pesquisa ação se utilizou um questionário múltiplo para as necessidades e expectativas, um questionário aberto para professores, uma entrevista com uma experta, e diários dos pesquisadores. Os resultados preliminares indicam que existe uma necessidade de combinar teoria e prática em avaliação de línguas, enfatizando em metodologias para o ensino de línguas, a avaliação para a educação bilíngue e políticas locais de avaliação. Ressaltam-se recomendações e desafios no desenho de um curso em avaliação de línguas, baseados em tendências do estado da arte e discutem-se implicações para o desenvolvimento profissional docente.

Palavras chave: Literalidade em avaliação de línguas, avaliação de línguas, políticas linguísticas, educação bilíngue.

Introduction

Educational policies in Colombia include broad guidelines for the assessment of/for learning (*Decreto 1290* from 2009 by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN). Teachers in schools are expected to assess student learning, and that includes English language teachers. In the case of language learning, the *Curriculo Sugerido* (Suggested Curriculum) (MEN, 2016) defines summative and formative assessment as two approaches to language assessment. However, there are no documents to guide this type of assessment, which is unique due to language as a central construct (Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Notwithstanding the importance of assessment for language teachers (Davison & Leung, 2009), the lack of published guidelines derived from empirical evidence exercises a great impact on language teacher education programs. Training for pre-service and in-service teachers, however, is needed and encouraged (Herrera & Macías, 2015; López & Bernal, 2009) in these programs.

Language teachers make decisions based on assessment data, whether this endeavor involves reporting achievement or improving learning (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Since data on language ability is used for decisions, they directly influence learning, teaching, and schools. Against this background, there is a need to improve the language assessment literacy of language teachers, a crucial stakeholder group in language assessment (Giraldo, 2018). In general, language assessment literacy (henceforth LAL) refers to the knowledge, skills, and principles for contextualizing, planning, developing, executing, evaluating, and interpreting language assessments, whether these are devised in the classroom or out of it (Fulcher, 2012).

To foster LAL among teachers, Brindley (2001) proposes that professional development programs include at least three modules: one around the why of assessment (purposes), one around the how (methods for language assessment), and one about the what (the meaning of language ability). While this proposal is indeed welcomed in the language testing field (see Inbar-Lourie, 2012, for example), research seems to be in beginning stages in Colombia. In the past five years, there has been an emergence of LAL research targeting in-service language teachers (see Kremmel, Eberharter, Holzknicht, & Konrad, 2017; Yan, Fang, & Zhang, 2017). However, there is scarce research on LAL development of pre-service language teachers. Specifically in Colombia, Restrepo and Jaramillo's (2017) preliminary findings on pre-service language teachers' LAL has led them to suggest that language testing courses do have a positive impact on participants: these courses

help them become aware of the meaning and purpose of language assessment –the how, why and what in Brindley’s (2001) proposal. As of the time we wrote this article, Restrepo and Jaramillo’s study was the only available research in Colombia targeting the LAL of pre-service language teachers.

Because of the need to further conduct research on LAL (Inbar-Lourie, 2013; Taylor, 2013), we are currently investigating the impact that a language assessment course can have on pre-service language teachers at a state university in Colombia. The language assessment course under scrutiny had its first cohort during the second semester of 2017, and was added to the language teaching program thanks to a recent curriculum modification (see details in *Methodology* below).

Specifically, we report the preliminary findings of the action research study underlying our approach to professional development in LAL. The results in this paper come entirely from the diagnostic stage of the action research cycle, whereby we collected the needs and wants from multiple stakeholders on what they would expect from a language assessment course. Therefore, the diagnostic stage in our study was a needs assessment exercise in curriculum development and sought to listen to stakeholder voices to foster LAL (Inbar-Lourie, 2017b). The overarching goal of our study is to characterize the impact of a language assessment course on pre-service foreign language teachers, while the goal of the diagnostic stage was to characterize the needs and wants for a language assessment course for pre-service teachers.

Literature Review

Assessment Literacy and Language Assessment Literacy

In education, assessment literacy refers to the skills and knowledge for the practice of assessment by stakeholders such as teachers and school administrators. This rather general definition by Stiggins (1995) has broadened in scope and more recently includes issues such as design and evaluation of assessments and knowledge of how students learn; such knowledge, as Brookhart (2011) contends, should inform assessment practices. Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), on the other hand, shares these generic definitions in education; however, it has been stressed that what is specific in LAL is the central construct for assessment: language (Davies, 2008; Inbar-Lourie, 2012).

In general terms, therefore, LAL refers to the knowledge, skills, and principles that stakeholders possess for the exercise of *language* assessment (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012, our emphasis). Such

exercise includes language assessments for specific contexts, purposes, populations, and decisions; as authors argue, language assessment as a process is planned, monitored, and evaluated.

While there is discussion that LAL involves several stakeholders (Pill & Harding, 2013; Taylor, 2013), clearly language teachers remain a central group of stakeholders that need to have adequate levels of LAL (Giraldo, 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2017b). Consequently, in addition to the core components outlined and explored by Davies and Fulcher, Scarino (2013) argues that language teachers' worldviews are indeed part of their LAL and helps them shape this set of skills.

In a review of LAL for language teachers, Giraldo (2018) proposes a core list of knowledge, skills, and principles that this group is expected to have, according to discussions in the field. Knowledge specifics include theories and methodologies for language teaching and learning, theoretical issues such as validity and authenticity, and personal contextual issues such as institutional guidelines for assessment. Besides, the author brings attention to instructional skills such as collecting classroom data on language development; design skills for closed- and open-ended instruments; statistical skills such as calculation of descriptive statistics; and technological skills such as the use of statistical software. Finally, specific principles include ethics, fairness, democracy, and transparency.

As can be observed, the construct of LAL has embraced a wide variety of issues in language education, and it is now a central discussion in language assessment. In fact, LAL has gained specific entries in language testing literature (see for example, Shohamy, May & Or, 2017).

Related research

Research studies tapping into language teachers' LAL have indicated that, in general, teachers want training in a wide variety of topics. The findings in Fulcher (2012) and Vogt and Tsagari (2014) state that in-service language teachers require training in issues such as test design and skills for test evaluation.

An interesting trend in the research conducted with teachers is that this group prioritizes the practical aspect of language assessment, while not entirely disregarding theory. Fulcher (2012) and Kremmel et al. (2017) have suggested that language teachers want to learn about the construction of items for multiple-choice questions, for instance. However, as their results show, teachers do not seem to be interested in

topics such as ethics and fairness in language assessment, which have been topics of heated debate in the field (Kunnan, 2003).

Other studies have helped language teachers to increase their LAL rather than diagnose their needs. For example, the study by Walters (2010) empowered teachers to become critical towards standards-based testing by means of developing test specifications. In the study by Arias, Maturana, and Restrepo (2012), Colombian in-service teachers improved their assessment practices and made them more valid, ethical, fair and democratic.

In conclusion, LAL is an expanding construct, welcoming what Inbar-Lourie (2017b) calls the genesis of assessment *literacies*. Thus, more research is being encouraged and welcomed to help characterize LAL. As a response to the call for contributing to the LAL discussion, we present a research study that brought together the perceptions of what a language assessment course should include, viewed from the lenses of pre-service teachers and language teacher educators.

Methodology

Context and participants

This action research study was conducted in the B.Ed. in bilingualism with an emphasis on English language teaching from a state university in Colombia. This program modified its curriculum based on the requirements established by the MEN in decrees 02041 and 18583 published during the years of 2016-2017. Because of this modification, a course titled *Seminar in Language Assessment* was added to the program's curriculum for the 8th semester. The seminar meets four hours a week, and the second semester of 2017 was the first time it was offered to students. LAL contents for the course derived from the diagnostic stage of this study.

The participants for the diagnostic stage of the research were professors ($n= 5$) who completed an open questionnaire, and one language teacher education expert; the expert participated in a semi-structured interview. These participants have been full-time professors in the aforementioned program for more than six years, were active members of the curricular transition, and participated in an event in 2017 on the concepts of bilingualism and national language policies.

Another group of participants in the diagnostic stage were pre-service teachers of the program ($n= 30$) whose age ranged from 17 to 25 years old. These participants were enrolled in the *Professional*

Development Course, a subject in the seventh semester, which explores concepts related to national language policies and bilingualism in language education. The students were selected as they were going to be part of the *Seminar in Language Assessment* for the upcoming semester. They expressed their expectations regarding the possible contents for a course in language assessment through a multiple-choice questionnaire, which was administered during the first semester of 2017.

As a response to the diagnostic stage, we concluded that for the first month of the course, the pre-service teachers needed to have an overall review of approaches and principles in language assessment; the following two months, students would deal with the design of language assessments; finally, the last month of the semester should be focused on issues such as bilingual assessment and general policies for assessment in Colombia.

Data Collection and Analysis

The approach in the diagnostic stage of our study was anti-positivistic (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) as it sought to collect data from stakeholders' views. Our methodology followed mostly the tenets of qualitative research because we collected information from an open-question survey, an interview, and researchers' journals. The survey for professors asked them to express what knowledge, skills, and principles for language assessment the students in the course should develop. The interview with the expert had open questions (e.g. What knowledge of language assessment do you think the students of this program should learn about?) and probes (e.g. In your opinion and experience, what areas of language assessment have you noticed students in the program have difficulties with?). Journal entries were guided by key phrases such as "Trends We have Identified in the Data" and "Deciding upon Topics for the Language Assessment Course".

Additionally, our method had a quantitative approach to data collection, through a questionnaire adopted and adapted from Fulcher (2012). Results from this instrument led us to calculate percentages and ranks on language assessment topics to be included in the course. The questionnaire had 28 topics the pre-service teachers could choose from (e.g. History of Language Testing, Writing Assessment Tasks and Items), and an open question: What other topics about language assessment should the course include?

For the qualitative side of the research, we used grounded theory for the data from three instruments: The answers to the open-question

survey, the transcription from the interview, and five comprehensive entries from our researchers' journals. We followed three levels of iterative data analysis in grounded theory (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Dillon, 2012). *Open coding* –an initial list of trends in the data– occurred as each one of us looked through answers in all instruments and compiled a list of emerging codings; both open lists were then merged to create one open list with fifteen categories; this list was used in the next analysis level. For *axial coding* (which examines and groups trends across open codings), each one of us looked over the merged list and made a second, more specific list of axial codings, using data from all instruments to confirm trends. We then compared both axial lists and calculated how much agreement there was between the two researchers. Inter-Rater agreement for axial coding was 88%; we discussed disagreements and came to a consensus on different codings. This agreement led us to the last data analysis level: *selective codings*, whereby axial codings were further grouped to arrive at major categories supported by research data. Finally, we discussed *selective codings* (i.e. we talked about what they should be labeled, according to data from all instruments) and brought everything down to five major categories that emerged from the diagnostic stage of our study, as follows:

- A. Overall awareness of language assessment
- B. Theoretical foundations in language assessment
- C. Praxis in language assessment, including design, score interpretation, and test critique.
- D. Bilingualism and language policies on learning, teaching, and assessment in Colombia
- E. Washback and impact from language assessment

Results and discussion

The purpose of the diagnostic stage in this action research study was to characterize the knowledge, skills, and principles for language assessment that a group of stakeholders would expect to have in a language assessment course. The data below shed light on the LAL expectations of pre-service teachers and professors from a language teaching program in Colombia. We first present the results from the questionnaire administered to students, then answers from the survey provided by professors, sample data from the interview with the language teaching expert, and journal entries from both researchers. The results below are divided into three major expectations: the first one focuses on designing assessments, the second one on general

language education issues vis-à-vis language assessment, and the third one on other pertinent issues for language assessment.

Overall Emphasis on the Practice of Language Assessment

Table 1 ranks the three top topics chosen by the pre-service teachers in our study. The two topics with the highest rank are related to the design of instruments for assessing language skills, and the third topic refers to the connection between language assessment and specific methodologies for language teaching.

The data stress the need to have praxis in language assessment within a coherent theoretical context for language education (e.g. CLIL). This may indicate that pre-service teachers have a lack of training in the design of instruments for assessing language skills. Besides, this group of stakeholders may consider the practical side of assessment as a priority, rather than a focus on theory they may already be familiar with, however superficially. To illustrate, the instrument uses the word “Design”, which may trigger among the students the idea of practical –not theoretical– language assessment. Lastly, the program the students are enrolled in has approached them through CLIL teaching, hence the evident expectation to learn about CLIL assessments.

Table 1. Three Top Topics from Questionnaire for Pre-Service Teachers

Rank	Topics	Respondents	%
1	Design of listening and reading assessments	28	93.3%
2	Design of speaking and writing assessments	27	90%
	Language assessments and methodologies (CLIL; task-based instruction)*	27	90%

Based on the quantitative results of Table 1, the conclusion that the pre-service teachers want a course that deals with the practical aspects of language testing mirrors what scholars have found in different parts of the world. Studies investigating in-service language teachers’ LAL (Kremmel et al., 2017, Yan et al., 2017) have shown that teachers want to develop skills for item-writing, which is consistent with the results we are presenting. What is interesting about the overall results of these studies is that both populations seem to have similar interests for their professional development in language assessment.

Table 2, on the other hand, lists the bottom three topics ranked by the pre-service teachers. Based on these data, the topics with fewer respondents are not altogether connected to the design of language assessments; in other words, topics such as ethics and test administration generally occur once an assessment has been designed and used; topic ranked 13 (*test specifications*), however, deals with a theoretical-practical aspect of language testing, which is writing instructions on how to write a test item or task. In this case, there may either be a contradiction in students' responses, or lack of knowledge of what test specifications are. The data in Table 2 suggest that the pre-service teachers would expect little attention to these matters, or it may be the case that they are not aware of what these issues imply in language assessment. The data also seem to reiterate what we present in Table 1: these pre-service teachers appeared inclined towards the design of language assessments. It may also be the case that Ethical Considerations and Test Administration are topics the pre-service teachers could be taking for granted; according to these stakeholders' responses, these two topics should not be prioritized in a language assessment course.

Table 2. Three Bottom Topics from Questionnaire for Pre-Service Teachers

Rank	Topics	Respondents	%
13	Writing test specifications/blueprints	10	33.3%
14	Language test administration	6	20%
	Ethical considerations in language assessment	6	20%

Overall, the results above show a lack of interest in specific language assessment issues, a trend which has been observed in other studies. For example, in the study by Fulcher (2012), participating in-service teachers showed little interest in test administration. Similarly, in-service teachers in Kremmel et al. (2017) and Yan et al. (2017) showed low interest in ethics and fairness in language assessment. However, in Fulcher's study, there was a high level of interest for training in item specifications, which differs from our study. In conclusion, it appears that pre- and in-service language teachers do not seem to want training in administrative and ethical issues for language assessment.

Lastly, Table 3 displays the list of subsequent highly ranked topics which link language assessment with theoretical issues. All topics have the same number of respondents (21 pre-service teachers) and include the selection of contextually sensitive type of language assessment, exploration of validity and how to validate language assessments, and how language assessment operates within bilingual contexts. The percentages in this table (70%) reveal that the pre-service teachers in our study seem to have some previous conceptions of theoretical aspects of language assessment and, most interestingly, that they perceive these topics as fundamental in their professional development. In the case of the first topic (assessments for own purposes), we believe this item directly addresses a need: the participants might want to consider assessments for their future practice, so selecting these assessments might be a relevant task for which LAL is needed. As for the second topic, we infer that students have studied validity before and, given their background, attach importance to it. The words validity and validation are crucial in language assessment, and these students may be aware of this fact. Finally, the program the participants are studying has the word *bilingualism* in its name, which should be a reason why assessment in bilingual contexts is a topic that ranks high.

Table 3. Sample of Topics Related to Theoretical Issues in Language Assessment

Rank	Topics	Respondents	%
5	Selecting assessments for your own purposes.	21	70%
	Validity and validation of language assessments.	21	70%
	Language assessment in bilingual contexts**	21	70%

The tendency in table 3 depicts the need of pre-service teachers for in-depth exploration of the selected topics for a language assessment course. These theoretical issues align with the knowledge dimension in the core list of LAL by Giraldo (2018). However, as the author and others emphasize (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012), the three components of LAL should not be seen separately but integrated. All three tables above show that, at least, attention to knowledge and skills must be present in the language assessment course for these pre-service teachers.

Close Connection between Theory in Language Education and Practice in Language Assessment

The data below comes from qualitative research instruments, specifically answers to the open question survey, and insights from the interview and researchers' journals. Overall, the data samples below confirm the stakeholders' need to have a course that combines theory and practice in language assessment. Particularly, the samples highlight practical aspects such as assessment methods and theoretical issues like knowledge and purposes for rubrics. In the survey, professor#4 states his wants: "Variety of methods for assessing second language proficiency (beyond testing). General policies for assessing learning in the Colombian Education System and its articulation with theoretical principles." The language education expert comments on the mix between theory and practice:

They (students) should develop the competence for doing that, so meaning that their theoretical knowledge: how is it, or what is it and what are their purposes and um, what are their criteria for developing them but also the practical part where they can develop rubrics

Further, the reflection below comes from one of our researcher's journals and further highlights the need for the theory-practice connection:

Entry 2, Topic 2, (17/07/17): It is crucial then, the capacity to link notions like testing and rubric design, marking, adoption and adaptation of materials, and language teaching approaches which are connected from theoretical perspectives to evaluation and assessment and which have been superficially covered throughout the semesters of the student-teachers' academic program to their current practice in institutions or schools.

Our first interpretation from these results is that stakeholders are not conceiving language assessment as a grade or test but rather as a universe of closely connected practical and theoretical issues. The range of topics to be included in the course may be signaling this fact. Furthermore, as it has been shown in other studies, when teachers have the chance to choose topics to improve or learn about, they tend to require as many topics as possible; this trend is also evident in the data we are presenting. Specifically, the topics these stakeholders want to include not only language assessment as an act of doing or using tests, but as an integration of contextual matters in language education; see results such as variety of assessment methods, assessment policies in Colombia, and methodologies for language teaching.

Similar attention to theory and practice of language assessment has in fact been highlighted by language assessment scholars (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2013). They argue that language teachers need to critically relate knowledge, skills, and principles for their language assessment practice. Specifically, in the study by Vogt and Tzagari (2014), the in-service teachers reported that they needed training across the spectrum of language assessment. Taken together, the findings in our study and those of others' studies seem to point to a comprehensive need for furthering professional development through training in language assessment for language teachers.

Other Issues for Training in Language Assessment

For this last section of our findings, the data come from journal entries, the survey for professors, the open question in the questionnaire for students, and the interview with the expert. Additionally, we interconnect data in this section with data from tables in the previous two sections.

We identified particularities that the language assessment course should address. According to participants in our study, the course should include information about methodologies for language teaching (e.g. CLIL -Content and Language Integrated Learning) and their relationship with language assessment. As one of the entries in the journal shows (Entry 1, Topic 1, 20/04/17): "Most of the students are currently involved in projects that use CLIL as the instructional approach and they still require much guidance on the conceptions of testing when content is embedded in the educational practices of language teaching." This trend is reiterated in Table 1, specifically the three top themes from the questionnaire for students.

The stakeholders expect information about general policies for assessment in the Colombian context. Professor#1 expects "Regulations or agreements from the national authorities regarding testing and evaluation." Professor#4 echoes: "General policies for assessing learning in the Colombian Education System and its articulation with theoretical principles." Finally, Student#20 expects the following: "National policies for language assessment."

Another issue the course should target, according to the expert, is the impact of language assessment on learning and teaching. The sample data below shows her view on this matter.

[Impact on teaching] And the thing is that evaluation from my point of view should also include how am I doing as a teacher. What is the effect of my course. Is it being successful?

[Impact on learning] assessment is not something instrumental, assessment is something that also has uh effects and consequences on the person who's assessed.

Lastly, assessment of bilingualism is a topic that should be part of the language assessment course reported in the present study. As Professor#5 suggests: "I would include evaluation in bilingualism: translanguaging and evaluation of L1 and L2." Table 3 above reiterates this theoretical issue in language assessment.

The combination of the four issues above seem to suggest that stakeholders have a determination for contextualizing professional development through language assessment. As may be suggested by the data, each of these issues could have some degree of relation to the curricular transition the program experienced, especially when it comes to bilingualism and language policies in Colombia. For instance, the samples above address CLIL as an approach which has been explored in the *Curriculum Design Course* given its close relation to bilingual education and language policies. There is also evidence to connect national language policies in Colombia (a topic students address in their practicum courses) and language assessment practices. Lastly, the language teaching expert expresses her views on the impact of language assessment for pre-service teachers; she seems to be highlighting a comprehensive purpose for assessment, rather than seeing it only as a grading tool.

Data displayed above strongly suggest the need to merge theory, practice, and general assessment issues in language assessment. Therefore, it is not surprising that the participants in our study want to have varied topics in the course. This is indeed a trend in the literature on LAL, whereby in-service teachers have expressed their wish to learn about diverse topics proposed in questionnaires (for an example, see Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). An interesting emergent finding from the present study is that participants expect to learn about language assessment within a broader context for language education, which includes approaches such as task-based language teaching, CLIL, and bilingual education.

Our findings point to what may be an overlooked area in the research on LAL. Participants in our study believe it is important to learn about language assessment alongside Colombian policies for assessment in education. Discussions about LAL have not explicitly

highlighted how general education policies may or may not have an impact on language assessment, but Davison and Lynch's (2002) idea of test mandate (a norm that officially establishes the need for a test) may come close to such discussions.

However, there are no discussions as to how documents like the *Decreto 1290* can illuminate and/or constrain language assessment, particularly in the case of Colombian language teachers, assessment in bilingual education, and contemporary methodologies for language teaching. Specifically, existing English language policies like the *Suggested Curriculum* have not explicitly linked the *Decreto 1290* to overall paradigms in language assessment; for instance, formative and summative assessment.

This lack of discussion serves as an argument for Inbar-Lourie's (2017b) call to listen to different stakeholders who can collectively understand "assessment targets, tools, procedures, analysis and intended but also unintended consequences" (p.267) around language assessment practices. Thus, we believe that a research avenue worth pursuing should include studies on how general assessment policies—along with general approaches to language teaching—coexist with language assessment issues.

Conclusions and recommendations

Language assessment literacy is an expanding area of debate in applied linguistics. The topics and research presented at the 39th Language Testing Research Colloquium (International Language Testing Association) held in Bogota in July 2017 attest to this fact. In the colloquium's closing plenary, Inbar-Lourie (2017) argued that, instead of LAL, the field of language testing should embrace the genesis and development of *LALs*. That different stakeholders—as shown in our study—want to see national policies for assessment in a solely language assessment course supports Inbar-Lourie's invitation. More importantly, our study reiterates language assessment as a key dimension of language teacher education, best encapsulated in this excerpt from the interview with the expert:

They look at assessment as something that is final with a purpose of just giving students a grade. And that is one of the areas that I, I think that we, that the course should emphasize on: On the purposes of assessment, on the usefulness of assessment, other than just giving students a grade.

The findings in our study show that the participants would like to have a course that deals primarily with practical issues in language assessment (e.g. item writing), even though not avoiding issues such as content-based assessment, purposes of assessment, Colombian assessment policies, and bilingualism. In fact, the data lead us to infer that these topics should be critically combined in the language assessment course to be administered. Therefore, the course should contribute to pre-service teachers' overall awareness of what language assessment means, its implications, and its overall impact on language learning and teaching. In turn, such heightened LAL should contribute to their overall professional development.

Regarding the issue of bilingualism, we suspect that the contents stakeholders want in the course under scrutiny were influenced by contextual factors. Recently, the program where the course belongs went through a reform, and its name now explicitly includes the word bilingualism, which is now reflected on the expectation to have assessment of this construct in the course.

Finally, we wish to highlight two recommendations and a related limitation in our study. First, none of the participants mentioned ethics and fairness as principles that a language assessment course should include, despite the allusion of such themes in LAL literature (Davies, 2008; Kunnan, 2003). We wonder why this was the case and warn that inclusion of these two topics, if not identified in a needs analysis, will merely be a judgement call. Second, Fulcher's (2012) questionnaire does not specify what classroom assessment (a topic in his questionnaire) involves, i.e. subcategories of classroom assessment. Because of this lack of specificity, we realized that there was no information on topics such as portfolio assessment, arguably a pertinent issue for language teachers' LAL. Thus, we feel this was a limitation –and indeed an artifact–of our research, and recommend that researchers wanting to use ready-made questionnaires have a critical stance towards these instruments to adapt them, even if they come from experts.

Overall and in tandem with Inbar-Lourie's (2017b) call to further research in LAL, we especially encourage language teacher education programs to share information on the development and impact of LAL courses, let alone when LAL is expanding and welcoming.

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Implementation of Audiovisual Material in an Early Sequential Bilingual Model during the Early Years¹

Implementación de material audiovisual en un modelo bilingüe secuencial temprano para la primera infancia

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Abstract

This research arose from the need to consolidate a meaningful bilingual methodology for children from three to five years of age from low socioeconomic backgrounds belonging to the public education system, where they could begin learning English and Spanish by means of a bilingual methodology that provides them with the same opportunities as middle to upper class children. Its aim is to implement an Early Sequential Bilingual Methodology Model in a public Early Childhood Development Center - ECDC (Centro de Desarrollo Infantil - CDI), and to collect data from class observations, student's responses, early childhood teachers' and English teachers' views as well as parents' perceptions towards its methodology and implementation in order to consolidate the model. Likewise, it will provide children with new opportunities to develop higher cognitive and high order thinking skills that can maximize their academic performance throughout their school years. This present Early Sequential Bilingual Model is a descriptive case study funded by a public university in Colombia and was implemented in a public ECDC (CDI) in Pereira (Risaralda-Colombia) based on the bilingual methodological proposals portrayed by Rodao (2011) and Arias *et al.* (2015). This research project depicts and systematizes the most predominant methodological techniques employed when teaching English at public ECDCs (CDIs) and interprets their effectiveness based on the data collected from

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interviews, fieldnotes and surveys. This article describes the responses of three- to five-year-old children to audiovisual material implemented in class.

Keywords: Spanish/English bilingual early childhood, early sequential bilingual methodology, reducing social gaps, equal educational opportunities, public early childhood education.

Resumen

Esta investigación surgió de la necesidad de consolidar una metodología bilingüe significativa para niños de tres a cinco años de edad, pertenecientes a niveles socioeconómicos bajos y que hacen parte del sistema de educación pública. El proyecto busca fortalecer el inglés y el español a través de una metodología bilingüe que les proporcione a estos niños las mismas oportunidades que tienen los menores de estratos medio y alto. Este estudio tiene como objetivo implementar una metodología bilingüe secuencial temprana en un Centro de Desarrollo Infantil (CDI) público, y recolectar información de observaciones de clase, respuesta de los infantes, percepciones de los educadores tanto de primera infancia como bilingües y de los padres de los niños que hicieron parte del proyecto con respecto a su implementación y su metodología para así consolidar el modelo de educación bilingüe para la primera infancia. Así mismo, se ofrecerá a los niños nuevas oportunidades para desarrollar habilidades cognitivas y neuronales que permitan maximizar su rendimiento académico durante los años escolares. Esta investigación cualitativa es un estudio de caso descriptivo financiado por una universidad pública colombiana, y fue implementado en un CDI en Pereira (Risaralda-Colombia) basado en una propuesta metodológica bilingüe presentadas por Rodao (2011) y Arias *et al.* (2015). Esta investigación detalla y sistematiza las técnicas metodológicas más predominantes utilizadas en la enseñanza del inglés en un CDI público e interpreta su efectividad basada en los datos recogidos en encuestas, entrevistas, y notas de campo. Este artículo describe respuestas de niños entre tres y cinco años de edad a material audiovisual implementado en clase.

Palabras claves: Primera infancia bilingüe en español/inglés, metodología bilingüe secuencial temprana, reducción de brechas sociales, igualdad de oportunidades, educación pública en primera infancia.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa surgiu da necessidade de consolidar uma metodologia bilingue significativa para crianças de três a cinco anos de idade, pertencentes a níveis socioeconômicos baixos e que fazem parte do sistema de educação pública. O projeto busca fortalecer o inglês e o espanhol através de uma metodologia bilingue que proporcione a estas crianças as mesmas oportunidades que têm os menores de estratos médio e alto. Este estudo tem como objetivo implementar uma metodologia bilingue sequencial precoce em um Centro de Desenvolvimento Infantil (CDI) público, e coletar informação de observações de aula, resposta dos infantes, percepções dos educadores tanto de primeira

infância como bilíngues e dos pais das crianças que fizeram parte do projeto com relação a sua implementação e sua metodologia, para assim consolidar o modelo de educação bilíngue para a primeira infância. Da mesma forma, oferecer-se-á às crianças novas oportunidades para desenvolver habilidades cognitivas e neuronais que maximize o seu rendimento acadêmico durante os anos escolares. Esta pesquisa qualitativa é um estudo de caso descritivo financiado por uma universidade pública colombiana, e foi implementado em um CDI em Pereira (Risaralda-Colômbia) baseado em uma proposta metodológica bilíngue apresentadas por Rodao (2011) e Arias et al. (2015). Esta pesquisa detalha e sistematiza as técnicas metodológicas mais predominantes utilizadas no ensino do inglês em um CDI público e interpreta a sua efetividade baseada nos dados coletados em enquetes, entrevistas, e notas de campo. Este artigo descreve respostas de crianças entre três e cinco anos de idade a material audiovisual implementado em aula.

Palavras chaves: Primeira infância bilíngue em espanhol/inglês, metodologia bilíngue sequencial precoce, redução de brechas sociais, igualdade de oportunidades, educação pública em primeira infância

Introduction

The effectiveness of audiovisual material during the implementation of an English early sequential bilingual model is one of the findings from a macro research project conducted with the aim of consolidating a bilingual education model designed for three- to five-year-old children of public early childhood development centers. This model aims to bridge the gap in the current Ministry of Education early childhood legislation and the bilingual policies in Colombia to ensure egalitarian bilingual education to all Colombian children during their preschool years, regardless their socioeconomic background.

This study was guided by the following question: What is the result of using audio visual material during the implementation of an early sequential bilingual methodology? Likewise, it had the following objective as a starting point: To describe the responses of the three- to five-year-olds, belonging to a public early childhood development center, in regard to the use of audio visual material as a teaching technique during the implementation of the early sequential bilingual methodology. Findings reveal that these kinds of materials play an important role in capturing children's attention as they create enjoyable learning environments that end up contributing to their second language acquisition process.

Literature Review

Bilingual Early Childhood

Espinosa (2010) states that the typical myth surrounding early childhood bilingualism that children acquiring two different structures and vocabulary sequentially could get them confused and overwhelmed is untrue. The author affirms that children have an innate ability to learn any type of language at any time. Hence, she declares that children should be stimulated to acquire an additional language as soon as they have a chance, since it will help them take advantage of the academic, cognitive, cultural, economic, linguistic, literacy, and social benefits of bilingualism. Ashworth and Wakefield (2005) assert that bilingual children will develop their creative thinking and problem solving skills as well as autonomy in their own language acquisition process. Along with Krashen (1981), Espinosa (2009) affirms that the teacher plays an essential role in the process of second language acquisition. Thus, early childhood professionals should strive to understand what is required

to expose children to an additional linguistic system as well as to determine how to accomplish it following high quality methodological standards. Espinosa further explains that there are several factors that play an important role for a child to acquire a second language rapidly, such as context, children's attitude and personality, linguistic aptitude, motivation, as well as the quality and quantity of input received. Nevertheless, she affirms that the sooner children are exposed to a second language methodology the faster they will acquire it.

Ashworth and Wakefield (2005) emphasize that children are triggered by their motivation, and constant development of their cognitive and linguistic skills while interacting with others. They state that teachers could spark children's imagination and enhance their creativity by employing meaningful activities such as storytelling, singing, playing, painting, among others. In addition, teachers should pay attention to children's curiosity, praise them, as well as rough-tune their language to make it as comprehensible as possible. Furthermore, the authors affirm that when children get in contact with a new language, they commence to transfer their native language experiences to their second language as part of their acquisition development, which makes it easier to assimilate. Finally, they recommend that, during this stage, it is best to consolidate both languages and content to accelerate the learning process.

In addition, McLaughlin (1984) claims that children from two to six years of age develop their language competences through a natural acquisition process, and if they are exposed to additional linguistic systems, by the time they reach formal schooling, they will have mastered them exceptionally. The author also states that during those ages, children, driven by their curiosity, begin creating and experimenting with the new language. Additionally, she emphasizes that exposing children to an additional tongue is considered second language acquisition when children begin their process at the time when their listening and speaking skills in their mother tongue are well-developed.

Moreover, Titone (1972) states that children that are around four to five years old are in the best age to acquire a second language. He affirms that during this period of life, children are eager to socialize with everyone and they are curious to experiment with the language. This is because they are less inhibited in comparison to formal education students. Likewise, he emphasizes that at this age children have the capacity to imitate and assimilate specific elements of the language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and even pragmatic and sociolinguistics aspects of the language more easily.

Early Sequential Bilingualism

To begin with, Genesee (2009) makes a differentiation between early sequential bilingual and late sequential bilingual children. The former are children that commence acquiring a second language after having a basic command of their native language, usually during their first five years of age. The latter represents children that are exposed to a second language during their teen to adult years. Also, the author claims that since early sequential (successive) bilingual paradigms are not that popular, parents and teachers tend to be skeptical about having their children learn both language systems sequentially; nonetheless, this could be avoided by sharing the benefits and advantages of being bilingual.

Purcell, Lee, and Biffin (2006) propose three stages of early sequential bilingualism. The first one is characterized by a silent period. In this stage, children listen and observe speakers of the target language non-verbal hints. This stage could take a couple of months and teachers should allow it to happen without pressuring children since this is when they begin to understand the form of the new language. During this stage, children interpret and use body language, gestures, facial and deictic expressions to communicate and later repeat some memorized fixed phrases that they hear from their teachers. Throughout the second stage, children create their own sentences to communicate in the second language. It is essential that teachers become aware of children's language development as to provide them timely feedback, praise them, and support them along the process. Finally, in the last stage, children are able to communicate with the new linguistic code with a more accurate pronunciation, lexical and grammatical use. It is crucial to mention that during this stage, children begin switching their native language with the second language back and forth. Additionally, Purcell *et al.* (2006) state that this characteristic is typical of bilingual users and it helps to increase their fluency rate.

Moreover, Purcell *et al.* (2006), as well as Espinosa (2009), insist that teachers should find out as much information as possible about their students. Knowing their interests, needs and motivations will facilitate the design of appealing lessons according to their age, likes, experiences, and culture. Furthermore, Genesee, Paradis, and Crago (2004) affirm that teachers should not combine both language systems within sentences since students need to be exposed to the new language structure as steadily and sustained as possible in order for their sequential language acquisition process to occur.

Implementing Audiovisual Material in the Early Years

Fernández (2014) explains that the use of audiovisual material in early education has certain advantages for language learning. First, motivation increases due to the fact that students improve their comprehension skills since they focus consciously on the language they are watching and listening. These kinds of material also motivates visual and auditory learners as they will be learning based on their learning style. A second advantage that King (cited by Fernández, 2014) points out, is that students will be exposed to authentic language. Therefore, students will improve their listening skills by the exposure to various accents and expressions.

Another benefit of implementing audiovisual material is that it helps children to create schemas of words. According to Evans and Green (as cited by Ramirez, 2013), children during the process of learning a second language make connections between what they already know and what they are learning.

In that sense, Canning-Wilson (2001) declares that the use of audiovisual material helps children to make associations between what they are watching with what they are listening to. The author also states that audiovisual material will also aid children to increase vocabulary learning as they will have an immediate image in their brain to support the language they are learning; thus, creating new schemas that help them to represent their reality.

The State of the Art of Colombian Early Childhood Bilingual Models

Little research on early childhood bilingualism have been conducted in Colombia. In the last decade, Salgado and Beltrán (2010), Rodao (2011), and Arias, Atehortúa, Chacón, Giraldo, Tamayo, Vélez, and Vidal (2015) conducted qualitative studies in this field that drew conclusions on the importance of implementing contextualized materials and meaningful activities to foster early childhood second language acquisition.

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As the first point, Salgado and Beltrán (2010) carried out research in a private institution in Bogotá, in which they identified the most employed pedagogical strategies when teaching an additive bilingualism methodology to six-year-old preschoolers. Those children belonging to the middle and high socioeconomic sector that participated in the study had been exposed to this bilingual methodology for more than 2 years at the time the data were collected. The results showed the importance of

conducting classes supported by thorough lesson planning and suitable ludic materials according to the learners' age.

Similar to Salgado and Beltrán, Rodao (2011) conducted research in Bogotá as well, where she designed and implemented a methodological proposal for three- to five-year-old children from a public early childhood development center. The author concluded that learning environments that include kinesthetic activities, arts and crafts, coloring, singing, and games foster second language acquisition. Nevertheless, in order to make these activities meaningful for children, their interests and needs must be taken into account.

On the other hand, Arias *et al.* (2015) proposed and implemented a simultaneous bilingual methodology in a public early childhood development center located in a rural area of Risaralda. The results showed that the acquisition of a second language occurs when being exposed to it naturally by means of ludic materials and activities.

To sum up, these studies contribute to this research as they provide insights on how early childhood bilingual education should be conducted in Colombia. Though they were carried out under divergent conditions, their implications serve as a starting point to strengthen this early sequential bilingual methodology which was designed and piloted during its first phase back in 2015. Additionally, for the sake of this project, the first investigation conducted by Salgado and Beltrán (2010) with six year olds from a private school shed light on how the socioeconomic status influences children's receptive and productive English skills given that children commence the bilingual immersion in that private institution from three years of age onwards. Subsequently, Rodao (2011) raised awareness on how children's emotional, economic, social, and political factors need to be taken into account before exposing them to bilingual education, as issues such as family care, health, nutrition, proper guidance, and even shelter may affect the implementation and their acquisition process. Lastly, Arias *et al.* (2015) highlights how the lack of an official early childhood curriculum for Early Childhood Development Centers in which the didactic units and syllabus could be identified makes it hard for English language teachers to align their L2 lessons to the ECDC's lessons. As a result, English teachers end up constantly inquiring the early childhood teachers for what they taught in their previous lessons in order to catch up with the first language lexicon and content presented.

All in all, being able to compare and contrast the early childhood bilingual methodologies conducted in our context enable us to acquire the necessary insights needed to conduct this research. Moreover, it

added weight to the endeavor that the aforementioned studies have pursued in regard to the importance of standardizing an early sequential bilingual methodology, which sets the course for a future public bilingual early childhood education program for three- to five-year-old children in Colombia. This way, justice and equality could finally be spread among all ECDCs across the country.

Methodology

Research Design

The type of study selected for this research was a qualitative case study. Merriam (2009) defines it as ‘an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system’ (p. 43). Interviews, surveys and observations were employed to gather information about the result of using audio visual material during the implementation of this early sequential bilingual methodology conducted with three- to five-year-old children.

Context and Participants

The context for this study was a public Early Childhood Development Center - ECDC (Centro de Desarrollo Infantil - CDI) in Pereira, Colombia. The ECDC has two branches located within the urban area whose socioeconomic strata is level 1 to 2 (very low), where 270 children from vulnerable families attend to receive integral care and education. Both branches are equipped with suitable spaces and elements to offer children integral care.

A total of 162 non-literate monolingual preschoolers were part of the implementation process during a period of four months and a half with an hourly rate of English instruction of two hours per week. The classes were directed by three English language teachers (pre-service teachers), all of them studying a bachelor’s degree in English language teaching. Additionally, there were five early childhood teachers and five early childhood teaching assistants. Finally, 28 parents were also participants of the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews, surveys, and observations were the three qualitative instruments used in order to obtain information to validate this research. Two of the three semi-structured interviews were done to the five early childhood teachers and their five corresponding

teaching assistants. Also, two online surveys were conducted through Google Forms prior to and following the implementation process. These surveys obtained information from the English teachers in regard to their perceptions, feelings, beliefs and opinions towards the early sequential bilingual methodology in place and the materials implemented. Besides, 17 observations were carried out with the aim of identifying specific elements regarding the use of materials, giving instructions, grouping, among others, as well as children's responses. (For samples, check appendices in Durango, Garzón, and Rodríguez, 2017)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The triangulation and interpretations of the observations, surveys, and interviews were originated using the method of content analysis. After all the information was transcribed as part of the pre-coding process, a variety of colors were selected in order to identify the concurrent topics observed. Also, in order to ensure validity and reliability, each co-researcher corroborated the data by independently pre-coding the data. Next, they discussed their outcomes, revised them and agreed on the topics to be scrutinized, as part of testing out the system of criteria created. Subsequently, the actual coding process took place, where all the data were segregated, condensed, and coded thoroughly and comprehensively. In the coding process, the assigned codes derived from information from each of the data collection methods, when and where it took place, participants, and their role.

Results and Discussion

At the outset, the use of audiovisual materials implemented by the English language teacher helped to promote a meaningful learning environment which aided children to increase their motivation towards their second language acquisition process. Hence, during the implementation process, videos were used as pedagogical strategies to engage children, to practice the vocabulary and sentences learned in previous sessions, and to foster second language acquisition. Subsequently, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented throughout the audiovisual sessions will be analyzed and described below, as well as the impact they had according to children's responses.

Furthermore, in the following fragment extracted from an observation field note, the English pre-service teacher had already presented the vocabulary about means of transportation through

flashcards. After reviewing the vocabulary, the teacher showed a video to engage children in the lesson and practice pronouncing various means of transport in the target language. In the video, the little ones were able to hear and identify elements such as the place, the characters, what they were saying, their actions performed, among others.

Observation excerpt one: *‘There are many ways to travel’ video*

Ss: (Ss stared at the video, 4 Ss are dancing along)

S1: *Carro* (Car) - (Did car movements with his hands while watching the car in the video)

T: Car (By pointing at the video and pantomiming a car with her hands)

Ss: *¡Bus!* (Bus) (Ss replied in L1 while watching the bus in the video)

T: Bus! (T corrected pronunciation while pantomiming the bus with her hands)

T: TRAIN! (T said out loud when it appears in the video while pantomiming the train with her hands)

Ss: Train

T: Airplane (While pointing at the video and pantomiming an airplane with her hands)

Ss: Airplane Ñaann, ñañannn! (Onomatopoeic sound) (3Ss mimed an airplane by moving their extended arms up and down)

(Video finished)

Note. T = English pre-service teacher; S1/S2 = Student 1, 2, etc.; Ss = Students

In the previous sample, the English pre-service teacher was repeating all the phrases in the video while children were looking at it and repeating after the teacher. After the image of the train came up the teacher modeled by shouting ‘TRAIN!’ to produce a sense of excitement, to what the children said ‘train’. Then the teacher said ‘airplane’ while pointing at the image of an airplane displayed in the video and as a result, the students repeated ‘airplane’ and three of them were making airplane movements with their extended arms. Moreover, the teacher pantomimed the characteristic movements and sounds of the means of transportation that appeared in the video in order for the children to correlate the words with their corresponding meaning better. While the video was playing, the teacher said the words in English out loud for the students to repeat them after her in order for them to

practice their pronunciation. For instance, when the train appeared in the video, the teacher repeated along with her pupils the word ‘train’.

To support these ideas, Mukherjee and Roy (2003) assert that employing visual aids such as videos during language lessons is a useful tool to contextualize spoken speech as it allows students to connect what is being said with what is being observed in the video. The authors advocate that students are able to understand more than 30% of what is being said with proper visual support than without it. In other words, videos are useful to enhance students’ understanding of the messages conveyed thanks to all the features that can be identified in videos, such as the place, the speakers, the actions they are doing while speaking, among other elements, which enable children to comprehend the interactions in an enjoyable way.

Additionally, videos enhance children’s motivation while enriching their second language acquisition. This is noted in the above observation field note sample, where one student expresses how much he liked the video by saying out loud ‘otra vez’ requesting the educator to play the video one more time. Also, motivation signs are also highlighted during the next early childhood teacher’s interview conducted at the end of the implementation.

Interview excerpt one: (Early childhood teacher one)

‘Bueno la motivación de muchos en general si fue muy buena porque todos

participaban, estuvieron muy atentos cuando la profe traía los frisos, los videos,

todos estuvieron muy atentos a lo que ella les explicaba’. (‘Well the motivation of

most students in general was very good because they were participative, they were

attentive while the teacher brought out fliers containing images, and the videos, they

all were very attentive to what she was explaining’.)

Thus, this teacher implies that videos as well as other resources such as flashcards enhanced children’s motivation and allowed them to participate in the sessions given that they were attentive and engaged. In other words, the use of videos triggered positive effects in terms of attention as it was evidenced during most observations, that audiovisual material allowed children to be more concentrated and to focus on the topics being studied while improving their listening skills, vocabulary, and comprehension.

In the same fashion, videos created a fun and interesting learning environment for children on the grounds that at the end of the vocabulary presentation right before the video, as evidenced in the example above, children started to talk to each other, but as soon as the educator played it, they immediately stopped chatting and began looking at it. Subsequently, this same occurrence was corroborated by one of the English language teachers in the post-implementation survey displayed below.

Survey excerpt one: (English teacher one)

‘The second technique was the use of videos as warm-ups to make students stretch and sing in order to prepare them for the next activities of the class, these activities were really useful because when I showed videos, the students that were not paying attention instantly look at them’.

Hence, that English teacher expresses that she employed videos as part of her warm-up activities repertoire in order to engage students so they could focus and be prepared for the rest of the activities to come. Likewise, English language teacher one implies that videos enhanced children’s attentiveness and concentration. This can be identified when she commented ‘when I showed videos, the students who were not paying attention instantly look at them’. As mentioned above, videos play an essential role when hooking students back into the lessons as videos trigger students’ attention and are motivating for them.

As a matter of fact, Tomalin (1991) asserts that incorporating videos into lesson plans are highly motivating for young students as they find them interesting and fun to watch. The author affirms that videos enable children to acquire words and phrases while they watch them. In other words, while engaging students back into a lesson through videos has a motivating effect on them, children are provided with the opportunity to practice words and phrases; thus, their second language acquisition process gets fostered.

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Bearing this in mind, the following sample, extracted from an early childhood teacher’s post implementation interview, provide further evidence on the positive impact that audiovisual materials have in terms of engagement and children’s responses.

Interview excerpt two: (Early childhood teacher two)

'A ver las que fueron más efectivas (...) eee (...) fueron los videos y las imágenes

grandes llamativas. (...) Eee (...) a los niños les (...) les llama mucho la atención

observar y como diariamente no tienen el televisor encendido, cuando se les prende y

es para algo didáctico ellos prestan mucha atención, así que los videos y las

*imágenes grandes fueron las que más llamaron la atención'.
(‘Let’s see, the most*

effective ones (...) eee (...) were the videos and big appealing images. (...) Eee (...) Observing catches

children’s attention a lot and since they do not have the television on every day, when it is turned on

and if it has a pedagogical purpose they pay a lot of attention, so videos and big images were the ones

that caught more their attention’.)

In this case, the early childhood in-service teacher two recognizes the role that audiovisual materials had when acquiring English through the early childhood bilingual methodology implementation. That teacher mentions how given the fact that using a TV is not that common inside their classroom, when used for pedagogical purposes, it ends up capturing her pupils’ attention. She also implies that videos big and appealing images end up making children concentrate on what is being displayed and heard. Early childhood teacher two also reports that audiovisual material was the most effective strategy used during the bilingual implementation. ‘A ver las que fueron más efectivas eee fueron los videos y las imágenes grandes llamativas’. As a result, it can be inferred that videos effectively foster children’s second language acquisition on the grounds that they allow them to review previously studied vocabulary and as when they are engaged they feel motivated to practice the new language presented. This was evidenced throughout the responses of children’s participation while teachers were eliciting information out of images and videos.

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In addition, it is important to highlight how this teacher agrees with what the early childhood teacher one previously said in regard to children being attentive in class as a result of exposure to videos. Since videos catch children’s attention, it is easier for them to assimilate the new information. Following this idea, Tomalin (1991) claims that

videos contribute significantly to the process of language acquisition and teaching since they combine education and entertainment; thus, videos stimulate children's motivation to acquire the target language. As it was mentioned before, the use of videos allowed children to easily comprehend the interactions in the second language in an entertaining way. Moreover, the use of videos as a strategy to foster second language acquisition in children played a significant role in the implementation of this early sequential bilingual methodology as they served as a tool to practice, review, and recycle vocabulary taught in previous sessions. The extract mentioned below illustrates how teachers employed videos to practice vocabulary in specific stages of the lesson to foster the language acquisition process.

Observation excerpt two:

T: Now we are going to watch a story, vamos a ver una historia que se llama

Treasure Island. ¿Cómo se llama la historia? (We are going to watch a story called...)

Ss: Treasure Island (they shouted)

T: ¿Qué van a encontrar?, ¿Qué va a encontrar Molly? (What are they going to find? What is Molly going to find?)

Ss: ¡ Un tesoro! (A treasure!) (1S shouted the answer as well)

T: A treasure?

T: What is that? (2x pointing at the soil)

Ss: Potato (1 student shouted)

T: Potato (T reinstates tilting his head up and down in sign of approval)

T: ¿Qué va a encontrar él? (What is he going to find?)

Ss: Zanahoria (Carrot) (1S shouted)

T: Carrots?

Ss: (No one answered)

T: What's that? (T asked pointing at the soil)

S: Cabbage! (A student took a guess)

Ss: Onion! (All students shouted, once they saw what it was)

T: Onion! (x2 nodding in sign of approval)
(Another explorer digs out an onion as well on the video)

Ss: Onion! (Ss shouted without the teacher asking)

T: The teacher played ‘Cho cho train’ song on YouTube, kids get very enthusiastic and start singing and walking out of the room. Early childhood teacher smiled at

T’s great gesture.

Note. T = English pre-service teacher; S1/S2 = Student 1, 2, etc.;

Ss = Students

The previous fragment was extracted from an observation field note where the teacher presented a video whose main character is digging some vegetables out of the ground while looking for a treasure. After the teacher introduced vocabulary of fruits and vegetables in the first stage of the session, he decided to study and practice the new vocabulary learned by playing the video. While the video was playing, the teacher elicited the name of some vegetables by asking ‘What is that?’ and pointing to the vegetables on the screen, to which children answer most of the time in English. For instance, when the teacher pointed to an onion on the screen and requested its name by asking ‘What’s that?’ one student made a guess and answered ‘cabbage’ but when all students managed to recognize the vegetable, they shouted ‘onion’ in response to the teacher’s question. Therefore, it can be inferred that children were able to relate the topic being studied with the mental image of it which led them to predict first the vocabulary and then identify and internalize the words due to the link made between the word and its visual representation.

Accordingly, Canning-Wilson (2001) affirms that videos serve as a tool to provide visual stimuli such as the environment which leads to prediction, speculation and activates background schemata when viewing a visual scene re-enacted. In other words, when children are provided with visual stimuli they are able to predict what is happening in the scene by connecting the language recently learned with what they are watching.

On the other hand, one of the English pre-service teachers that was part of the implementation commented on her experience of utilizing videos during her lessons.

Survey excerpt two: (English teacher two)

‘During the implementation of the project I noticed that children learn more easily

when they are exposed to material like videos, songs among other sources’.

In the above fragment of a conducted post-implementation survey, the English pre-service teacher two recognizes the usefulness of exposing children to material such as videos to enhance children's attention and foster second language acquisition. It is important to mention that most of the videos implemented in classes contained songs and chants as background music as well as appealing images. When the teacher asserts that 'children are able to learn more easily when they are exposed to videos', she validates the effectiveness of employing this type of material, during the implementation of a bilingual methodology, as they strengthen the comprehension of the topics studied in the target language. The teacher also emphasizes on the fact that videos are a strategy that facilitates children's language acquisition. In other words, it makes the process of acquiring a linguistic system easier. However, as the early childhood teacher mentions during the above interview, this strategy works if employed with a pedagogical purpose.

In order to clarify this idea, it is portrayed that videos can foster second language acquisition on the grounds that they serve as a bridge to connect the language being studied with its mental representation which leads to internalization. Nonetheless, it is crucial when children get exposed to videos during their English language lessons, for teachers to interact with the videos and to ask their pupils to do the same in order for them to be more engaged and to avoid possible misbehaviors. The importance of interacting with videos is illustrated in the next sample, where an English teacher played some videos without interacting along with them which lead to misbehavior during the session.

Observation excerpt three:

- T: T played 'Ears, eyes, nose and mouth' video
 Ss: (Ss stared at the video. 1S at front started to dance)
 T: Played 'The numbers' video (T did not engage students before playing the video)
 Ss: (Most seemed to enjoy this video. They started to sing along and count with their fingers. Some Ss at the back were not paying attention)
 T: Played the video 'Move your legs'
 Ss: (All students looked at the video. Some of them got up and danced and some others danced while sitting on their chairs)
 T: Played another video related to parts of the face. (T did not interact with the video)

Ss: (Ss looked at the video. They were not asked to do anything with it. Some of them were playing with their friends)

Note. T = English pre-service teacher; S1/S2 = Student 1, 2, etc.;

Ss = Students

In this case, the teacher played those videos to review vocabulary in the target language. Throughout the observation it was identified that the teacher did not engage children before playing the videos. Consequently, some students were playing and chatting while some others were staring at the video. It is clear that videos are motivating for children, but when children are not engaged before watching them, they lose their purpose, which in this particular case was to review English vocabulary. Moreover, if there are no English teacher's interactions present along the course of the video such as dancing, singing, or drilling, among others, children lose interest and begin carrying out other activities like chit chatting or playing with their classmates. In that sense, the role of the teacher is crucial when implementing audiovisual material. According to this, Santos and Osorio (2008) affirm that teachers' intervention is vital while playing videos to avoid behavioral issues during the class. In order to do so, the authors assert that the videos employed during class must have a purpose according to the stage of the lesson where they are displayed. In this way, children will be more motivated, attentive, and engaged with the video. In addition, Richert *et al.* (2010), found that children will acquire more vocabulary through videos when there is an intervention whether from their parents or their teachers in comparison to those who are just left unsupervised while watching them.

Conclusion

The use of strategies that enable teachers to promote second language acquisition are essential. Nonetheless, there are some implications surrounding the use of audiovisual material in the bilingual classroom, especially when concerning early childhood. To begin with, during this research children were exposed to videos by means of LCD TVs that teachers employed for specific purposes and instances of their lessons. As a result, it is essential to count with technological devices that enable teachers to display them during their implementations. Further, it was identified that English teachers must take into account children's age and needs when implementing videos, as well as their interests in order to increase their attention span during the lessons.

Moreover, this research concluded that pedagogical tools such as audiovisual materials can be exploited either to capture children's attention and/or to control behavioral issues, or also to recycle previously learned vocabulary. Additionally, the use of contextualized and appealing audiovisual material allows children to acquire vocabulary effectively as they concentrate more on the lesson and get motivated to produce the language. In general, employing videos during early childhood bilingual education permits practicing vocabulary previously learned which leads to its internalization on the grounds that it enables children to establish connections between the vocabulary words in the target language with their visual representation.

The results also portray that when videos are implemented purposefully throughout the lesson, they are a useful strategy to acquire words and phrases in an entertaining way as children find them appealing and interesting to watch. What is more, these aspects enhance children's motivation and participation which are essential elements to enhance their acquisition process and performance due to the fact that with these type of materials they are eager to participate as they find them interesting and enjoyable. Moreover, for teachers to achieve their goals with video implementations, it is essential for them to interact along with the videos by singing, drilling, dancing, among other actions which can facilitate children's engagement and will allow them to be more concentrated and willing to watch the video to understand and learn.

In addition, language teachers can employ videos related to the lesson as warm-ups to catch children's attention and to activate prior knowledge. It was evidenced during the implementation of this project that the atmosphere of the class changed when audiovisual materials were implemented. The number of students who were interested and participated throughout the implementations significantly increased. Furthermore, English teachers should provide children with different opportunities to practice the target language, in that sense audiovisual materials become a great tool to be used in the early childhood classroom. That is to say that, the use of videos empowers the learning of new words in a fun and dynamic way.

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In addition, Yazara and Arifoglu (2012) indicate that children from two to five years old have the capacity to imitate the behaviors and events they observe. They also claim the importance of presenting language considering their interests and needs since in this way learning occurs effectively, in the case of this age group they like cartoons. In that sense watching videos becomes a great tool to learn as they can

aid comprehension and create an enjoyable learning environment, so children can learn by repetition, absorption, miming and imitation. However, the teachers' use of body language, gestures, prompting, and asking concept checking questions while playing videos, are essential to make this strategy worthwhile for young learners. Additionally, the results demonstrated that videos are useful to foster children's participation while they acquire a second language considering that children show enthusiasm while dancing, interacting, and repeating the vocabulary displayed during video time. It also shows the importance of the teacher's interaction and participation while implementing these tools.

Finally, it is important to point out that few studies have been conducted regarding early childhood bilingualism for public education in Colombia. This finding is part of the second phase of the research project directed by Enrique Arias Castaño and Clara Inés González Marín. The second phase was conducted by Durango, Garzón, and Rodríguez (2017) and its main goal is to work towards enhancing bilingual education and promoting equal bilingualism exposure during the early years, especially of the most disadvantaged Colombian children with low socioeconomic status. These kinds of projects might enhance early childhood bilingual education as they provide insights about the most suitable teaching techniques to implement while working with young language learners.

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Implementing Critical Literacy in AI Undergraduate Students¹

Implementando la literacidad crítica en estudiantes
universitarios de nivel AI

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the current teaching practices utilized with undergraduate students at a private university in Ibagué-Tolima, who are required to complete Reading Comprehension coursework to obtain their professional degree. Two different methods for Critical Literacy proposed by Clarke and Whitney, and McLaughlin and DeVoogd, are used as examples for piloting and implementation stages respectively. Two different groups belonging to the same level were chosen to perform the activities during the second academic year of 2017. The collected data was analyzed using Grounded Theory procedures. Results showed that critical literacy is not a task that has been well developed at the Language Center. Therefore, the author suggests that teacher education in the area of Critical Literacy should be implemented in pedagogical training.

Keywords: Journals, teaching history, critical literacy, reading comprehension, peer observation.

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es analizar las actuales prácticas de enseñanza con estudiantes universitarios de una universidad privada en la ciudad de Ibagué - Tolima, quienes deben tomar Comprensión de Lectura como requisito de su carrera profesional. Se utilizaron dos métodos diferentes de Lectura Crítica propuestas por Clarke y Whitney, y McLaughlin y DeVoogd, son utilizados como ejemplos para el pilotaje y la implementación respectivamente. Dos grupos del mismo nivel fueron los que realizaron las actividades durante el segundo semestre de 2017. Los datos recolectados fueron analizados utilizando procedimientos de teoría desde la base. Los resultados mostraron

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que la Lectura Crítica no ha sido bien desarrolla en el Centro de Idiomas. Por consiguiente, el autor sugiere que los docentes se capaciten en Lectura Crítica a través de cursos pedagógicos en dicha área.

Palabras Claves: Diarios, historia de enseñanza, literacidad crítica, comprensión de lectura, observación de compañeros.

Resumo

O propósito deste artigo é analisar as atuais práticas de ensino com estudantes universitários da Universidade Particular em Ibagué, os quais devem tomar Compreensão de Leitura como requisito da sua carreira profissional. Utilizaram-se dois métodos diferentes de Leitura Crítica propostas por Clarke e Whitney, e McLaughlin e DeVoogd, são utilizados como exemplos para a pilotagem e a implementação respectivamente. Dois grupos do mesmo nível foram os que realizaram as atividades durante o segundo semestre de 2017. Os dados coletados foram analisados utilizando procedimentos de teoria desde a base. Os resultados mostraram que a Leitura Crítica não tinha sido bem desenvolvida no Centro de Idiomas. Em decorrência, o autor sugere que os docentes se capacitem em Leitura Crítica através de cursos pedagógicos na mencionada área.

Palavras Chaves: Diários, história de ensino, literalidade crítica, compreensão de leitura, observação de colegas.

Introduction

In daily teaching, it is common for teachers to reflect upon their practice, and the most common way to keep record of their experiences is by using teaching journals. Teaching journals are important because they often include aspects of the education process that cannot be seen, such as feelings, personal opinions, thoughts and perceptions of using techniques, students' reactions to such techniques, difficulties, likes and dislikes of new strategies, and frustrations. Gebhard (1999) defines a teaching journal as "a first person account of a series of teaching experiences... In addition, it can create an opportunity to confront the affective aspect of being a teacher, including what annoys, disconcerts, frustrates, encourages, influences, motivates, and inspires us" (p. 79). The journal I keep for the purpose of preparing my classes helped me discover one of the incidents I decided to analyze, because I want to make my teaching more process than product oriented (Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, & Conrad, 1990).

While clearly a personal teaching resource, Richards and Farrel (2005) state that "the journal ... may be a source of information that can be shared with others" (p. 68). When one talks to one's colleagues about issues that have been found in one's teaching, the journal helps shed lights on certain important incidents that are happening in a given class and how to tackle these situations. Additionally, Griffie (2012) defines the diary journal as "a document maintained by an individual writing a report to himself or herself on some topic area, such as learning a language or teaching a course" (p. 204).

Another source of information that was used was peer observation. This source was relevant to discover some of the incidents which were not perceived at first. Peer observation consists of watching another teacher's class in order to obtain understanding of some aspects related to teaching, learning, or classroom interaction (Richards & Farrel, 2005). After observation comes feedback. Giving feedback to one's peer is the most important aspect of peer observation because it provides teachers with another point of view of the class. There might be aspects that the teacher cannot perceive while he or she is teaching, but the peer will have a new more objective perspective. In addition, reflecting upon one's own class and having feedback can help a teacher in the process of self-evaluation.

A third source, which I never thought would be useful for finding incidents to analyze, is teacher history. The idea of the teacher history comes from the approach of reflective teaching as a means of improving classroom practice (Bartlett, 1990). The meaning of

reflection by Kemmis (as cited in Bartlett, 1990) states that “reflection is not just an individual, psychological process. It is an action oriented, historically-embedded, social and political frame, to locate oneself in the history of a situation, to participate in a social activity, and to take sides on issues” (p. 204). Through the teaching history, I narrated why I decided to become a teacher, and what inspirations I had during my practice, and also included experiences I have had during my life. Bailey (1990) asserts that collecting one’s personal reflections is practical for teachers because, in some cases, “we teach as we have been taught: The patterns that emerge in our current classroom behaviors may have been formed long ago” (p. 218).

Theoretical Framework

Reading comprehension is a very important skill in everyday life because there are many things that can and need to be read and understood, such as news outlets, magazines, street signs, menus, newspapers, text messages, etc. Lopez and Giraldo (2011) state in a recent study that

There is an urgent need to increase the reading skills of school-age Colombian students. The ICFES test (Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior), a nation-wide standardized test for high-school students, shows that Colombian high school graduates do not reach high levels of reading comprehension (p. 46).

Repeatedly Colombian students in high schools do not achieve high results in exams. Thus, students go to higher education institutions feeling frustrated and not knowing what to do when faced with activities related to reading. Learning to read is instrumental in learning to think critically. The written word surrounds us daily. It enlightens and confuses, it amuses and depresses us, it heals and sickens us (Brown, 2007).

In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1972) states that “the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements” (p. 87). In other words, students need to be more critical when they read a text, no matter what strategy they use to understand it. However, this is not easy because in Colombia, the majority of people are not used to being active critical readers.

Implementing critical literacy to A1 students is not easy. First, before teachers start applying strategies for critical literacy with

learners, it is important for them to learn or have a clear understanding of what critical literacy is and of why it is important. “Critical literacy is built on exploring personal, sociopolitical, economic and intellectual border identities” (Bishop, 2014, p.52). Once teachers become critically aware, they need to know how to teach learners to read from a critical view (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

A synonym for critical literacy is *analytical reading* (Molden, 2007, p. 50), and it is defined, according to McLaughlin (2004) “as not only a teaching method but a way of thinking and a way of being that challenges texts and life, as we know it” (p. 50, as cited in Molden, 2007). The origin of critical literacy evolved from the Frankfurt School of Critical Society Theory, which affirms that humans can change society through words and actions (Wood, Soares, & Watson, 2006).

The purpose of implementing critical literacy is to help students develop their capacity to use texts to analyze social fields and their systems of exchange (Luke, 2012). In other words, teachers need to teach their students how to analyze texts, so that students can discern patterns, designs and complexities, and to develop the capacity to redesign and reshape the texts.

The term critical literacy is not new among educators. Critical literacy is often confused with critical thinking, but Lee (2011) mentions that “critical literacy practices differ from critical thinking skills in that the former are set in a sociopolitical context oriented toward identifying unequal power relationships and serving social justice” (p. 97). In his article, Lee also states that critical literacy is not only for higher level students, but that lower level students can also engage to these practices (p. 98); that is why I decided to implement some strategies for critical literacy in reading comprehension with my A1 level.

According to King (2010) it is important to keep four variables in mind when it comes to learning how to read successfully: the reader, the text, the strategies, and the goal. Reading, in other words, is not only comprehending a text, but also about how to address said text. There are four steps in practicing critical literacy with younger and less proficient learners (Abednia, 2015). Those steps are: 1) familiarizing learners with critical literacy, 2) negotiating readings, that is coming to an agreement with students about the texts that are going to be read, 3) asking critical questions, and 4) discussing questions collaboratively. With these four steps “critical literacy facilitates not only the integration of different ingredients of a second language but also a meaningful synthesis of language practice and development of critical consciousness” (p. 87).

As for the techniques to teach critical literacy, there are various authors who provide teachers with a great variety of activities to tackle reading. Amongst these activities, Clarke and Whitney (2009) propose to work with Jones's framework and multiple perspective text which has three parts: *deconstruction*, *reconstruction*, and *social action*. Also, McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) suggest some strategies such as problem posing, the rest of the story (which is an adaptation of problem posing), switching, alternative texts, juxtapositioning, mind and alternative mind portraits, and theme-based focus groups. The choice of the strategy depends directly on the teacher, and the context in which the teacher works.

After having analyzed the three sources of information – teaching journal, peer observation feedback and teacher history – I found that one of the most critical drawbacks I had during the instruction of my classes was the lack of activities to analyze texts in my Reading Comprehension class. This class belongs to a group of students who study at a private university in Ibagué – Tolima, and according to the new curriculum of the institution, need to take three semesters of reading comprehension in English. They are required to complete the levels before they finish 50% of the credits of the degree they are studying. My students make up part of Reading Comprehension III, a class which concludes with the writing of an essay.

During the first two semesters, students explore important strategies to analyze a text. The texts are taken from authentic readings, not from coursebooks – which use texts for specific levels of learning – and the activities proposed in the booklet students follow in class are related to the strategies the students are studying. In the third semester, they have to review the strategies seen in the previous two semesters in order to place themselves in the position of writer. I tried to make this class different by implementing games such as *kahoot*, in which students are provided with multiple choice questions about the text they are supposed to read, and they have to answer to win points. It was only when I discovered my lack of activities that I decided to take action.

Piloting

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For the purpose of this exercise, I implemented features of Action Research, which “specifically refers to a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future” (Ferrance, 2000). The approach used in this exercise is a qualitative approach.

First, I started to read about critical literacy and decided to apply some of the strategies I found. For the piloting, I based my activity on the lyrics “So Good,” a song performed by Louisa Johnson (Mac, Gimes, & Drewett, 2016). According to Wood, Soares, and Watson (2006), song lyrics “help students to key in on their interests and aspects of popular culture” (p. 58). Beforehand, I decided to take some words out of the lyrics for students to complete after listening to the song twice. They were delighted to do this listening activity for the first time in their Reading Comprehension III. I do not know if they had done something similar in the previous semesters. After the second listening, I went through the lyrics and students told me the answers to the gaps. They did better than I expected (see appendix A).

After the initial listening activity, I asked students to read the lyrics of the song and find the message the writer intended to deliver. I provided learners with pieces of paper and markers in order to do the activity. While they were analyzing the lyrics, I wrote on the whiteboard the following questions: “With your partner, discuss: 1) Who is the intended audience? 2) What does the author like doing?” The idea of this activity was to engage students to the song. After that, they worked in groups to develop more ideas via these questions: “1) What is the message of the song? 2) If you could ask the author any question(s), which question(s) would you ask?” They had to discuss the questions in small groups and write down their answers. After some time, students taped their work on the walls around the classroom and I had them walk around in order to see and read everybody’s answers to the questions. I call this activity “a gallery-walk”. See Figure 1. Sample 1 and Figure 2. Sample 2.

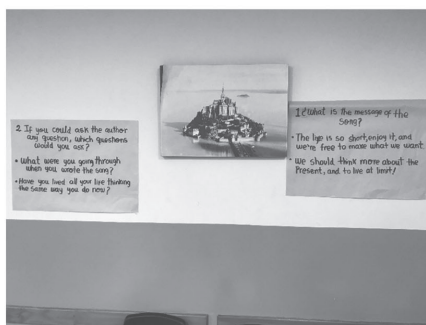


Figure1. Sample 1

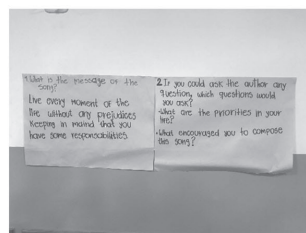


Figure 2. Sample 2

After the class, I started to reflect upon the activity and I decided to use the same one with my other Reading Comprehension III class.

I wanted to see how different my classes were when analyzing from a critical stance. To my surprise, it was a little bit more difficult for this group, but I could see they were having fun while doing the activity. After reflecting upon the level of difficulty the second class had, one problem arises; are the classes being successful for the purpose of the University? This question requires to do a more specialized research project.

Once I had seen their work, I made the decision to apply a new strategy, but this time I was going to use two different texts for the first group, and only one for the second, because I observed that the second group had more difficulties developing their ideas from the questions I posed.

Implementation

The strategy I chose for this implementation was *switching*, which is, according to McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), a strategy that can help show biases in the text as well as make the reader more aware of the author's intention (as cited in Molden, 2007). Among the different switches, I decided to use gender switch and ethnic/race switch. The idea of gender switch is to tell the story using the opposite sex, and as for ethnic/race switch, it is to change character's racial or ethnic characteristics. (p. 54)

Two of *Aesop's Fables* (Aesop, 2017) were given to different groups; *Androcles* and *Frogs Desiring a King*. Those who read *Androcles* had to identify the moral of the story. Then, they had to rewrite the story, this time telling it as though *Androcles* were a girl. For *Frogs Desiring a King*, students had to tell the story with different characters, but following the same moral. (See appendix B)

Students in the first reading class had one hour to read each fable and rewrite the story. At the beginning, they were asking questions to confirm that what they were doing was what I had asked them to do. This first group was very committed to doing a good job, and they were working very well. After one hour, they asked me for more time because they had not finished. After seeing how well they were working, I granted them more time.

Unlike the first class, the second only had the fable of *Androcles* and they were supposed to do the same activity the first class had done. They had to find the moral and tell the story changing the gender. This group had more difficulties when rewriting the story. Some students did not know what to do and they expressed this to me. I had to give them

more examples in order to help them write. Some groups said, “Nothing would change. The story would be exactly the same.” So I posed the question, “Are you sure a girl would act the same way Androcles did?” After that, they started to change the story. At the end of the class, I collected their pieces of work so as to analyze them.

Later, I started to reflect upon the activities I had done and wrote in my journal “the second group needs more input and they need to be taught how to think from a critical stance. On the other hand, the first group was more engaged and it was easier for them. What is happening?” After writing the entry, I knew I had to do a focus group to hear their voices regarding the activities. In order to analyze the data, I used the grounded theory, which involves the construction of theory through data collection and analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Outcomes

Hearing students’ opinions about the activities was very important for the results. In the focus groups, students from both groups expressed their feelings towards the ambience of the class.³ They commented that “And it was more fun. Both activities were good...,” “we try our best. We like to do the activities, it is not only reading and being bored because we have to.” They also stated, “The activities were more didactic,” “it is not an ordinary activity; read a text and answer questions related to it, but there were activities that made us learn. Hence, these kinds of activities encourage us to learn English in a different way.” Others said, “I found the activity interesting, particularly the fable because it was something different from what we were doing” and “The activities were very good. We utilized new techniques that helped with the comprehension of English because they were not traditional activities mainly focused on reading and answering questions. To name one, the poster.”

These impressions were entered in my teaching log. During the class I noticed how students were engaged in doing the activities. They seemed to enjoy what they were doing. “I felt my class was different. Students were working well and they looked happy doing the activities,” I wrote.

I also received feedback that was not wholly positive. Some students believed that the activities were not easy at all, especially when they were asked to make the gender switch. Some groups stated

³ Students’ comments were translated by the author for publication purposes.

that the story would not change at all, because a woman could also behave as a man does. “It was difficult because we have a previous concept. For example, we said that she would never escape, but I said to her that that was something ‘chauvinistic’.” Also, they mentioned that it was a different experience because the activities made them doubt as expressed in the focus group: “We start to doubt. We all doubted about the audience,” and “I think that it was more like a bittersweet feeling because we, as women, would act differently.” I appreciated that and wrote in my log that “I could see in their faces that they were thinking and thinking”, and asked myself, “was their level too low for the activity, or was the activity too difficult?”

Moreover, students felt they were doing a different activity in which they had to be in the author’s position, as if they were talking to the author. “I really liked the activity of being in the author’s feet because it helps infer what we understand.” Another said, “Cool. We already had an idea of what the fable was about and we put it in another context,” and another, “As for the questions, I think it was innovative because I had never wondered about the author.”

Ultimately, students reflected upon their daily reading practice and they think these kinds of activities should be used more often. One remarked, “These kinds of activities make you feel like attending class... like learning.” Another commented, “In the regular courses we do, but not in Reading Comprehension.” The implementation of critical literacy strategies for readings was definitely effective, given the joy students felt, as well as the new things they learned in order to enjoy a reading class. “I think that we learn other abilities apart from learning English.”

Conclusions

Even though the activities were implemented in two different groups, I could see that the aim of having students read from a critical stance was accomplished. The difference in the level was not an obstacle to perform such activities; I just had to work differently in each group. As for the students, they realized that reading critically has many deviations and it depends on the readers to decide how to tackle the texts. Both, students and I, were able to see how differently a text can be aimed and how fun a reading class can be.

Additionally, students were very committed to participating in the activities and they expressed their sympathy for having a fun and different class. As for the posters, they showed that aspects such as

grammar and vocabulary do not affect the result of the activity, but it is an issue that needs to be tackled in further classes. (Picture C, D, and E)

Recommendations

Once the analysis of the focus group and the teaching log were done, one issue arose: Teachers in the Language Center of the university where the strategies were applied may not know how to teach critical literacy. In order to overcome this situation, it is advisable to train teachers in this area of knowledge, so they can implement a critical view in the Reading Comprehension classes. For this reason, I have asked the director of the Language Center to create a space to share this concern and to have a workshop based on critical literacy in reading. The idea of training teachers in this aspect will help improve teaching situations so that classes may become more interesting and meaningful, without leaving aside the main purpose of the course, comprehension of texts – no matter what they study, they can analyze any kind of text.

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Appendix A

So Good – Louisa Johnson

I said I'm 'bout _____ minutes away
 One more stop and I'll be off this _____
 I'm free any day of the week, always losing some _____
 I told myself I'll be back by 10
 Trying to save myself for the _____
 But I know me, I hate to miss a _____

Don't say, don't say I didn't warn you
 Don't say I didn't warn you
 I live for the moment

I wasn't supposed to go out _____
 I should be at home, I got work at 9
 Shouldn't be out here doing what I _____
 But it feels so good, so good
 I was only gonna be an hour or two
 I guess that now I'm here I'm going down with you
 But it feels so good, so good
 _____ on my shoulder's giving up on me
 No listening to him and I can hardly speak
 The _____ they play makes me this way, oh yeah
 It was only 10, how did it get to 3?
 It's like I'm in my ow _____ machine
 But you know me, I'll never leave
 Don't say, don't say I didn't warn you
 Don't say I didn't warn you

Just live for the moment
I wasn't supposed to go out _____
I should be at home, I got work at 9
Shouldn't be out here doing what I _____
But it feels so good, so good
I was only gonna be an hour or two
I guess that now I'm here I'm going down with you
But it feels so good, so good

Cause everyone I know is here
_____ sours, crying tears
Living out the best years
So keep on toasting shots, cheers
_____ know it feels So good

I wasn't supposed to go out _____
I should be at home, I got work at 9
Shouldn't be out here doing what I _____
But it feels so good, so good
I was only gonna be an hour or two
I guess that now I'm here I'm going down with you
But it feels so good, so good

Appendix B

The Frogs Desiring a King

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted. ‘Mighty Jove,’ they cried, ‘send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order.’ Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came downrplashto the swamp. The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move. Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst. But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him, ‘We want a real king; one that will really rule over us.’ Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up. Then the Frogs repented when too late.

Better no rule than cruel rule.

Androcles

A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest. As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him. As he came near, the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog. Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live. But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days. The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena. Soon the Lion

was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog. The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest.

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

Author

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Motivating English Language Use by using the Benefits of Technology¹

Motivar el Uso del Idioma Inglés a través de las Bondades de la Tecnología

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Abstract

This paper shares the results of a small-scale research project focused on using technology to motivate the use of English. Tenth semester students from a University in Tunja was the target group to develop the project. It also had as an objective to promote a virtual learning environment to boost English as a foreign language. A field diary, an online forum, a survey, and students' artifacts were used to gather information in this action research study. Findings revealed two categories, firstly, *Collaborative work to instill motivation* which explains why students tend to work better while working in groups and secondly *The use of technology to enhance language learning* where it is described how the use of technology makes students more confident to learn English.

Key words: ICT, foreign language, collaborative work, motivation

Resumen

Este documento comparte los resultados de un proyecto de investigación a menor escala enfocado en emplear la tecnología para motivar el uso de la lengua extranjera inglés. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo con un grupo de estudiantes de décimo semestre de una Universidad en Tunja. Este tuvo también como objetivo promover un ambiente virtual para estimular el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera como el inglés. Un diario de campo, un foro, una encuesta y las actividades desarrolladas por los estudiantes fueron usados para recolectar información en esta investigación acción. Los resultados revelaron 2 categorías, la primera, *Trabajo colaborativo para favorecer la motivación*

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la cual explica por qué los estudiantes tienden a trabajar mejor en grupos; y en segundo lugar, *el uso de tecnología para motivar el aprendizaje de un idioma* donde se describe cómo el uso de recursos en línea permite que el estudiante gane confianza e interés por aprender.

Palabras claves: ICT, lengua extranjera, trabajo colaborativo, motivación.

Resumo

Este documento compartilha os resultados de um projeto de pesquisa a menor escala, enfocado em empregar ferramentas virtuais de aprendizagem para motivar o uso da língua estrangeira inglês. Este projeto foi realizado com um grupo de estudantes de décimo semestre de uma Universidade em Tunja. O mesmo teve como objetivo empregar tecnologia para incrementar a motivação dirigida à aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira como o inglês. Um diário de campo, um foro, uma enquete e as atividades desenvolvidas pelos estudantes foram usados para coletar informação nesta pesquisa ação. Os resultados revelaram 2 categorias, a primeira, promover a motivação através do trabalho colaborativo a qual explica por quê os estudantes tendem a trabalhar melhor em grupos; e em segundo lugar, o uso de tecnologia para motivar a aprendizagem de um idioma donde se descreve como o uso de recursos em linha permite que o estudante ganhe confiança e interesse por aprender. Os resultados revelaram que, através das oficinas, os estudantes ganharam confiança para aprender inglês.

Palavras chaves: ICT, língua estrangeira, trabalho colaborativo, motivação

Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in modern life has caused a transformation in fields such as education. In my particular case as a teacher, it is considered important to embrace new virtual tools to support teaching. The lack of appropriate ICT in classroom activities and the importance of adopting different teaching strategies highlight the need to increase interest in practicing a foreign language; hence, the objective of this study was to employ virtual learning tools in order to foster motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The idea of the present research came from three issues:

1. The teachers' lack of interest or disregard in developing the digital competence of students.
2. The teacher's reflection and identification of the students' needs as evidenced in the class.
3. The unsatisfactory experiences of university students while learning English.

A potential solution was considered to be the new pedagogical materials offered by the Internet which increase interest in learning.

Data was collected through a variety of research instruments. Firstly, a field diary was used in order to record information that was not visible in the written assignments. Secondly, students' artifacts (e.g. written assignments), which showed the use of the virtual learning tools, were collected. Lastly, comments on the Discussion Forum revealed students' perceptions after employing learning tools to foster their knowledge of English.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, some teachers of the Language Department in a University in Tunja, give traditional classes, where a book is the main resource used to teach. Other teachers use the Moodle Platform to share links where students can reinforce the language and grammar topics; it means students can autonomously go to the platform and develop exercises on their own. There is no interaction or feedback among the teacher and the students, and therefore their motivation to learn English is low. Based on this, the researcher suggested creating a learning environment for tenth semester students from the Law Faculty, which included the use of technology in the teaching sessions in order

to answer the question “How might technology contribute to foster students’ motivation in the English class?”

Literature Review

In this section, the concepts that were considered in this study were *ICT*, *collaboration*, *Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)*, and *motivation*. But firstly, it is worth mentioning that some research studies about motivational impacts of ICT already exist within a wide range of literature; to start with, there is a study called “*The influence of ICT on learners’ motivation towards learning English*” undertaken by Kreutz and Rhodin (2016), which was conducted in a Swedish school and investigated whether ICT influences students’ motivation and in what way that motivation was affected. In this regard, Andersson (2003), cited by Kreutz and Rhodin (2016), asserts that many students are bored since Swedish schools still keep old teaching traditions. The data was analyzed and collected through survey questionnaires and it showed that students’ motivation increased in a positive way while using ICT in different lessons in the EFL classroom. Based on the information provided, this study concluded that ICT increases motivation in order to learn another language.

On the other hand, the research report entitled “*The motivational effect of the ICT on pupils*” developed by Passey, Rogers, Machell and McHugh (2004) intended to investigate the impacts of ICT on pupil motivation and consider the ways in which teachers could enhance motivational impact for pupils, therefore, 17 schools from across England were taken as a sample and interviews, observations, and questionnaires were implemented for this study. The findings advised that ICT definitely has a positive influence in the majority of students . It was also reported that, within an appealing environment, most pupils enjoyed using ICT and teachers widely reported that ICT supported learning through teaching. In this case, once again the idea of using technology in the classroom brings positive outcomes to adapt activities with which students could demonstrate their technological competence.

To end up, the research entitled “The benefits of Using ICT in the EFL Classroom: From Perceived Utility to Potential Challenges” led by Azmi (2017) reveals that the use of ICT promotes autonomy, motivates learning and helps to better performance in the EFL classroom. This was a document review research which considered and examined the literature produced over the last two decades (1990-2014); the review of research documents unveil that the appropriate implementation of ICT in the classroom can make the difference. However, the study advise

the need to plan carefully and set well-defined objectives. Moreover, appropriate training in the use of ICT is required and the pedagogical planning is crucial to produce satisfactory results. In this case, the review done displays other important issues related to training in the use of ICT because it is not just matter of using an attractive tool from a multimedia point but to demonstrate mastery of it to really transform teaching.

Therefore, the previous studies concerning ICT and motivation are relevant to the teaching field and as such they serve as the starting point for the commencement of a similar study, considering the context, content, and participants. Accordingly, technology makes part of our daily life, which has contributed to develop social and intellectual skills and, thanks to it, teachers may take advantage to increase motivation to learn a foreign language.

Information and Communication Technology

From the past, the human being has used different means of communication such as language, symbols, and other tools to transmit and transform information and then establish communication using different technologies as mechanisms to manage, transmit, and process all the information that is created and received. Some teachers now tend to propose a new methodology in the classroom and change the traditional class, where there were established customs to develop a class and it was focus on the traditional "chalk and talk" into an online learning environment as a way to communicate. However, virtual contexts can intimidate other teachers who are used to face-to-face sessions (Sarkar, 2012). These teachers may feel reluctant to adopt new teaching strategies ignoring that they could help students to learn more effectively and efficiently.

UNESCO (2002) asserts that one of the main purposes of ICT is to unveil what we can do with it to improve education. For this reason, the tools developed on the Internet and the recent knowledge model generated by information technologies have produced several impacts on society. Then ICT looks for new means of how people can communicate, interrogate, make decisions, and solve problems; so to have access to all of the above, professional development in ICTs is crucial especially for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills that contribute to their work. Based on the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency , BECTA (2007) teachers lack competency with modern learning tools and this could be because new teaching strategies have not been fully explored.

Today young people and adolescents have a natural affinity for technology because we can observe them doing up to five tasks at once, such as sending text messages, uploading and downloading videos, watching movies, among other activities. The above leads to a change in the pedagogical model where the apprentice is recognized as the center of the class. In this regard, Tapscott (2009) states that a big change happened 20 years ago when the computer, the Internet and other technologies appeared along with what is known as the Net Generation. In this manner, childhood starts to assimilate technology as one environment more and adults become accustomed to it; we can clearly observe how easily teenagers fit into this new environment so that it becomes part of a daily routine of an individual and indicates the need to dominate emerging technologies and change the paradigm people have about the weakness of learning due to age.

On the other hand, it can be indicated first, that information and communication technologies have become a tool of daily use for the individual who has in some way become dependent on them for the usefulness that they provide as they facilitate the connection with other learning environments. Second, ICT provide a variety of devices that increase storage capacity, and third, emerging technologies have provided different means through which the person receives and analyzes all the information they obtain.

Finally, these emerging technologies such as wikis, blogs, and interactive boards, among others, offer progress to the community despite the barriers that can be identified either from hardware or software, but no matter what these barriers are, because ICT demands a transformation of the classroom to have a transcendence in students' lives and, in this way, change the traditional concept of education.

Collaborative Work

Collaborative work is the means by which knowledge can be shared and enriched in the academic process; in this way, teachers and students have the possibility to analyze different opinions from different perspectives. Oxford (2011) asserts that collaborative learning focuses on 'social constructivism' whose purpose is to invite apprentices to take part in a community. Then, once the sense of community is created and sensitized, it is essential to offer the apprentices a pleasant environment to potentiate their learning and thereby, the teachers could avoid the absence of commitment. This is where the teacher plays an important role where they must be actively involved in the process of orientation of the apprentices providing them with learning opportunities considering

their motivations and expectations. Hence, bearing in mind the above assertion the most important aspect while working with others to achieve the same goal is that this goal can be reached if there is a guide that assures the group is working in the right direction.

Additionally, collaborative work requires individual transformation that leads to participation and contribution. Blatchfords, Kutnick and Baines (2007) assert that the relationship among the members of a group plays an important role seeing that it provides a more effective working group, and consequently, an effective classroom context. Thus, based on the assertions made by the previous authors, it is stated that smaller groups single-sex or friendship-based relationships with the purpose of exchanging meanings and learning from the same group of friends. Consequently, learning can be strengthened through social interaction the role of the teacher is essential for having a meaningful experience.

In short, it is necessary to raise awareness about the importance of implementing collaborative tools in the classroom that point to communication and make students active members of a community; therefore, some responsibility must be assigned to students to identify when and where to seek guidance, and reinforce autonomous learning.

Computer Assisted Language Learning

Levy (1997) adopted the concept of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and defines it as the exploration and analysis of the application of computers in the teaching and learning process of language learning. In addition, Warschauer (1996) suggests that computer assisted learning offers a wide range of uses for language teaching and mentions that the teacher is in charge of stimulating the practice of the activities through the Web, interaction, and research. Consequently, training in the use of learning environments is crucial to renew abilities and competencies, considering that technology provide great opportunities to create and present significant contexts to new pupils who come to the classroom with previous competency in technology and are at the forefront in the use of virtual learning tools.

For the mastery of new technologies, it is necessary to lead the students and increase their interest in learning by using new educational strategies. Thanks to CALL, teachers have the opportunity to implement pedagogical advances and new concepts related to digital competence into practice; likewise, teachers have the opportunity to design materials to improve language learning or to adopt materials by using technology, for example, videos, didactic products, and several tasks considering the learners' needs.

Lastly, technology has a high potential in the field of language learning and instruction, however, these advances are in an initial state of agreement; Higgins (1993) claims that the full development of CALL in education, among other things, depends on the change in the concept of technology as assistance to instruction for the adoption of technology as a support for learning.

Motivation

Considering that motivation influences learning and it is recognized as a fundamental factor for teachers and researchers in any area of study, the teacher's work is to stimulate and increase students' interest and help them meet the established goals. Dörnyei (2006) states that without sufficient motivation, individuals with extraordinary abilities could not meet long-term goals. In the specific case of learning a language, Dörnyei et al. (2016) indicate that a more complex situation is presented due to the nature of the language itself, which involves the incorporation of the culture of a second language (L2); in other words, the student is immersed in a new context to get in touch with the reality of other countries to learn about customs, food, celebrations, and everything that deals with a new culture and that is why the importance of motivating them to use another language other than the mother tongue.

In different learning environments, it is possible to identify unmotivated students who are not involved in activities and act in a passive manner by performing tasks that do not make sense to them. Based on Noels (2009), lack of motivation can be generated by several aspects, for example, when they do not value the type of activity to perform, the feeling of inability to carry out an exercise, or when they underestimate the quality of their work. Therefore, it is necessary to study how to address and increase motivation in the students towards the learning of a foreign language as in this case; so there is a need to offer authentic material and contextualize real situations to show the importance of employing another language.

Additionally, another factor that can influence students' motivation is the methodology adopted by the teacher where a throwback to the 50s can be achieved and mainly the board and chalk came first. That is why Chen (2010) argues that in many ways technology offers a wide variety of tools for teaching and learning without limitations of place or time and due to the aforementioned, today's student finds it more motivating to learn. Consequently, it is crucial that teachers adapt their methodology according to students' interests and promotes lifelong learning.

Methodology

Type of study

The type of study conducted was action research, which is a kind of research that emerges from the classroom itself. According to Sagor (2005), action research is an investigation conducted by someone who is able to take steps concerning their own actions, with the purpose of improving their future practices. He proposes an action research process which consist of four stages: Firstly, *clarifying your vision/target*, whose purpose is to identify the problem and think about a solution; secondly, *articulating your theory*, to plan how to achieve the outcome; thirdly, *implementing your theory*, which means taking action and collecting data; and finally, *reflecting on results* to see what the data tells and decide how to act on it.

Research Instruments

In order to collect the data, a field diary, students' documents, an online forum, and a survey were used to gather information.

The research diary was used to collect information in case the researcher forgot or did not include important details that occurred during a class or specific session, bearing in mind the teacher could reflect on the notes later and state new ideas for future lessons. Students' documents show the process students have followed during a period of time and give the opportunity to check what students create, in this case, activities developed by using virtual learning tools; this contributed to identify their interest in and improvement of the language used. Moreover, the forum can be considered as an efficient tool, which contributes to collaborative learning and the construction of knowledge, given that students could comment on each other's work and receive feedback about their assignment. Finally, a survey was applied to obtain more relevant information from students where a few questions are asked.

Setting and Participants

For the present study 16 students from the Law Faculty at a private University in Tunja were involved in the project; they belonged to tenth semester and the English classes were taught twice a week. English is currently a compulsory subject which is included in their curriculum, classes are developed taking into account the communicative approach.

Research stages

To start executing the study, students were surveyed to identify their insights towards the use of technology to learn English (stage 1); it helped to set out the current study; during the implementation of the small-scale project, the MOODLE platform let students share their activities and the comments they wrote for their classmates in the forum (stage 2). In this way, the researcher could review students' performance in every assignment they uploaded (stage 3). Eventually, a survey to analyze students' perceptions after using technology was administered. To end up, the researcher started examining the data by analyzing it and revising theory in order to plan future actions (stage 4).

Following the third stage offered by Sagor et al. (2005), two activities were planned to carry out this study, thus students received a list of virtual learning tools and the topics of the activities were selected based on the content included in the syllabus to respect the requirements of the course and the level; students could work in groups or individually. As mentioned previously, it was important to make an informed choice of ICT tools then, the researcher strove to find manageable online tools of easy access and tried to select those resources which could attract students' attention. The first activity was related to the environment then, students had to create their presentations and once they had the link to the online resource they used, they shared it on the Moodle platform. In the discussion forum, students wrote about how appealing the use of virtual tools was and any other perception they had during the development of the first activity. Likewise, the students had to comment on each others' work, and finally, the tutor wrote an encouraging comment for each group to motivate them to keep working.

For the second activity, students had the chance to explore some online resources to make a decision about one. Finally, they decided to work with MIND42 which is free online mind mapping software that lets students collect ideas in a graphic way and visualize connections between different topics. In this case, students created a mind map to foster the topic related to cybercrime and once again they shared the link and participated in the forum.

Results

This study adopted the grounded data analysis approach; hence, the processes of disassembling and reassembling data considered by Freeman (1998) were taken into account during the whole process. In general, the data collection displayed two categories.

Category 1: Collaborative work to instill motivation

This category analyzes the results of how collaborative work instills motivation after employing technology. The data shows that students prefer to work in groups, in terms of organization and content, when they receive support and an objective is set. McGrath (2003) says that working in groups lets students solve problems which may arise during the development of an activity. When students explored the online resources they felt confused and given this situation, different groups started collaborating among themselves by sharing the easiness of some virtual learning tools and in this way tried to solve which tool could be better to use.

Subsequently, Johnson, Johnson & Smith (2014) point out the importance of every group member because, as a group, it is crucial to strive hard for encouragement in the completion of a task, hence, they also mention that the purpose is to make each member stronger to perform and complete a given assignment. It can be said that interpersonal relationships among students help with the outcomes that come from collaborative efforts.

At the beginning, students explored different online resources to deliver the class assignment and in this way identify which learning tool was the most appealing to use. Beforehand, the teacher explored the different online resources and became familiar with them in case the students inquired about how to use the tools and she could lead them in the process of choosing the most interesting. This study also demonstrated that, with the teacher and group's support, learning is more comfortable; for instance, in the first activity about the environment, students were asked to research an environmental problem our country was facing, to describe the situation, explain it, and illustrate the actions taken to tackle the problem and what Colombian law says specifically about the environmental problem. Once they had the information, they needed to select an online resource to create their presentation with the information collected.

In the following sample, the product created by one of the groups for the first activity is evidenced. The online resource used was Piktochart; in this application the user can create infographics, then, graphics, gifts, images, and videos can be included. Teamwork was essential, students not only discussed about the presentation, but also about the information; it is evident, students got familiar with the online tool what motivate them to deliver an outstanding assignment.

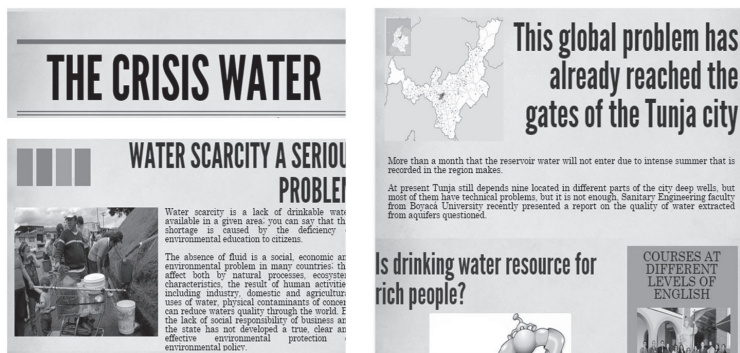


Figure 1. The crisis water (Pérez & Moreno, 2014), Sample # 1

The sample reveals how this group managed to employ an online tool, what led to discuss what kind of information they could share and at this point language use became important. Consequently, Blatchford, Kutnick, and Baines (2007) demonstrated that relationships are fundamental for effective group work because all members can contribute to the group interaction, support each other, and deliver good work on time. Although, sometimes students are seated or working in some form of grouping and these groupings probably inhibit learning and the interest to learn. For this reason, group work can be more effective when students have the chance to select the members of the group.

The next annotation acknowledges students' confusion and evidence that students chose the tool based on ease of use; however, it is important to remark the purpose of the study was to employ technology to boost motivation while learning English as a foreign language more than the potential these resources could provide.

Excerpt No.1

" Students look confused and indecisive about what online tool they could choose. Some online tools look appealing for them at the first sight but when they explore them students think the online tools are difficult to handle.

The teacher tries to lead the different groups and suggest them to see a tutorial about the online tool they want to use. Finally, most of the groups agree in the use of Calameo because it is easier to use [sic]" (Teacher's diary, August 4, 2017)

Once students had finished the assignment, they had to share their link in the discussion forum available in the platform students were using to share their assignments, to answer some questions about the group work, and finally, to express whether the activity was engaging. The purpose of the forum was to make students interested in the activities, receive feedback from their work, as well as encourage them to keep working and improving students' interaction.

Below are some comments from the students:

Excerpt No. 2

"the Working Group was held according to the thematic view in class and each complement our work [sic].

it is exciting because it offers different tools for sharing information [sic]" (Forum # 1, activity #1, August 24, 2017)

Excerpt No. 3

"It was very interesting work, where we work as a team and bring each of us with documents that had to do with the theme.

this tool motivates us to explore, investigate and interact with new ways to do work of a more dynamic and creative way [sic]" (Forum # 1, Activity 1, August 25, 2017)

Excerpt No. 4

"The work as a group was excellent... The virtual tool motivated us because it's innovative form, not using the same things, like a pen and paper like it's common [sic] " (Forum # 1, Activity 1, August 25, 2017)

Excerpt No. 5

"The work at group was good... it was a motivation to write because we were interested in the way of using the different tools [sic]" (Forum # 1, Activity 1, August 27, 2017)

As is evident in excerpts 2, 3, 4 and 5 the experience of using technology is described as interesting and positive thanks to the group

work. According to the previous information, it was a successful experience that provided the reinforcement of competencies such as technological competence. García, Basilotta, and López (2013) state that collaborative learning methods involve group work among students, and therefore, they help each other to work together to reach the same objective. This also lets us consider the activities from different perspectives and create an environment where students can practice their social abilities and leadership. Moreover, it is said that Information and Communication Technology offers the possibility of social intervention to open collaborative environments which allow students to execute the activities planned.

A survey was applied as the last instrument of data collection. Questions were written in English and students kept the same language while answering them. It helped to support the empathy students experienced by working collaboratively and it provide them confidence and scaffold motivation; the last question was about how different English classes were after using technology to deliver the assignments. Excerpts No. 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate that the use of technology increases students' motivation.

Excerpt No. 6

"Rarely we use virtual learning tools because we spend more time reading, English is difficult and technology helps increase interest.[sic]" (Survey, question # 3, October, 04, 2017)

Excerpt No. 7

"is motivating the use of computational resources in English learning [sic]" (Survey, question # 3, October, 04, 2017)

Excerpt No. 8

"the virtual tools facilitate the classwork because helps understanding of the topics [sic]" (Survey, question # 3, October, 04, 2017)

Hence, it can be affirmed that once an activity is set, it is crucial that the group supports it, considering that it can possess complexity,

and given its nature, it may require the whole group to work together to achieve the same purpose. On the other hand, it is evident the use of language in students' writings; the online tools became an excuse to make students learn vocabulary about their program and reinforce grammar structures. Importantly, group work took students into a discussion about current environmental problems, what can be considered as a meaningful learning.

Category 2: The use of technology to enhance language learning

The teacher-researcher concludes from the collected data that ICT use plays an important role for language learning, given that technology is a source of motivation that helps to capture the interest of students and support learning through teaching. It definitely provides a space to negotiate learning and scaffold language through reading and writing.

About the benefits that the technology offers inside the classroom, Gordon, Wesley, Grites (2011) comment that technology is a potential means of producing a positive attitude towards learning. Thereby, apart from the emotion that managing a virtual tool can elicit, substantial interest is added, which takes us to new academic experiences; additionally, the teacher needs to know how to manage the online tools they propose, in case the students become confused. Therefore, the resources must be carefully chosen in order to suit a particular teaching situation and to meet the specific needs of students. Technology also lets teachers provide a significant context for the communicative activities and, in this way, involve students through real and authentic experiences, which favor motivation and the learning process.

In the following sample, the development of the second activity is evidenced. It was suggested to use MIND 42, because last time students took a lot of time trying to decide what online tool they could employ; therefore, this tool let students create mind maps and was simple to use and fast to learn. They read about cybercrime, types of cybercrime, causes, history, and summarize the information to share it online

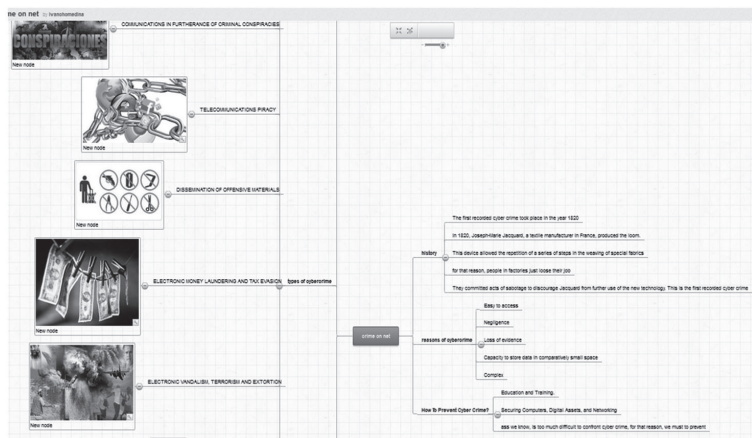


Figure 2. Students' artifacts

Unlike activity # 1, this online resource was considered easier to handle since there are only a few options to create a mind map offered by MIND 42. When using this tool, students felt comfortable because they learnt, for example, how to upload an image or delete it in case they wanted to change it. Motivation was displayed while developing the assignment because students could master the online resource. However, the teacher's support helped to solve doubts. Based on BECTA's ICT Research Network (2003), it is evidenced that ICT has a positive effect on students' learning and strengthens their feelings of responsibility towards their established assignments. Likewise, ICT boosts independence and motivation for the self-directed learning which allows the teacher to maximize students' self-confidence and explore new opportunities to improve their pedagogical practice, particularly in the creation of more stimulating and pleasant lessons.

Once participants did their mind maps, they had to share the link and describe briefly whether the chosen tool was appealing and interesting to know the perceptions and support the idea that ICT is convenient for pedagogical practice. The activities planned provided the opportunity to put into practice, students' writing and reading skills to foster the foreign language. Based on the above mentioned, one of the perceptions gained by one of the groups was the following:

Excerpt No. 9

"This application is an easy way to understand a text is what your goal, and more importantly shows a specific topic [sic]" (Forum # 2, September, 18 2017)

Excerpt No.10

"The motivation for using a virtual tool is wanting to make an innovative activity [sic]" (Forum # 2, September, 18, 2017)

Excerpt No. 11

"The classes were different because one learns to use other learning tools that as a group were unknown, what contributes to the learning of students [sic]" (Survey, question # 3, October, 04, 2017)

Considering the previous samples, the members of the groups had a highly positive response when using technology; it is noticeable that students also cared about the content of the assignment by highlighting the importance of understanding it. Therefore, it demonstrates that students are fostering the language by using ICT and raising interest in developing their other skills and that is why it is fundamental to explore other learning environments which might help teachers. Based on Harmer (2001), motivation is essential for success; accordingly it is fulfilled in the execution of the second activity because students were not as blank as in the first activity; moreover, their success could not be achieved without working in groups where they had the chance to combine their strengths and learn from one another, bearing in mind that a student can have different abilities in the same area.

Subsequently, excerpt 12 evidences students' change of, considering they did not look confused, but sure, while using the online resource.

Excerpt No. 12

T: "In the planned activity for today class, students show a more trustful attitude towards the new online tool set to work on Unit 2 that is about Cybercrime... Some groups start asking how to insert a node or images and once the teacher gets closer they seem to have the solution.... [sic] (Teacher's diary, August, 30, 2017)"

It is demonstrated in the use of the online resource taking into account students' attitude and skills to solve doubts and understand how to include or delete information. Lastly, the results of the first two questions stated in the third research instrument are exposed, which contributed to the data analysis.

Is it important to include ICT in English language classes?

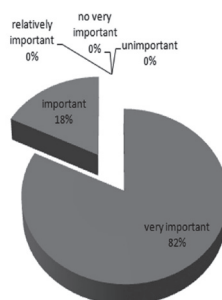


Figure 3. Survey Results, Question # 1

Based on the first question, it is clear that for the 18 surveyed students more than 50% of them consider the incorporation of ICT in English class to be very important. This once again demonstrates the positive impact that ICT has on the academic performance of a large number of students and the justification for this second category. On the other hand, the 18% of the participants considered the implementation of ICT in English classes to be important; they also noticed the pertinence of changing the way in which classes are delivered. Bearing in mind the results and considering the context in which this strategy was applied, it is possible to muse on the idea of adopting ICT in different language levels. In that regard, Frydrychova (2014) mentions that languages teachers try to employ ICT in their teaching to make a

more effective and motivating learning process, that is why he suggests using several web sites to strengthen the different language skills; to keep communication with native or non-native speakers through the use of e-mail, Skype, chat, or other web applications and the creation of an online course.

Additionally, analyzing the answers of the second question: Do English language classes change when implementing ICT?, all participants are leaning towards a positive attitude, which makes it evident that if one decides to opt for another teaching strategy, the teacher can captivate students in their subject.

From the results, the participants' satisfaction after incorporating technology to boost English language learning is 100%. There were no negative responses. This could imply that students felt motivated and knew that using technology to learn English is at least not a negative change and the classes would definitely change, some of the explanations given by the participants in this same question are revealed.

Excerpt No. 13

"Se hace un poco más fácil el aprendizaje y hay mayor acceso a herramientas que contribuyen al enriquecimiento por ejemplo del vocabulario [sic]" (Survey, Question # 2, October, 04, 2017)

By using ICT, learning seems easier and there is a wider access to online tools which contribute to motivate language enrichment for example regarding vocabulary.

Excerpt No. 14

"Si porque las TIC brindan nuevos métodos para aprender el idioma, para los estudiantes es una herramienta dinámica y permite una nueva relación entre los estudiantes y el profesor [sic]" (Survey, Question # 2, October, 04 2017)

Yes, because ICT provide new methods to learn a language; for students ICT is a dynamic tool which allow a new relationship among students and the teacher.

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After analyzing excerpts 13 and 14, it can be said there is an interest for the inclusion of new Information and Communication Technologies as a didactic and pedagogical strategy.

Technology permits the development of technological competencies, which allows students to be prepared for the challenges of the modern world; likewise, it helps with the acquisition of vocabulary when the students are performing a given task and increases motivation through the use of technology, providing learning opportunities for the practice of a language. This could indicate that if most of the students have positive attitudes towards ICT, the rest could be affected and develop a more positive attitude towards ICT.

Conclusion

Based on data collection instruments, it is identified that ICT motivated students to work collaboratively and they could also foster their language skills through the use of vocabulary related to their program.. When there is commitment to learn and develop an activity, it is because students show a different attitude while developing class activities.

Technology has made teachers reflect about how to increase students' interest and how to focus their attention; so, throughout discussions and negotiations students can scaffold their learning and foster critical thinking skills. Consequently, the context where learning takes place must be considered bearing in mind the type of learners we have in the classrooms.

To boost lifelong learning, and considering students were about to finish their major, I considered that it was important and appropriate to show them how they could keep developing their technological competence by being familiar with some online tools. Besides this, it was important that the teacher involved students in activities that caught their attention to empower them in their learning process.

The teacher, as a part of any learning process, supports their students to make sure they build their own knowledge, promote autonomy, initiative and creativity. Then, in this case, the students were invited to become involved in their own learning process by keeping an active dialogue with the different groups which enhanced collaborative work and fostered language learning.

Collaborative work was evidenced when the different groups shared their knowledge about the use of the online resources, found new information about the topic proposed in class, but most importantly, strove hard to achieve the same goal, which was to present their final product. Subsequently, learning was reinforced through social

interaction, which had a positive effect while exchanging meaningful experiences.

Based on the data analysis it is also recognizable that there is a lot to understand about the mixed environments that strengthen not only the foreign language but the use of technology in the learning and teaching practice. In this manner, it can be affirmed that the integration of a foreign language and technology can be generated if they are inside the contents of the area considering the creation of mixed courses through the use of technology leads to an increase in the interest towards learning and reinforces, as in this case, a language as English.

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Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills through Political Cartoons: A Pedagogical Implementation¹

Mejora de las habilidades de pensamiento crítico a través de las caricaturas políticas: una implementación pedagógica.

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Abstract

This article reports a pedagogical implementation carried out with pre-intermediate English students, in an English teacher preparation program at a public university in Colombia. This pedagogical implementation aimed to provide this population with a space to enhance their critical thinking skills through the implementation of a variety of task-based workshops where they were asked to observe, analyze, reflect and discuss about some political cartoons. The data to answer the research question was collected using class video-recordings, students' artifacts and a focus group. As a result of the pedagogical implementation, it was possible to identify how these students became aware of some social and political issues affecting them and their close context, and the importance of stating a position in front of them. Furthermore, students suggested that the workshops developed had shown them a possible pedagogical path they could follow in their future as language teachers.

Key Words: Political Cartoons, Critical Thinking Skills, Task-Based Approach.

Resumen

Este artículo reporta una intervención pedagógica desarrollada con estudiantes de inglés pre-intermedio, de un programa de formación de maestros en una

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universidad pública en Colombia. Esta intervención pedagógica buscaba proveer a esta población con un espacio para mejorar sus habilidades de pensamiento crítico a través de la implementación de una variedad de talleres basados en tareas donde se le pidió observar, analizar, reflexionar y discutir sobre algunas caricaturas políticas que fueron abordadas en sus clases de inglés. Para recolectar datos para analizar la pregunta de investigación se usaron grabaciones de video de las clases, artefactos de los estudiantes y un grupo focal. Como resultado de la implementación pedagógica, fue posible identificar cómo estos estudiantes tomaron conciencia de algunos problemas sociales y políticos que afectan a ellos y su contexto cercano y la importancia de establecer una posición frente a ellos. Además, los estudiantes sugirieron que los talleres desarrollados les habían mostrado un posible camino pedagógico que podrían seguir en su futuro como profesores de idiomas.

Palabras Clave: Caricaturas Políticas, Habilidades de Pensamiento Crítico, Enfoque Basado en Tareas.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta uma intervenção pedagógica desenhada para prover a estudantes de Inglês pré-intermédio, de um programa de formação de mestres em uma universidade pública na Colômbia, um espaço para melhorar o seu pensamento crítico através da implementação de oficinas baseadas em tarefas onde observavam, analisavam, refletiam e discutiam sobre caricaturas políticas que foram abordadas nas suas aulas de inglês. Para coletar dados para analisar a pergunta de pesquisa se usaram gravações de vídeo, artefatos dos estudantes e discussões de grupo. Como resultado da implementação deste estudo, os estudantes reconheceram o papel ativo como cidadãos que devem assumir responsabilidades nas suas comunidades, eles também argumentaram que as oficinas foram úteis para melhorar o seu pensamento crítico e ao longo de cada atividade foi possível evidenciar como seus argumentos foram fortalecendo-se.

Palavras Chave: Caricaturas Políticas, Pensamento Crítico, Enfoque Baseado em Tarefas.

Introduction

Education should contribute in the construction of autonomous, active and critical beings, capable of analyzing, reasoning, reflecting, making decisions, and solving problems not only in their lives but also in their societies. As language teachers, we considered that one of the main objectives of English foreign language education is to open spaces where students can move along the different cognitive processes previously mentioned.

Our research study focused on implementing five task-based workshops that were designed based on social and political issues portrayed in political cartoons. Our main intention was to provide participants with a space for them to reflect, discuss and state positions in front of the issues approached in those new texts: political cartoons. This study was developed with pre-intermediate English-students.

Currently information is presented through different types of texts; one of these texts is political cartoons which commonly are designed to show particular realities in a satirical manner. In the Colombian context, cartoons, but specifically political cartoons have been used as texts to portray social and political issues affecting the Colombian society.

The cartoons selected for this research reflected different problematic situations like corruption, gender inequality, obsession to social networks, migration, and global warming which are common in Colombia and therefore in the contexts where these participants live in. These cartoons could be placed in what El Refaie & Horschelmann (2010) identify as political cartoons. For these authors political cartoons describe reality of social and political issues from a critical point of view.

Dougherty (2002) states that “political cartoons are an excellent classroom tool to build students’ critical thinking skills, to generate lively classroom discussions, and to get students excited about politics” (p. 258). These were the main reasons why political cartoons were proposed for this group in particular. Our intention was to identify and analyze whether or not the implementation of some political cartoons developed or fostered pre-intermediate English students’ critical thinking skills.

As researchers, we strongly believe that beyond teaching students how to read the word, it is necessary to guide them to read the world; therefore, it is necessary to enhance students’ critical thinking skills. With this purpose in mind five task-based workshops were designed to

provide these students with spaces where they analyzed, discussed and reflected about different political cartoons.

The next section of this paper presents some national and international studies conducted by other teacher- researchers who have approached cartoons and critical thinking skills to foster their teaching and learning processes in higher education. The objective of this section is to establish the relevance of previous research to our general field of study: critical thinking.

Literature Review

Arango, Gomez & Gomez (2009) conducted a research study where cartoons were considered as a tool for higher education teaching. Its objective was to establish conditions and characteristics cartoons should have as tool for teaching. They concluded that cartoons has a didactic potential, which has been underused for teaching and that higher education institutions should encourage its use and do research for validating its potential.

El Refaie & Horschelmann (2010) studied young people's responses to a newspaper cartoon as a way of exploring the concept of multimodal literacy. The study aimed to elicit the geopolitical views of 16-19-year-olds in a multiethnic British city by using cartoons as a way of encouraging them to talk about their thoughts and feelings towards recent political events. They found that contrary to popular perceptions, political cartoons are complex and could have more than one meaning, and therefore require a particular form of literacy.

Ibarra & Ballester (2015) explored the relationship between comic, interculturality and literary education and they provided an illustrative picture of the emergence of multiculturalism in contemporary cartoon. They observed the use of comics as a top pedagogical strategy by different institutions and highlighted the interest of the new generations in this type of text.

These three previous studies provided us with different information related to theoretical constructs to support our study. Their findings in terms of cartoons as didactic resources and the activities developed by these researchers guided the design of the workshops we applied in our pedagogical implementation.

A different study conducted by Arias (2014) focused on showing how music can help students to enhance their critical thinking processes through the implementation of implicit content of songs in the EFL

classroom. This last study remarks the importance of applying-problem based activities in order for students to have a critical vision of the issues that affect the current world. This study motivated us to explore and create a different environment for our classes bearing in mind our students' previous knowledge and their experiences.

Carvajal, Poveda and Rojas (2012) conducted an action research study focused on critical thinking skills development in an NGO with displaced children of elementary English language level. These researchers designed a didactic unit with the objective of contributing in the development of some critical thinking skills in the population under study. Their findings evidenced the progress these kids had in two dimensions: cognitive and affective. They also identified that questioning was one of the most effective strategies to develop critical thinking skills.

Based on the results presented in the study conducted by Carvajal et al. (2012), we decided to include questions in the five workshops as a fundamental component for each of the workshops developed during the data collection process. These questions were addressed at different stages during the task-based cycle.

Theoretical Framework

This study is held on a frame of constructs that guided and supported our path to explore and find answers to our inquiry. We begin by defining critical thinking, then critical thinking skills; finally, we conceptualize the concept of cartoons and describe the core of our study: political cartoons.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a complex term and it has been defined in several ways. Scriven & Paul (2007) have defined it as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (p.1).

However, that process is not a static one. Critical thinking involves the constant analysis, evaluation and reevaluation of the information that is received or produced. For Scriven and Paul (2007) a critical thinker is always improving the quality of his or her thinking.

This process requires a disciplined analysis and assessment of what is thought and said.

Elder & Paul (2010) propose six stages any person should pass through to become a critical thinker. These stages start with what they have called the unreflective thinker stage, moving through other four stages: the challenged thinker, the beginning thinker, the practicing thinker, the advanced thinker, and finally reaching the master thinker stage. Becoming a critical thinker goes beyond the simple purpose of thinking different. For these authors, changing the way of thinking and acting is a long-range project.

Facione (1990), using the two-sentence definition of critical thinking generated from the Delphi Report, identified critical thinking as “the process of purposeful, self-regulatory judgment. This process gives reasoned consideration to evidence, context, conceptualizations, methods, and criteria” (p. 5). This author also suggests that critical thinking involve both skill and habits of mind and dispositions.

Considering the previous definitions, but particularly Facione’s one, we as researchers concluded that critical thinking is the constant and never-ending interactive process of observing, analyzing, reflecting and evaluating a reality; and this process can take place only when students are asked to address a situation and come up with a solution. This means that critical thinking is not a process enclosed inside the brain, but rather the development of critical thinking skills that human beings can develop with others.

Critical Thinking Skills

Regarding that the purpose of this study was to provide spaces for students to enhance their critical thinking skills, here it is relevant to define the concept of critical thinking skills.

Although Bloom’s taxonomy is not the only framework of critical thinking, it is the most widely known and used by scholars. Bloom (1956) presents a taxonomy that divides the way people learn into three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The study here presented focused mainly on the cognitive domain which emphasizes intellectual outcomes. This domain is further divided into six categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Anderson & Krathwolh (2001) proposed a revision of Bloom's taxonomy where they re-named the categories aforementioned and provided some verbs to describe the actions a critical thinker displays. The following figure exemplifies this process of re-naming Bloom's taxonomy:

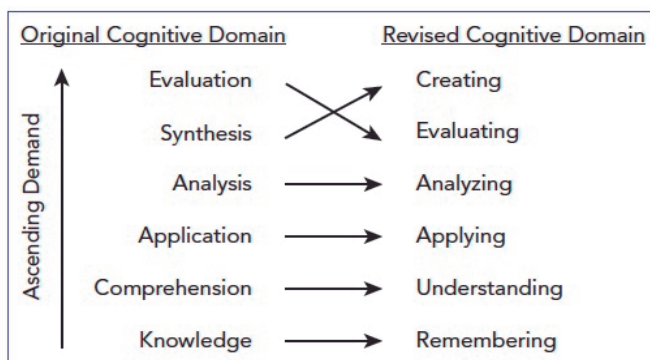


Figure 1. Revising Bloom's Taxonomy

Taken from: <https://sharemylesson.com/blog/what-no-one-tells-you-about-blooms-taxonomy>

These new categories involve some cognitive skills that individuals should practice or master to become critical thinkers. As each category implies different cognitive skills, it is necessary to clarify that the actions proposed by Anderson & Krathwolh (2001), in each of those categories, were at the center of the critical thinking skills we wanted to enhance in our students. In the following table there is presented the structure of the cognitive processes proposed by Krathwolh (2002) for the Cognitive Dimension.

Table 1. Cognitive Processes of the Cognitive Process Dimension

Structure of the Cognitive Process Dimension of the Revised Taxonomy
<p>1.0 Remember - Retrieving relevant Knowledge from long-term memory</p> <p><i>1.1 Recognizing</i></p> <p><i>1.2 Recalling</i></p> <p>2.0 Understand - Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written and graphic communication.</p> <p><i>2.1 Interpreting</i></p> <p><i>2.2 Exemplifying</i></p> <p><i>2.3 Classifying</i></p> <p><i>2.4 Summarizing</i></p> <p><i>2.5 Inferring</i></p> <p><i>2.6 Comparing</i></p> <p><i>2.7 Explaining</i></p> <p>3.0 Apply - Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation.</p> <p><i>3.1 Executing</i></p> <p><i>3.2 Implementing</i></p> <p>4.0 Analyze - Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose</p> <p><i>4.1 Differentiating</i></p> <p><i>4.2 Organizing</i></p> <p><i>4.3 Attributing</i></p> <p>5.0 Evaluate - Making judgments based on criteria and standards.</p> <p><i>5.1 Checking</i></p> <p><i>5.2 Critiquing</i></p> <p>6.0 Create - Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product</p> <p><i>6.1 Generating</i></p> <p><i>6.2 Planning</i></p> <p><i>6.3 Producing</i></p>

Regarding the information presented previously about critical thinking and about critical thinking skills, the following criteria were considered and applied along the different workshops to enhance our participants' critical thinking skills:

1. These critical thinking skills should be constructed socially, that is to say by means of cooperative work.
2. They require a personal effort and commitment to have a progressive process.
3. We should start from the particular to the general; it means learners have to analyze their immediate reality first, and in that way, to have better understanding of the global phenomena.
4. It is necessary that learners make a constant assessment of their process, in order for them to be aware of their difficulties and strengths.

Finally, we consider that based on the previous criteria, learners should have the ability to act more critically towards the improvement of the world's reality.

Cartoons

Cartoons portray different events that occur in societies. The objective is focused on criticizing in a satirical and humoristic way particular issues and features that affect reality. For Monzon (2005) cartoons are an art in which life, customs and thought of a time or a town are expressed. Its highest value lies in discovering hidden but decisive qualities of a person or situation, provoking a smile or a frank laugh, as well as creating reflection and reaction analysis.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (Macro-Paedia, vol.3) cited in Onakpa (2014, p. 34) states that "Cartoons sharpen the public's view of a contemporary or topical issue, event, political or social trend." It means that tendencies in the current world could be analyzed and criticized by the common population, and in some cases, change their perception of a particular reality, since, they are presented in an attractive and accessible way for people.

Besides, cartoons have two different purposes: to amuse and to inform people. During this research, cartoons were used combining its two purposes: to amuse since it uses sarcasm, exaggerated drawings; and to inform due to the social content they include. Cartoons can also be classified into animated cartoons and editorial cartoons where political cartoons are situated.

Political Cartoons.

Political cartoons are a type of cartoons that is focused only on social or political events. They involve an image that shows exaggerated details of a politician, social problematic or famous event in order to picture a situation in a particular and very unique way. The idea of a political cartoon is to know the reality of a political system in an accessible and easier way, since it is shown through humoristic and funny graphics that catch people's attention to be active participants of society.

Political cartoons can be used as a pedagogical tool to promote critical thinking since they can be considered as a way to get information in a simple and entertained way. Walker (2003) claims that "one of the most powerful weapons that a cartoon has is its seemingly humor whose message can be absorbed easily, without much reflection or resistance" (p.16). However, as our population was teenagers, we wanted to approach political cartoons with the intention of moving them into a deeper analysis of this new type of text. We consider political cartoons as a new text; since this was the first time they were introduced and studied in this particular class.

Political cartoons also have the ability to summarize throughout pictures extended information that could be found in newspapers, critical articles and news in general. They generally are thought-provoking and attempt to educate the viewer about a current issue. They also have the purpose of dissecting and criticizing deeply a social and political issue, catching the audience's attention instantaneously (Wintz, Karaca, and Lang, 2003). It could be said that political cartoons were a different type of texts the participants had to read about the reality that surrounded them.

In the study here presented political cartoons were used as the main strategy to introduce the participants in the analysis of different political and social issues regarding the Colombian and the international context. Political cartoons were the excuse to go beyond those problems, to analyze them and to state a critical position about them.

Instructional Design

Throughout the first semester of 2017 year, five task-based workshops were developed with the pre-intermediate class. These workshops lasted two hours each one; meetings were scheduled every fifteen days during their English Classes.

In order to enhance critical thinking skills in this group of students, we selected five contemporary topics that were related to their context and world's reality. Table 2 presents the topics and workshops developed based on those topics.

Table 2. Topics and workshops

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Workshop</i>
1. Immigration	No Human Being is Illegal
2. Gender Inequality	Men-Women=equals
3. Social Networks	A Social Life
4. Corruption	Corrupted Minds
5. Global Warming	No Planet, No Life

After selecting the topics for the five workshops, we began a search for the political cartoons in the newspapers, internet and social media to work each topic. The topics presented in the next table approached a social or political issue we wanted to address in our classes; however we decided to state a title for each workshop that could be more attractive and meaningful to our participants. We presented this title as a warming up to introduce the issues to be approached in each workshop.

The workshops were designed around the Task- based approach proposed by Willis (1998). This author suggests that tasks are activities used to achieve a communicative objective, by using the target language. Throughout these tasks, our intention was also to promote and foster students' critical thinking skills. The tasks allowed students to analyze the political cartoon, reflect and interact with their partners to share their ideas, opinions and concerns in relation to the problematic issues there presented or portrayed.

This approach is developed by implementing six different types of task. These types include: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing of personal experiences and creative tasks (Willis, 1998). Based on the tasks mentioned previously, five workshops were designed. These workshops included creative, diverse, fun and enjoyable content to promote critical participation in students. The structured model of task-based learning proposed by Willis and Willis (2007) was considered to organize the stages of each workshop. This model includes: Pre-task, Task preparation and Post task.

Here it is presented briefly what each stage of the different task-based workshops entailed:

Pre-task: During this stage, an introduction was made to get students' attention and prepared them for the topic that was going to be presented further on. This introduction was developed by using different videos, games and songs.

During this stage the political cartoons for each workshop were presented and shared with the students. Students had the chance to observe each political cartoon and comment around the topics there portrayed.

Task Preparation: In this stage, students were able to elaborate the central task, where they could analyze, explore their imagination, creativity, and share ideas among them. Students were involved in developing scale models, performances, posters and videos creation. Along the workshops, diverse activities for this stage were proposed to avoid repetitive activities.

Post task: This was the last stage of the workshops. Based on the activities the students developed during the task preparation stage, learners develop performances, exposition of the posters, and explanation of their own political cartoons and scale models. This was considered as the stage where the researchers could identify the critical thinking skills fostered or developed in each workshop.

Type of Research

This study followed the action research method which according to Koshy (2005) and Varcacel (2009), consists of teachers studying class situations to improve their pedagogical practice. Four steps were taken into consideration as the action research principles state: observing, planning, acting and evaluating.

In the first step (*observing*) the lack of spaces to develop critical thinking in the language classes in the modern language program was identified; for that reason, the researchers agreed to foster this skill by implementing political cartoons as a pedagogical innovation for this class.

During the second step (*planning*) a structural plan conformed by five (5) workshops was created, it included *pre-task*, *task*, and *post-task phases*, implementing the task based model proposed by Willis and Willis (2007), in which students accomplish a communicative goal by means of small tasks and using the target language.

In the third step, (*acting*) the workshops were implemented. During a series of two-hour sessions students developed the proposed activities in the workshops.

During the last step (*evaluating*) the researchers condensed the information gathered in the workshops and analyzed it in order to support the theory.

Setting and participants

The study was conducted at a public university in Colombia during the first academic semester in 2017. This university has two English teaching preparation programs: The Foreign Languages Bachelor Program and The Modern Languages Bachelor Program. The class selected for this study was a pre-intermediate level course according to the Common European Framework. They were in the 3rd semester of their major and at this level they were expected to continue developing their communicative competence as well as to enhance their critical thinking skills. The students' ages ranged between 18 and 21. This group studies an average of five (5) hours of English per week. For the study 10 out of 16 students accepted to participate voluntarily in the study and that was the data we analyzed. In this paper the names of the participants were replaced by S and a number.

Data Collection

Three collection methods were used: class video-recording, students' artifacts and a focus group. These instruments allowed the researchers to analyze and triangulate the data needed to answer the research question.

Class video-recording

Edwards and Westgate (1987) consider class video-recording allows a retrospective analysis of data. Students were recorded to analyze their behavior, interaction, and responses to the activities to determine the impact and effectiveness of them. It also let researchers to analyze the critical thinking skills that were enhanced in each workshop.

Students' artifacts

They are “the range of written and symbolic records kept by or on participants in a social group” (Goetz and Lecompte, 1984, cited in Merriam, 1991, p.105). This instrument provided pertinent information about students' experiences and their process in the classroom to know their perception of different topics. In this sense, during the workshops students created a variety of artifacts like posters, reflective writings, performances, scale-models, and their own versions of political cartoons. The student's artifacts were mainly developed during the post – task stage. These artifacts were also analyzed to identify critical thinking skills.

Focus Group

Conducting focus groups is a qualitative research method that allowed researchers to collect a large amount of data from a substantial group of people in a relatively short amount of time (Bell, 2010). This focus group was conducted at the end of the study to go deeper in students' reflections, concerns and thoughts about the workshops and topics presented. Some unstructured questions were designed to allow students to express spontaneously about the social issues treated in class, the materials and how this had an impact in their immediate context. The group discussion was done with all the students of the class during one hour at the end of the study.

Findings

Grounded theory was applied to analyze the data. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) grounded theory is a qualitative research method in which theory emerges from the students' data through the implementation of an inductive process rather than a deductive one. Taking into account the grounded theory method, we collected, transcribed, labeled, analyzed and interpreted data to answer the research question proposed for this study.

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This process required a constant revision and reading of the information gathered from the sources that were applied with the intention of perceiving relevant aspects of the topic under study (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this case, this research aimed to analyze to what extent the implementation of political cartoons enhances critical thinking in pre-intermediate English level students.

In order to integrate the collected information from the instruments, it was necessary to take into consideration the methodological triangulation proposed by Krathwohl (1993) which allowed us to use different sources to collect data and to confirm their reliability and veracity. The samples that support the data analysis are presented as students produced them, therefore grammar or spelling mistakes can be observed in those samples.

The findings were organized around two main categories: *connecting the word with the world* and *identifying a path to follow*. The names of these categories were established by the researchers during the labeling process. The data analysis here presented evidences that critical thinking skills cannot be separated and analyzed in isolation due to they are cognitive processes that cannot be separated, on the contrary these processes are overlapped and complemented.

Connecting the Word with the World

This category emerges from the analysis of the different instruments applied to collect data. While analyzing the data, it was possible to identify that the English language classroom was transformed into a space where the participants were learning not only about the language, but that language was transformed into a vehicle to learn, reflect, analyze and discuss about different current social and political issues. Here, there are presented some samples connected to this category:

'Your mental jail will protect you from reality' (S3, Workshop #3 Social Life, poster about Social Networks, May 16)

"people now believe that social networks can help in real life, but that is incorrect because that is not a solution" (S6, Workshop #3 A Social Life; video recording #1, minute 2:50, May 16)

In terms of critical thinking skills and based on the previous samples we can say that these students were reflecting about what people consider as real life. It can be said that these students were identifying that sometimes people are not able to recognize the reality they are living in and, according to participants' analysis, it can happen because of the different media people are involved with every day.

This same situation was also observed by S2:

"we can see some pictures or photos on social networks, and that give us an idea of a "perfect life" (Workshop #3 A Social life; video recording #2, Minute: 1:5; May 16)

In the same line of thought, the students S7, S8 and S9, complemented that idea with the following reflections:

the social networks create fake lives” (Workshop #3, A Social life; poster about Social Networks; May 16)

“Social network is the modern slavery, because they (people) are always looking for new messages in WhatsApp or new posts on Facebook, or new stuff that doesn’t have any meaning in the real life.” (S5, Workshop # 5, Focus Group, Minute: 20:05; June 1)

These participants are giving a description of what social networks mean to them and, in the case of S5, it is possible to evidence how he was able to state his own definition by comparing it with a modern slavery people accept, and he concluded stating that situation is not part of the real life. From these reflections we could see that participants perceive the social networks as spaces people use to escape from what they consider *real life*.

However, reflecting and comparing were not the only critical thinking skills that we could observe in the data analysis. We could perceive that while they were demonstrating understanding of information, facts and ideas by giving descriptions and stating main ideas, they were also presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about the same information, ideas or facts (Facione, 1990). The next samples evidence this analysis:

“You must recycle because the world needs you now” (S3, S6, S9, Workshop #, 5 No Planet, No Life, class video- recording, Minute: 00:12; June 1). And, they concluded with the next idea: “the solution to clean and protect the world is in your hands. Recycle!” (Minute: 01:20).

In the previous sample, it is possible to see that these participants were connecting the situations happening outside the classroom and the possible solutions to the pollution issue. According to them, this problem can be solved if each person assumes that the world is in his/her hands. In this sense, we could say that this group of students was not only identifying the problem, but they were also hypothesizing about a possible solution. They were aware of the problems that are in their immediate reality and they developed the necessity of attacking them by means of a systematically plan (Elder & Paul, 2010).

This same situation was also evidenced in the next samples:

“We should change our society. A society blaming to the other is not the solution. The change is inside each one of us, being honest and

good persons” (S3, Workshop # 4, corrupted Minds, Reflective Writing activity; May 23, see annex 3)

Based on the previous analysis, it is possible to say that during the different workshops these students were enhancing different critical skills because they were not only reflecting about some social issues, but they also were demonstrating understanding of the facts presented in the political cartoons; they were also organizing their ideas to identify the causes of some current problems, but at the same time they were proposing solutions to those problems. All these cognitive processes are considered critical thinking skills (Krathwohl, 2002)

Showing a path to follow

The name of this category was identified in the different data collected. It was possible to see the impact that Political Cartoons cause on this group of students. Different participants were writing and discussing about the role of those cartoons in their life as students and also in the possibilities of using them in their future as language teachers. The next samples evidence this situation:

“cartoons are a creative way to keep our active role like citizens and think beyond our eyes” (S9, Workshop # 4, corrupted Minds, Reflective Writing activity; May 23)

“the workshops helped us to realize the bad situations of the society and in our college, because sometimes we live outside of the reality, and we believe some problems don’t affect us” (S3, Workshop # 5, Focus group, class video-recording; Minute: 23:10; June 1st)

A similar statement was found in the same workshop. It was proposed by S1, but in this case, he mentioned specific issues that affect our society:

“Problems like corruption, powerful people can manipulate our society. Through political cartoons we can face those situations and analyze all the factors hidden on it” (Workshop # 4, corrupted Minds, Reflective Writing activity; May 23)

On the other hand, some students proposed that society needs a deep change and it depends on people’s acts to achieve it. It is the case of S7, when she said:

“All the scenarios that we have seen are the reflection of a society that has a lot of things to change. We need to know more about our context, about our problems and how those situations can change our

life” (Workshop # 4, corrupted Minds, Reflective Writing activity; May 23, see annex 3)

According to the students’ samples, we can identify that they were able to recognize that even though many societies seem to be manipulated by corrupted governments, it is our responsibility as citizens to struggle with this, taking honesty, respect and tolerance as main principles. These previous samples also evidence the critical thinking skills students were enhancing. They are not only reflecting about an issue but they were also proposing alternatives to face those social and political issues.

These participants also expressed that this pedagogical implementation was meaningful for their professional lives as future teachers. It was possible to evidence that they were aware of their responsibility as future language teachers and their commitment on generating changes. The next samples evidence this observation:

“Like future teachers we should try to change the point of view of our students, invite to create a better world” (S7, Workshop #4 Corrupted minds, Reflective Writing; May 23)

S4 fostered the previous reflection, by mentioning some aspects that highlight the responsibility and the important role that teachers play in societies.

“We as teachers should try to create awareness in our students because we are creating a new generation and we can influence in our students and give them new tools to change the situations” (S4, Focus Group, Minute: 15:16; June 1)

Likewise, S3, S6, S10, manifested what teachers have to do nowadays, especially in the Colombian context:

“Teachers have to construct something that is destroyed” (Workshop #4 Corrupted Minds, class video-recording, Minute: 01:48; May 23)

With this analysis, we can say that at this level, students were able to enhance some critical thinking skills and they had the possibility to expand their critical vision about some social and political issues; although it was possible to see they were able to identify their roles as citizens and as future teachers, we consider there is still a life-long road they should follow to become skillful critical thinkers.

To sum up, it is important to highlight that students’ critical thinking level had a progressive and meaningful improvement through

the implementation of the five workshops carried out along the semester. They were able to go beyond analyzing local and global issues to look for solutions and new alternatives to overcome them. This progression can be related to the third and four stages proposed by Elder and Paul (2010) that individuals go through in order to become critical thinkers.

Conclusions

Taking into account that this study was designed to identify and analyze whether or not the implementation of some political cartoons enhanced or fostered pre-intermediate English students' critical thinking, and to determine how these could emerge with the implementation of some political cartoons, the participants were invited to actively participate in five workshops where they produced artifacts and participated in discussions related to diverse political issues.

Political cartoons was a different didactic alternative for this population since they were involved into the analysis of different political and social issues by using a different type of text that allowed them to connect the word with the world and therefore contributed into the enhancement of different critical thinking skills.

Based on the previous data analysis, it is possible to say that we could see our population was enhancing some critical thinking skills, since they were able to reflect, discuss, analyze and evaluate information presented in a political cartoon. They were also contrasting the issue presented in the cartoon with their own realities and they were proposing solutions to the problematic presented. However, we consider that it is necessary a constant practice to foster the development of these and other critical thinking skills.

Students argued that they achieved a critical opinion about the cartoons, because they could reflect about the topics that affect the society. They also highlighted that when they worked in groups they had the opportunity to listen to more points of view about the topics, so they had the possibility to reflect on them. They became more critical in regards to the society issues, because they realized those problems can affect them.

We, as language teacher-researchers consider necessary to continue creating spaces where students can learn not only the language but with the language. It is our responsibility to develop sharp, open and analytical minds to face the current globalized world. We should never forget that all education is political and that we teachers are called to empower kids to read the word and the world.

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A Reflection About Self-plagiarism¹

Una reflexión acerca del auto plagio

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Abstract

This paper explores self-plagiarism in three different articles that reported results of the same research project on reading in a foreign language. This article follows the qualitative research method and an exploratory case study was used. Results support that both inadequate paraphrasing and adequate paraphrasing were given. Regarding inadequate paraphrasing some similar words and ideas were found. On the other hand, using different authors in a specific idea, having different numbers of words in a common issue, and being versatile to present information might lead to adequate paraphrasing. Conclusions suggest that a dialog between editors and authors must be given in order to clear self-plagiarism up. Finally, conclusions also suggest that editors should consider the inclusion of some similar information in articles written by the same author or the same research members.

Key words: dialog; reading a foreign language; self-plagiarism.

Resumen

Este artículo explora el auto plagio en tres diferentes artículos que reportaron los resultados de un mismo proyecto en lectura en lengua extranjera. Este artículo sigue el método cualitativo de investigación y se utilizó el estudio de caso múltiple. Los resultados indican que se presentaron tanto parafraseo inadecuado como parafraseo adecuado. Con relación al parafraseo inadecuado se encontraron algunas palabras e ideas similares. En contraste y en relación con el parafraseo adecuado, se encontró que utilizar diferentes autores en una idea, utilizar diferentes números de palabras en un elemento común y ser versátil para presentar la información puede ayudar al parafraseo adecuado. Las conclusiones sugieren que debe existir un diálogo entre los autores y editores para aclarar el auto plagio. Finalmente, las conclusiones también sugieren que

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los editores deberían considerar la inclusión de información similar en artículos escritos por el mismo autor o los mismos miembros de investigación.

Palabras clave: auto plagio; diálogo; lectura como lengua extranjera.

Resumo

Este artigo explora o autoplágio em três diferentes artigos que reportaram os resultados de um mesmo projeto em leitura em língua estrangeira. Este artigo segue o método qualitativo de pesquisa e foi utilizado o estudo de caso múltiplo. Os resultados indicam que ocorreram tanto parafraseio inadequado como parafraseio adequado. Com relação ao parafraseio inadequado se encontraram algumas palavras e ideias similares. Em contraste e em relação com o parafraseio adequado, encontrou-se que utilizar diferentes autores em uma ideia, utilizar diferentes números de palavras em um elemento comum e ser versátil para apresentar a informação, pode ajudar ao parafraseio adequado. As conclusões sugerem que deve existir um diálogo entre os autores e editores para esclarecer o autoplágio. Finalmente, as conclusões também sugerem que os editores deveriam considerar a inclusão de informação similar em artigos escritos pelo mesmo autor ou os mesmos membros de pesquisa.

Palavras chave: autoplágio; diálogo; leitura como língua estrangeira

Introduction

After a lengthy process of reviewing, one of my articles was going to be published in a journal in Colombia. Suddenly, I received an e-mail from an editor stating that I self-plagiarized a paragraph of an article and therefore she made the decision to decline the article. She also mentioned that she would consider declining another article I had previously submitted. I then apologized and tried to explain that I did not do it on purpose and I proposed to correct a paragraph that contained 72 words of verbatim plagiarism to amend self-plagiarism. Moreover, I proposed to hold a meeting with the academic committee to have a talk and share our insights about this issue. Fortunately, she accepted and invited the committee to have a meeting. In that meeting she illustrated the reasons why she declined the article (self-plagiarism, reuse of information) and I, in turn, presented my reasons (not on purpose, small amount of information, self-plagiarism is debatably). A month later, I received a letter from the editor apologizing for her decision and she informed me that the article was going to start again the process of reviewing. She also mentioned that the other article would continue with the process of reviewing, too. This anecdote led me to reflect on self-plagiarism, feeling that this issue should be taken further. For this reason, I decided to analyze some information that I have used in different articles in order to explore self-plagiarism. This article begins with the review of literature and the methodology. Then, the results are presented and finally the conclusions and implications are given.

Plagiarism

In the academic world to give proper credit to the source is a must and authors' ideas need to be protected in order to avoid plagiarism. The Oxford online dictionary defines plagiarism as "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own". Many journals have in their policies the call to avoid plagiarism and editors play a pivotal role in order to control ownership of articles (GIST Education and Learning Research Journal; IKALA *Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*; PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development; Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal; HOW). Different cases of plagiarism have been found in medicine and chemistry (Bloemenkamp, Walvoort & Hart, 1999; Schein & Paladugu, 2001; Schulz, 2008). In fact, Shahabuddin (2009) reports that a PhD student was fired due to the fact that she took extensive verbatim appropriations of a book. Masic (2012) also exemplifies a young researcher who published different

articles in clinical cardiology and involved faculty colleagues but were not or minimally included in the research project.

On the other hand, there is no any official guide or regulation to control plagiarism and situations may vary depending on the case and field. In fact, Enders and Hoover (2004, cited in Shahabuddin, 2009:355) state that editors do not have a formal policy when they find cases of plagiarism such as unattributed sentences, unattributed proof from published paper, privately collected data, among others. Editors have to make difficult decisions and they sometimes question if they have made the right decision to decline an article.

Types of plagiarism

The Harvard Guide to Using Sources³ divides plagiarism into six categories:

1. Verbatim plagiarism: this is given when the writer copies word by word in an academic paper.
2. Mosaic plagiarism: that occurs when the writer copies pieces of information from a source or different sources and changes some words of the original one without paraphrasing or quoting properly.
3. Inadequate paraphrase: this is given when the writer does not use his/her own words to relate the information or when his/her words are very similar to the original source.
4. Uncited paraphrase: this occurs when the writer uses his/her own words to describe another writer's ideas, but the former does not cite the latter.
5. Uncited quotation: this happens when the writer uses quotation marks but does not credit the author of that source.
6. Using material from another student's work: this occurs when a student uses ideas that were given in discussions in groups and does not cite the group or classmate in a foot note.

For the purpose of this paper, inadequate paraphrase will be considered. Although some researchers (Kumar & Tripathi, 2009; Rojas, 2012; Soto, 2012) use other types of plagiarism such as false authorship, double submission to different journals, unauthorized

³ <https://usingources.fas.harvard.edu/what-constitutes-plagiarism>.

copying, direct plagiarism, incorrect paraphrasing, complex plagiarism using a reference, plagiarism with loose quotation marks, self-recycling, sources not cited, sources cited but still plagiarized, and other types of plagiarism (copy and paste, word switching, data plagiarism, among others) the previous guide encompasses all of them. The Harvard Guide to Using Resources is a good option to take into as it gives examples of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Self-plagiarism

Another kind of plagiarism is self-plagiarism. Spinak (2013) defines self-plagiarism as “using a previous piece of one’s own research and presenting it for publication as something new and original.” The author suggests that there are different reasons why self-plagiarism happens but not all are unethical. One of the reasons is that a research project may have different phases and old and new information is combined, and this leads to intermingle the same information in different articles. Another reason has to do when the results of a research project are divided into small parts (salami publishing) and sent to different journals. It can happen that these parts repeat important information of the research project. A third reason involves the awareness of self-plagiarism presented in the policy of journals. The instructions should contain some explicit restrictions about self-plagiarism as well as self-citing. Finally, self-plagiarism may occur when a person uses information from his/her thesis and publish it in articles. However, the writer can use an entry of a foot-note to explain this.

On the other hand, self-plagiarism is debatable as authors can use their own ideas in different published materials. Samuelson (1994) mentions some factors that support the use of previous published words: the new contribution has to do with the previous work as it is the basis of the topic; the new evidence or the new arguments are based on previous work and substantial information needs to be repeated; the audiences are different; the previous information is well developed and it is not worth telling that information in a different way. Samuelson (1994) suggests a rule of thumb in which self-plagiarism could be acceptable up to 30% but this could vary from area to area. The author also states that it is not possible to establish a legal maximum limit. In fact, Balbuena (2003) and Akst (2010) report that a person cannot plagiarize himself/herself due to the fact that the same author is involved. Finally, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) indicates that a limited scope could be possible to repeat words but the acceptable limit is difficult to determine.

Methodology

This inquiry is based on qualitative analysis, as I explored self-plagiarism. It is also an exploratory case study (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003) due to the fact that I analyzed different articles that reported results of the same research project. Three articles are taken as source to verify self-plagiarism: Motivation Conditions in a Foreign Language Reading Comprehension Course Offering Both a Web-based Modality and a Face-to-face Modality (Lopera, 2014), Diary Insights of an EFL Reading Teacher (Lopera, 2013), and Interaction in an EFL Reading Comprehension Distance Web-based Course (Osorno & Lopera, 2012).

Context

EALE (*Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras*) research group carried out a project titled the “Effects of web-based and face-to-face instruction modalities in the reading comprehension of graduate students at Universidad de Antioquia”. The project began in 2009 and finished in 2011 and the main objective was to compare the effects of each modality. Two reading comprehension courses were offered to graduate students at the School of Law: a web-based course and a face-to-face course. It is worth noting that the same teacher taught both courses and was part of the research group, and the academic content of the foreign reading course was the same. The course was divided into five units (word and their meanings, reading strategies, development of reading skills, text organization methods, and critical reading). The web-based course was designed using a MOODLE based platform. There were a total of 38 students registered in this course and 27 in the face-to-face course.

Results

The common parts of the three articles were only taken into account in order to analyze self-plagiarism. Literature review about reading, the methodology and instruments described, and the introduction of findings were analyzed. In the next sections are the analyses of each part:

Literature about reading

The three articles contain the concept of reading:

Table 1: Concept of Reading

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
<p>Reading is an interactive process between the writer and the reader. Alyousef (2005) defines reading as “an interactive process between a reader and a text. The reader should interact dynamically with the text with the intention to understand its message” (p. 144). This author also states that the reader must possess two important elements in order to interact with the text: linguistic knowledge and background knowledge. The former involves awareness about the language, including vocabulary, grammatical structures, and tenses. The latter is linked to the familiarity the reader has with the text.</p>	<p>Reading is a complex process in which the reader has to comprehend the text. Alyousef (2005) states that reading is an “interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (reading fluency). In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to elicit the meaning” (p. 144). However, there are two important elements that the reader needs to possess: linguistic knowledge and background knowledge. The former refers to the awareness about the language, such as grammar or vocabulary structure. The latter involves the familiarity the reader has with the reading content.</p>	<p>Dubin and Bycina (1984) argue that reading is a selective process that occurs between the reader and the text where background knowledge and language knowledge play a very important role for comprehension.</p>

Articles one and two have about the same amount of words (92 and 99 accordingly) and the same author is cited (Alyousef, 2005). However, the introduction of the concept of reading is different as article one states that the process of reading interactive and it involves the words *writer* and *reader*. In contrast, article two involves just the role of the reader. The definition of reading in article one is shorter than article two and was deleted regarding the original source that is presented in article two. At the end of the definition, articles one and two give the same information but it is paraphrased in a different form. However, they contain many similar words (linguistic knowledge; background knowledge; about the language; the former; the latter). Finally, article

three is totally different from one and two as the definition of reading is shorter (32 words) and the authors are different.

Regarding the reading process in foreign languages, the three articles provide the following information:

Table 2: the Reading Process in Foreign Language

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
Other authors also support that reading involves a cognitive process (Cassany, 2006; González, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Weir, 1993). Students must predict, memorize information for, interpret, pay attention to, and make hypotheses when they decode a written message. Cassany (2006) argues that reading processes are more complex in a foreign language because students may face difficulties with syntax, grammar, vocabulary, or culture; additionally, they usually have to make a greater effort when they are trying to interact with the reading. As a result, it is very important to guide students with reading strategies. Thus, developing a set of reading strategies is very important for learners.	Foreign language readers have to make a bigger effort to interact with texts because they might face grammar or vocabulary difficulties (Cassany, 2006). Thus, the role of the teacher becomes crucial, as foreign language readers need to be guided to overcome those difficulties.	Cassany (2006), González (2000), Grabe and Stoller (2002), and Weir (1993) see reading from a cognitive view, where prediction, interpretation, hypothesis statement, attention, memory, and perceptual processes are very important when decoding a written message. Cassany (2006) reports that these processes are more complex in a foreign language because the reader is not familiarized with syntax, vocabulary or culture, which implies a bigger effort when trying to develop this competence. Thus, a set of reading strategies is very important for learners.

In this occasion, the number of words are different in all three articles (106, 43, 81, accordingly). Articles one and three have the same authors cited but are presented in different moments: article one introduces the idea that reading involves a cognitive process and then the authors, whereas the third article presents the authors of reading first and then the idea that reading involves a cognitive process. Another difference has to do with parts of speech. Article one uses verbs to describe the cognitive process: predict, memorize, interpret, pay attention to, and make. In contrast, article three uses nouns: prediction, interpretation, attention, memory. Moreover, both articles one and three have the same idea that Cassany presents at the end, but the information was paraphrased and some words were different: Cassany (2006) argues (article 1), Cassany (2006) reports (article three); students, reader (one and three accordingly); reading processes, these processes. However, some words or ideas are the same: processes are more complex in a foreign language because; thus, very important. It is worth noting a better paraphrasing would have been used to avoid repetition of words. On the other hand, article two is totally different from one and three as only one author is presented, and the cognitive view is not given.

Regarding the part of reading strategies, almost the same analysis is given:

Table 3: Reading Strategies

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1999) and Janzen (2001) highlight the importance of teaching explicit reading strategies to students in order to improve their interactions with the text. Reading strategies help learners pay attention to textual cues, overcome difficult situations while reading, and integrate information from the text (Block, 1986). These reading strategies may range from basic (e.g., previewing or scanning) to complex (e.g., inference or summarizing).	Reading strategies help learners interact with the readings and different authors highlight the importance of applying them in language learning settings (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Hosenfeld, 1979; Janzen, 2001; Lopera, 2012; Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2004; Osorno & Lopera, 2012). When students are trained to use reading strategies they know what to do when facing troubles with readings (Block, 1986). Language teachers can use simple reading strategies such as previewing, predicting, guessing word meanings; or complex ones such as inference and summarizing.	Reading strategies help learners conceive a task, identify what textual cues they have to pay attention to, make sense of what they read, and decide what to do when they have troubles understanding the text (Block, 1986). These reading strategies range from the simple ones (e.g., scanning, guessing word meaning, previewing) to the complex ones (e.g., summarizing, inference, tone).

The number of words in articles one and three are not quite different (67 and 59 accordingly). In contrast, article two contains more words than articles one and three (83). The articles also present different authors cited (article one: Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1999), Janzen (2001); article two: (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Hosenfeld, 1979; Janzen, 2001; Lopera, 2012; Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2004; Osorno & Lopera, 2012); article three: (Block, 1986) but I appear in article two and this helps avoid self-plagiarism. Nonetheless, articles one and three are not well paraphrased at the end, due to the fact that the idea as well as words are quite similar (reading strategies, range, from, eg, scanning, complex, inference) leading to inadequate paraphrasing.

Methodology

All three articles contain the same information about methodology but paraphrasing is more accurate in all of them. Article one describes a research design, exploratory case study, and mentions the comparison of two modalities. It also describes that participants had to sign a consent form. Article two begins by describing the principles of the methodology, mentions the reason to use this methodology (support the teacher’s diary insights), and the grounded approach. It finishes with the guided question to analyze data. Finally, article three describes in detail the methodology used and gives the reasons why researchers followed this methodology: to do deepen exploration, real-life events, and personal insights. In short, being versatile in presenting information might lead to adequate paraphrasing, as the information was presented in different order. Regarding numbers of words, article one has 77 and article two has 74. Article 3 has the highest number of words 189. It is worth noting that all three articles contain the same authors. The following table depicts the information:

Table 4: Description of Methodology

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
A case study was followed as a research design (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). The research involved the methodology of an exploratory multiple case study, as the researchers wanted to further compare and contrast the motivations of the face-to-face course and of the web-based course using different instruments to gather data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Tellis, 1997; Yin 2003). Participants were asked to sign a consent form stating that their participation was voluntary, and their identities were protected.	This study followed the principles methodology of a multiple case study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2003) as the team of researchersI wanted to support the teacher’s diary insights in a foreign language reading comprehension course. Researchers used the grounded approach when they categorized the data (Freeman, 1998). The following research question guided their inquiry: What do the diary insights really evidence about the teaching practices of a foreign language reading teacher?	This project follows the methodology of an exploratory multiple case study as we wanted to do a deep exploration of the web-based distance course using different instruments to gather data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2003). We adopted the multiple case design because we analyzed real-life events that showed numerous sources of evidence through replication in the course. We also followed a case study because it allowed us to analyze personal insights from the teacher and students as well as data

		<p>MOODLE. We tallied and then grouped the events of interaction in the different instruments according to our opinions. We first had an individual reading to consider relevant issues and then shared our patterns in the research group meetings. We named and coded issues of interactions and we constructed categories through our discussions (Freeman, 1998). Then, we analyzed the data according to the existing theory of interaction and validated our findings. Finally, participants signed a consent form stating that their participation was voluntary and their identity was protected. The form also stated that data gathered were going to be used for archival purposes.</p>
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On the other hand, all three articles describe the information about the teacher in a very similar form in articles one and three (title of the teacher, experience in teaching, first experience in web-based education, and motivation). Conversely, article two is different, since it just gives information about the face-to-face course and it mentions the place the teacher works for. The number of words in article one is 77, number two is 42, and number three is 70.

Table 5: Description of the Teacher

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
The teacher held a masters degree in teaching foreign languages and had more than ten years of experience teaching face-to-face reading comprehension courses in graduate and undergraduate programs. However, it was his first experience teaching web-based courses, although he was quite motivated to have this experience. The teacher had computer skills and was part of the team who designed the web-course for the research project. For the purpose of this project, the same teacher taught both courses.	The teacher was part of the research team and as well as a full-time professor at <i>Sección Servicios, Escuela de Idiomas</i> (School of Languages). He had ten years of experience teaching foreign language reading comprehension courses for both graduate and undergraduate students.	The teacher holds a Master degree in Language Teaching and has a lot of experience teaching face-to-face EFL reading comprehension courses for both graduate and undergraduate students. Nevertheless, it was his first experience teaching a web-based reading comprehension course and he was quite motivated to teach this course. He also had computer skills and was part of the team who designed the course making him confident to teach this course.

All three articles have the same information about the program of the reading comprehension course:

Table 6: the Reading Comprehension Program

Unit	Name	Topics
1	Word and their meanings	Dictionary use, parts of speech, cognates, affixes, word meaning in context.
2	Reading strategies	Prediction, skimming, scanning, and graph interpretation.
3	Development of reading skills	Sentence structure, topic, main idea, and referents
4	Text organization methods	cause and effect, comparison and contrasts, description, narration, argumentation , and classification and categorization
5	Critical reading	Fact and opinions, tone, and arguments

It is important to consider that the three articles contain the same information, due to the fact that it is an institutionalized program and it is shown in the same way.

The instruments

The description of the instruments was different as the author used third person (article two), first person (article three), and passive voice (article one) in the articles. Also, the authors cited are different. Besides, the number of words is totally different: article one contains 144 words, article two contains 182, and article three contains 221. Finally, the instruments are displayed in different form:

Table 7: Description of the Instruments

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
<p>Questionnaires. Three questionnaires were administered to evaluate the course and teacher, the students' motivations and reading strategies, and the students themselves. These instruments were analyzed to verify the motivations.</p> <p>Observations. This technique allows investigators to examine issues, such as behavioral interactions and participation, among others (Brown, 2001). Researchers observed different sessions of classes in the face-to-face course. The chats, forums, e-mails, and exercises of each unit were analyzed in the web-based course.</p> <p>Focus groups. When the courses finished, the students were invited to participate in focus groups to discuss their academic experiences in a deeper way. Researchers programmed four sessions (two per modality).</p>	<p>Diary of the Teacher The teacher recorded all his reflections and observation about the teaching process of each class session in order to construct a critical view (Bailey, 1990; Jeffrey & Hadley, 2002). The teacher kept the diary in English and took about two hours for each class to write each entry electronically. It took him about five months to finish the diary. It is worth stating that he was aware of and had experience writing the diary for research purposes.</p> <p>Questionnaires Students completed three questionnaires: evaluation of the course and the teacher, reading strategies and motivation, and self-evaluation. There were multiple choice questions and open questions for completing each questionnaire.</p>	<p>Questionnaires: We used four questionnaires to evidence interaction: self-assessment, motivation, evaluation of the teacher, and the evaluation of the platform MOODLE. Students ranked their learning process from a scale of 1 to 4 (4 the highest). They also had to select multiple choice questions in two of the questionnaires and had to answer some open questions. The objective of these questionnaires was to ask the students to self-verify the process of learning. We designed all questionnaires.</p> <p>Observations: Observation is a technique that allows the researchers to assess issues such as teaching, behaviors, materials, and interactions (Brown, 1994). We analyzed the web-based course content, evaluations of each unit, exercises, forums and chat sessions. We also analyzed the e-mail</p>

<p>Teacher diary. The teacher kept a diary for each modality in English. He recorded all of his observations, thoughts, and reflections about the teaching process. The objective was to build an academic view of the two modalities (Jeffrey & Hadley, 2002).</p>	<p>Observations Researchers observed ten class sessions. They examined issues such as teaching, behaviors, learning strategies, interaction, and participation in the classroom (Brown, 2001).</p> <p>Focus group Students had a focus group session (Dendinger, 2000) at the end of the course in order to discuss their learning experience. Researchers prepared some open questions regarding interaction, application of reading strategies, vocabulary improvement, and positive and negative aspects of this course. The session was audio-taped.</p>	<p>exchanges that occurred between the teacher and the students.</p> <p>The teacher's journal: The teacher kept a journal in order to record his observations as well as reflections along the course (Jeffrey & Hadley, 2002). We analyzed this instrument to get insights from the teacher.</p> <p>Focus group: We asked students to participate in focus group sessions in order to comment about their learning process during the web-based distance course. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) state that this technique helps researchers verify students' perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes about an issue, in this case, about the course. We also audiotaped and transcribed these sessions using regular orthography.</p>
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Introduction of findings

The introduction of findings differs in all articles. First, the number of words is different: article one has 82, article two has 107, and article three has 36. Second, authors cited are also different in the articles, except Freeman (1998) that is mentioned in articles one and two. Third, each introduction involves its scope: article one motivation, article two diary, and article three interaction. On the other hand, articles one and two share some common information such as the procedure of analyzing data, but adequate paraphrasing was given, as article one gives in detail the people involved in the research (ten researchers: six teachers, three undergraduate students, and an advisor). It also mentions how the analysis was made and how researchers obtained the categories. In contrast, article two begins describing the combination of data reading processes and the transcription part. After, it mentions the individual reading of researchers and how they then shared ideas in groups. These differences might lead to present information in a

versatile form. Finally, the paragraphs finish with different as well as specific information of each article, as it is shown in the following table:

Table 8: Introduction of Findings

1. Motivation conditions...	2. Diary insights...	3. Interaction in an...
<p>Ten researchers participated in the data analysis (six teachers, three undergraduate students, and an advisor). All researchers examined the data individually in order to find patterns in the different instruments. Then, they labeled and compared some important ideas in order to code and categorize the data. Finally, the researchers used triangulation to validate the data (Freeman, 1998) and translated certain excerpts from Spanish to English.</p> <p>Based on the macro-strategies proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), the researchers found several issues concerning motivation.</p>	<p>Researchers mixed both primary processes and secondary processes to read the diary (Curtis & Bailey, 2009). All the data were transcribed and researchers read and labeled the data individually. They then shared and discussed some important ideas in groups and coded the data in order to have categories. Finally, consensus was obtained through data triangulation (Freeman, 1998). Researchers translated some excerpts from Spanish to English in order to use them as support. Researchers validated some diary entries made by the teacher in order to support objectivity. Four main topics emerged from the diary: motivation, interaction, improvement, and the application of reading strategies. The findings are explained below.</p>	<p>Based on Moore (1989), Bouhnik and Marcus (2006) we concentrated our attention on observing the effects of the four types of interaction identified in this distance web-based reading foreign language course. The results are the following:</p>

Conclusions

In this article an effort to analyze self-plagiarism has been made. The author analyzed three different articles that were a product of the same research project in reading as a foreign language. Results support that both inadequate paraphrasing and adequate paraphrasing were given. Regarding inadequate paraphrasing some similar words and ideas were found. On the other hand, using different authors in a specific idea, having different numbers of words in a common issue, and being versatile to present information might lead to adequate paraphrasing. It is important to take into account that the results could be subjective as the author analyzes himself.

The objective of this paper is to cause awareness of self-plagiarism and to generate discussion about the same information used in different articles. In my case, it was really difficult to paraphrase some similar parts of the articles and I sometimes committed inadequate paraphrasing. Due to the fact that some authors argue that you cannot self-plagiarize yourself (Akst, 2010; Balbuena, 2003; Samuelson, 1994; Spinak, 2013), this paper is opened to be criticized by the academic community. It is worth noting that some articles emerge from the same research project and it is inevitable to repeat some information. My proposal for editors is to permit include the same information in the following sections of the article: part of the theoretical framework, methodology, and instruments. Regarding the results, I also propose to report just the ones that are being developed under the topic of analysis.

When reporting results of the same research project in different articles a dialog between editors and authors must be given to clarify this issue. It is not a matter of declining of just accepting an article, but a way of constructing academic discussions in publications. In fact, when different articles contain some similar information, this has to be explained to editors. Even if journals do not have the policy of self-plagiarism, authors themselves should clarify this upfront. As I did not do this, this caused a debate with the editor.

Finally and based on my case presented here and the production of different articles from the same research project, editors should consider the use of the same information when other members of the research project produce other articles. This interjection is common in all reports and it may show fairness in publications. But now a difficult question emerges: how much similar information could be acceptable?

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EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development Through International News¹

El Fortalecimiento de la Competencia Intercultural de Estudiantes de Inglés Mediante Noticias Internacionales

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Abstract

This case study analyzed how a group of English learners built critical intercultural awareness through the discussion of cultural events as reported in news media such as *The New York Times*, *the U.S. News*, and *The Telegraph*. Learners' critical reflections on controversial social conflicts related to injustice, gender inequality, and stereotypes in different cultures constituted the core data collected through field notes, logs, and one questionnaire. Findings revealed that English learners not only gained new knowledge about beliefs, values, and behaviors that cause conflict in other cultural communities, but compared them critically to their own culture. This research concluded that integrating news in EFL education can be a salient instructional material to help EFL speakers become more critical intercultural individuals through topics belonging to deep culture.

Key words: intercultural communicative competence, news, English as a foreign language, EFL learners surface culture, deep culture

Resumen

Este estudio de caso examinó cómo un grupo de estudiantes de inglés construyó conciencia intercultural crítica mediante la discusión de eventos culturales reportados en varias noticias de periódicos internacionales tales como *The New York Times*, *The U.S. News*, y *The Telegraph*. Las opiniones críticas de los estudiantes sobre temas sociales controversiales como la injusticia, la

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desigualdad de género y los estereotipos en diferentes naciones constituyeron los datos centrales que se recogieron mediante notas de campo, diarios y un cuestionario. Los hallazgos indicaron que los estudiantes de inglés no solamente adquirieron nuevo conocimiento sobre creencias, valores y comportamientos que causan conflicto en otras comunidades culturales, sino que los compararon críticamente con su propia cultura. Esta investigación concluye que la incorporación de noticias en la enseñanza del inglés puede ser un material importante para preparar a los estudiantes a ser individuos interculturales críticos por medio de temas pertenecientes a la cultura profunda.

Palabras clave: competencia comunicativa intercultural, noticias, inglés como lengua extranjera, cultura superficial, cultura profunda.

Resumo

Este estudo de caso examinou como um grupo de estudantes de inglês construiu consciência intercultural crítica mediante a discussão de eventos culturais reportados em várias notícias de jornais internacionais tais como The New York Times, The U.S. News, e The Telegraph. As opiniões críticas dos estudantes sobre temas sociais polêmicos como a injustiça, a desigualdade de gênero e os estereótipos em diferentes nações constituíram os dados centrais que se recolheram mediante anotações de campo, diários e um questionário. As descobertas indicaram que os estudantes de inglês não somente adquiriram um novo conhecimento sobre crenças, valores e comportamentos que causam conflito em outras comunidades culturais, senão que os compararam criticamente com a sua própria cultura. Esta pesquisa conclui que a incorporação de notícias no ensino do inglês pode ser um material importante para preparar os estudantes para serem indivíduos interculturais críticos por meio de temas pertencentes à cultura profunda.

Palavras chave: competência comunicativa intercultural, notícias, inglês como língua estrangeira, cultura superficial, cultura profunda.

Introduction

*I*ntercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been a focus of inquiry in EFL education over the past two decades, since one of the current learning goals is to train EFL learners to build intercultural communication with individuals coming from multiple cultural settings. Verbal communication and linguistic forms are no longer the only aspects to be learned in the language classroom. Lázár (2003) states that foreign language teaching should emphasize “intercultural consciousness and intercultural skills” of “discovery of ‘the other’” (p. 7). Similarly, the CEF⁴ (2001) states that learning a language implies “to discover otherness— whether the other is another language, another culture, other people or new areas of knowledge” (p. 12). Thus, there is a need to prepare language learners to become interculturally competent in an increasing globalized world (Byram, 1997; Lázár, Lussier, & Christian 2007; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2003; Moeller & Nugent, 2014).

Framed within an intercultural perspective, this research study claims that one significant way to help EFL learners develop critical intercultural awareness is through the discussion of international news, since news articles contain controversial issues belonging to the level of *deep culture*, namely social inequality, power, racism, and prejudice in many countries. Furthermore, this research study claims that news is authentic language that can enable EFL learners to use the foreign language more meaningfully while building ICC at a critical level. In this sense, four EFL learners took part in this case study who engaged in building their ICC with the support of news articles from *The New York Times*, *the U.S. News*, *The Washington Times*, and *The Telegraph*, all available in the Internet. An in-depth description of how these learners started to develop ICC in the target language through issues of deep culture is analyzed here.

Statement of the problem

Despite the fact that almost 20 years ago influential authors, including Kramsch (1993), Byram (1997), and Lázár (2003), stated the importance of fostering ICC in EFL education, more work needs to be done in the present to ensure that our teaching practices in Latin American countries not only place special emphasis on the study of grammar and communicative functions, but also on intercultural communication. Many EFL classrooms have failed to incorporate intercultural topics to prepare learners to become part of a global society (Mai Hoa, 2011; Hesar et al. 2012) because teachers mainly teach *surface culture*, underlining static, representative, and visible elements of the target

culture such as festivals, tourist destinations/landmarks, celebrities, and typical food (Hinkel, 2001). However, these visible aspects of culture will never prepare learners to encounter cultural identity, difference, and culture shock in real communication. Hanvey (1979), cited by Shaules (2007), affirms that superficial or “shallow intercultural experiences,” i.e. tourism, food, and architecture only “involve the explicit” (p. 98) understanding of facts that other cultures proudly celebrate. Therefore, there is an imperative need to recognize that culture cannot longer be studied from celebratory perspectives only, assuming that it is always fixed, archetypal, and happy. Quite to the contrary, EFL teachers must start preparing EFL learners to observe that, as Greenblatt (1995) and Levy (2007) suggest, culture is transformative and evolves in time and, in many occasions, is chaotic and conflictive up to the point that it revolts long-established norms. Such is the case of traditional conceptions on women’s chastity and the sacred value of marriage which have not only changed significantly over the past 50 years, but have caused conflict and resistance among older and younger generations that strive for keeping or refusing those cultural rules.

In order to adopt a more critical and realistic approach to the study other cultures in the foreign language, this research study attempted to enhance a group of EFL learners’ ICC through international news, authentic materials that portray deep cultural content, ideologies, and beliefs that differ from one country to another. Radio, TV, printed, and Internet news keep people informed about the social, political, and cultural events that happen around the world. Hence, they can be useful material to enhance critical ICC.

Theoretical framework

Deep Culture

Deep culture or invisible culture can be understood as those complex meanings related to the norms, worldviews, beliefs, values, and ideologies that, in general terms, are shared by a group or community (Hinkel, 2001, p. 444). These cultural meanings are complex and many times conflictive because the fact that they are adopted and sometimes imposed in a given community does not necessarily mean that all the members of that community accept and obey them. There is always exception to the cultural norm depending on diverse social, economic, ideological, and even personal views and circumstances. For instance, there is the cultural value in many countries that children have the right to education. However, because of poverty and social disadvantages, many children are forced to work long hours in order to support their

family subsistence. Therefore, while many families value education as a privilege for children to succeed in life, and have the means to afford it, some others, who do not have money, value hard work as an honest and dignified cultural practice to make the most of their lives. Hence, deep cultural meanings are relative because they are transformed by people over time (Greenblatt, 1995) and can be whether individual or collective, context-dependent, and transformative as they are not always suitable and homogenous for all the members of a nation.

Intercultural communicative competence in EFL education

ICC is a difficult term to define because it is part of an ongoing discussion conducted by several authors and fields (Moeller and Nugent, 2014). In EFL/ESL³ education, ICC is understood as “the ability to cope with one’s own cultural background in interaction with others” who “hold different linguistic codes” and “different sets of values and models of the world” (Lázár, 2004, p. 9). It involves language learners’ capacity to accept other perceptions of the world and be aware of other peoples’ differences and ways of seeing life (Byram 1997; Byram et al., 2009). According to Byram (1997), ICC is developed in social interaction during the process of communication. The language learner necessarily has to use the foreign language to learn about and cope with deep, maybe strange, and even conflictive cultural values during the process of meaning negotiation.

ICC cannot be enhanced by just identifying and learning by heart lists of general facts of surface culture such as tourist places, holidays, historical events, food, etc. By contrast, ICC requires a deep and “dynamic interactive process of intercultural relationships” as individuals from different cultures confront “a relatively more abstract level of cultural difference, ...develop empathy (the ability to look at things from the perspective of our cultural hosts), and learn to construct cultural difference better” (Shaules, 2007, p. 100).

Because ICC is necessarily linked to the process of communication, EFL teachers in Latin-American countries might think that ICC development is a hard, almost impossible task to be accomplished, since the majority of learners have a few or no opportunities to interact with citizens from other cultures of the world to establish real intercultural communication. Moreover, it is a fact, that most of English teachers in EFL settings are neither native speakers, nor members of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Therefore, creating actual intercultural relationships and communication in EFL education is still complicated.

³ EFL: English as a foreign language/ ESL: English as a second language.

However, Byram (1997) clarifies that in educational contexts the intercultural speaker can actually make evaluative analysis of “documents” and “events” to become aware of conflicts and ideologies, and understand “explicit and implicit values” in one’s own and others’ cultures (p. 63). Not only learning about culture through oral interaction, but also through reading and analyzing culture-based “documents” (such as news featuring real language and “cultural events”), constitute a point of departure to help learners develop ICC in EFL classrooms.

As ICC is still a topic of constant debate and research, it has been lately associated with the notion of *global literacy*. In fact, Kumaravadivelu (2008) calls it global cultural consciousness, Bennet (2008) and Fantini (2010) call it global competence, and Focho (2011) names it global literacy. Bennet (2008) and Fantini (2010) clarify that although ICC is being used with diverse names by authors from different fields, those names ultimately aim at accomplishing a shared goal: the ability to cope with cultural differences in a more globalized society. In this sense, ICC or global literacy involves the social skills to acquire critical understanding of current national and international events in order to function effectively as a “world-minded person” (Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007, p. 183). It represents a social concern about global controversial conflicts that affect humankind in general regarding race, religion, gender, and social clashes. That is why several researchers, including Nakamura (2002), Revelo (2008), and Focho (2011), support intercultural awareness and global communication in EFL classrooms so that students are instructed on democratic values, human rights, and respecting “difference” in a world that is still intolerant and prejudiced.

The *saviors* of intercultural communicative competence

Byram’s (1997) ICC, an educational model designed for foreign language teaching, consists of three components or *saviors* (Byram, 1997):

1. *Knowledge* of surface culture (emblematic and easy observable elements) and knowledge of deep culture (not easy observable beliefs, values, and ideologies).
2. *Skills of discovery, of relating, and of interpreting* that enable the intercultural speaker/reader to compare and contrast cultural meanings that are different and unknown to him/her.
3. *Attitudes* (openness, readiness, and curiosity) that lead the intercultural person to appreciate and deal with strange cultural practices in a more flexible and positive way.

With these three *saviors*, all interrelated and interdependent, ESL/EFL intercultural learners should build an additional *savoir* that Byram (1997) calls *critical intercultural awareness*, which is the ability to evaluate perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and others' culture.

The role of news in EFL education

Most of published research on using news in EFL education has been mainly directed to help learners improve the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) as well as grammar and vocabulary (Gebhard, 1996; Nunan, 1999). Such are the cases of prominent EFL teacher (Teng, 2015; Bahrani and Tam, 2012; Cross, 2011; Berber, 1997) who have conducted relevant research on how news articles can support communicative competence development.

However, Moglen (2014) says that because of the limited inclusion of news in ESL/EFL learning processes, further research is required. Hence, Moglen's statement led this research study to examine the integration of news articles in the EFL classroom from a different standpoint: one that was not only concerned about how international news could contribute to improve language competence, but also build EFL learners' critical ICC, since little research has been conducted from this intercultural perspective. News can motivate EFL learners to listen to, read, speak, and write critically about the problems of real life in different nations because one of their "main advantages" is to include "authentic cultural information" (Berardo, 2006 p. 64). Byram et al. (2002) equally suggest that "newspapers with different political or cultural perspectives" can be a "rich source" to "promote the intercultural dimension" (p. 23) when learners are encouraged to examine them from a critical perspective. Similarly, Peterson and Bronwyn (2003), Kukulska-Hulme (2010), Dema and Moeller (2012), and Bastami (2013) indicate that news articles, magazines, and videos are authentic sources to analyze cultural events that happen in other nations of the world.

International news is the product of many cultural groups that can lead learners to identify deep-rooted social aspects and social struggles that members of a community are not even aware of (Frank, 2013). Learners can be encouraged to identify which values, beliefs, and ideologies on race, gender, power, sex, morality, etc. influence or dominate foreign cultures. Also, news can motivate learners to analyze how those cultural ideologies transform and evolve in time and space and differ from one country to another. These contents can help

learners to enhance intercultural awareness critically as they can start to consider how to eradicate expressions of hatred, exclusion, and human rights violation, while, in turn, become intercultural speakers of modern civilization.

Methodology

Research design

Based on Merriam's (2004) and Yin's (2003) guidelines on research design, this was a qualitative case study that examined in-depth and analyzed how a small group of Colombian EFL learners fostered their ICC while being asked to provide critical reflections on several controversial cultural issues reported in international news sources (see Table 1). The research question leading this study was: How could international news enhance a group of EFL speakers' intercultural communicative competence?

Participants

Four Colombian university EFL learners participated in this case study, all having different degrees and lifestyles, but sharing a common reason to study English: They wanted to improve their English level because they had been offered jobs and study opportunities abroad. Margarita⁴ was a 30-year-old English teacher who was planning to travel to the USA to pursue a master's Degree. Violeta, was a 28-year-old computer technician who had been offered a job in the USA. Anahí was a 26-year-old student of modern languages at a university who was doing the paperwork to apply for a University in England. Camilo was a 28-year-old student who needed to study English as a requirement to finish his undergraduate studies. These learners had an intermediate English proficiency level (B1⁵) according to the CEFR because they had already taken several English courses in the past. However, they still needed to improve accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation.

⁴ The names of the participants are pseudonyms as their real identity has been protected for ethical and research reasons.

⁵ Level B1: According to The Common European Framework of References to Languages, B1 indicates that the speaker "can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken ... Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans." (2001, p. 24).

Setting

This case study was conducted in the context of a conversation club where participants addressed critical discussion of cultural contents as depicted in international news. The conversation club was scheduled on Saturdays' afternoons from March 05 to May 07 of 2016. In the first meeting, students were invited to start creating awareness of how they could become better intercultural speakers, and were tutored on some initial notions of the term ICC based on Byram's model. Then, they were informed that they were going to read authentic news from *The New York Times*, *the U.S. News*, *CNN*, and *The Washington Times* (See Table 1) in English as a means to start building ICC.

Table 1. News discussed in the conversation club

Session	Topic/ news	News articles discussed	News source/Materials
1	Understanding The concept of ICC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of ICC - How we can foster ICC - Why it is important to become a critical intercultural speaker in a globalized world. 	Teacher's presentation and students' participation
2	Race relations in the USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "America has a big race problem" (Nesbit, 2016). - "Race and Reality in America: Five key findings" (Agiesta, 2015) 	<i>U.S. News</i> <i>CNN</i>
3	Islamic Sharia ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "The ugly truth about Sharia law" (Riddell, 2016) 	<i>The Washington Times</i>
4	Teens' views of marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Marriage 'no longer the foundation stone of family life'" (Bingham, 2013) - "Now, the Bad News on Teenage Marriage" (Kershaw, 2008) 	<i>The Telegraph</i> <i>The New York Times</i>

Data collection instruments

In the follow-up sessions, participants came prepared with the reading of the news (See Table 1) as they had previously done reading tasks in some worksheets (artifacts) containing questions that arose concern about topics of deep culture. They read the news individually in order to start creating cultural awareness and come to the conversation club with initial reactions and opinions to share with and analyze with their partners. Through the analysis of different news, they started to understand and discuss cultural ideologies, values, and beliefs, and gradually became more reflective intercultural learners while using the foreign language. Three topics were chosen at random to be analyzed in this article (see Table 1). However, students discussed other topics during the experience.

⁶ Islamic Sharia: a religious law of the Islamic tradition. Sharia means "God's divine law." Its application in modern times has caused debate between traditionalist and reformist Muslims.

To answer the research question, three data collection instruments were used: The researcher took field notes every single meeting supported by audio-recordings. After each session, the notes and the recordings were reviewed several times in order to complement the notes related to learners' critical comments on culture generated during the discussion of the news. Artifacts (worksheets) were the second data collection instrument (see Appendix A) on which participants wrote personal opinions about the news before and after each club session. These artifacts contained a link to the news available in the Internet and several questions that headed participants to express their personal reactions about conflictive cultural topics reflected in the news. The third instrument was a questionnaire that encouraged participants to respond freely open and closed-ended questions linked to the main subject being investigated (Wallace, 2006). This instrument was administered when the conversation club finished.

Data analysis

Content analysis (Dawson, 2002) was used to analyze the data collected. Field notes were analyzed first, a step that required reading the data many times until patterns related to participants' similar reflections on aspects of deep culture were identified. For instance, data showed participants' repetitive and similar comments on the new cultural information that they were learning through the news and that they did not know about before. Thus, the researcher grouped and classified these patterns into an initial category called: *Learning about unknown cultural practices and beliefs*. Initial categories represented the sets of patterns found and associated with ICC development in the conversation club. As triangulation (Freeman, 1998) is a required procedure in the analysis of qualitative data, the patterns in the field notes were later compared to participants' opinions in the artifacts and in the questionnaire in order to confirm if similar patterns and initial categories related to ICC were present in all the three data collection instruments. Once having a set of patterns and pre-categories, final categories arose which were lastly refined and restated as findings.

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Findings

News helped EFL speakers to learn about controversial beliefs and practices that belonged to deep culture.

A significant finding was that, instead of simply learning about emblematic and "shallow" (Shaules, 2007) information of surface

culture such as holidays, tourist places, and typical food, the learners recognized that they learned about controversial cultural traditions and complicated beliefs of deep culture that are popular and socially accepted in other nations, but that these learners did not know about and found them difficult to understand and appreciate. For example, when discussing the news on race relations in the US, Anahí affirmed that after reading the news articles “America has a big race problem” (Nesbit, 2016) and “Race and Reality in America: Five key findings” (Agiesta, 2015), she learned that there had been a civil war in the US in the past because of race issues. She also said that after doing more research about this topic, she found out that this war had been caused because of ideological positions about slavery as a legitimate institution in southern states. Anahí said that the “southern states approved slavery because whites saw black people as inferior beings while northern states defended the abolition of slavery because it was an unjust practice” (field notes, March 26).

Similarly, Violeta said that this news article mentioned the words “Jim Crow Laws” in the sentence “We’ve certainly made substantial progress since the repeal of the Jim Crow laws. But we also clearly have substantial work to do in America” (Nesbit, 2016). She admitted that although the news explained the current racial tension between whites and African-Americans in the USA, the “Jim Crow Law” was not a clear term for her. So, she needed to do research to understand it. She said that she had found out that this law was a “policy of segregating or discriminating against black people at public places, on public transportation, or employment from 1876 and 1965” based on the idea that “black people were seen as inferior and animals” (field notes, March 26). She also reported that the article denounced that racist and segregating attitudes towards black people still continued in the USA in the present times as Americans’ ideologies about whites as a superior race hadn’t changed much since then.

New knowledge about controversial topics of deep culture was also gained when learners read the news “The ugly truth about Sharia law” (Riddell, 2016), since learners affirmed that they had never heard about this law before. For instance, Camilo commented that he had learned from the news that the “Sharia law was a legal code based on the Quoran that controlled the lives of people living in the middle east like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan” (field notes, March 26). Margarita equally stated that she had learned that “the Sharia law was a strict law that punished Muslims with death if they disobeyed religious beliefs listed in the Quoran” (Margarita’s worksheet, March 26).

The previous examples evidenced that these EFL learners started to develop ICC through international news as they were aware that these documents enabled them to gain new cultural knowledge about contentious viewpoints and behaviors related to race, segregation, domination, and religion as conceived by other groups different from their own cultural environment. As proposed by Byram's (1997) model of ICC, these learners became intercultural speakers who gained the *savoir knowledge* as they learned about sociopolitical facts when being encouraged to confront abstract and ingrained elements of culture in the news, instead of dealing with celebratory and easy observable elements of culture. In fact, data in the questionnaires showed learners' recognition of the significant role of the news as authentic material to help them build new intercultural knowledge:

I knew there was slavery in the USA in the past, but I had never known about the division between the southern and the northern states and about the Jim Crow law, and how that law had influenced racist attitudes in the present times. All that information is new for me, and is hard to deal with (Violeta's questionnaire, May 7).

The news about the Sharia law in the Middle East is new information for me. I never paid attention to the news reporting about problems of domination in Saudi Arabia and Syria due to religious beliefs that control and subject people unjustly . . . That news were not important for me then. (Margarita's questionnaire, May 7).

According to data, learners admitted that they had never paid attention to those conflictive behaviors and ideologies reported in foreign news because they had never been interested in intercultural issues. Moreover, data indicated that learners started to be interested in global issues, leading them to become more world-minded citizens who were concerned about unjust conflicts that have affected humankind through history. The four speakers stated that this was the first time in their lives that they had learned about cultural clashes in other foreign cultures in a deeper and more realistic way, this being evidence of their initial ICC development in the foreign language as they became aware of other cultural realities that are not always congratulatory and emblematic in other nations.

News led EFL learners to interpret and evaluate controversial ideologies from other cultures.

These participants not only gained *knowledge* of other cultures' practices, but *interpreted* and *evaluated* critically the events reported in the international news by expressing their opinions about implicit meanings of deep culture. Such was the case when learners read the

news “The ugly truth about Sharia law” (Riddell, 2016), since they assumed a critical position about the fact that the members of the Islamic group ISIS⁷ used the Sharia law to murder homosexuals through cruel and inhumane practices. Camilo said that it was shocking for him that “ISIS was a powerful militant group that pushed gays from the roofs or stoned them to death in public places in Syria” (Field notes, April 2). As a language learner dealing with complex cultural ideologies about sexuality and gender, Camilo was critical to say that it was unjust how straight men manipulated a religious law to kill, in the name of God, those who had a different sexual orientation. Anahi also pointed out critically the following:

The news says that children were incited by angry mobs to stone homosexual to death in Syria. I don’t agree with how adults involve children in these cruel practices that go against human rights. Children should not learn to be cruel and hate others who are different (Anahi’s worksheet, April 2)

These critical reflections show that learners questioned how complex ideologies about gender and sexuality, already adopted by many Muslims through the Sharia law, were used to exert power and violence against minority groups. Anahí questioned the fact how deep-rooted traditions about sexuality in other nations perpetuated the cultural belief that sexual diversity was immoral. In her opinion, it was a mistake that adults encouraged children to murder those neighbors who were different.

Violeta, on her part, was critical about another conflictive gender issue reported in some news:

I read in other related news that the Sharia Law also oppressed women in Muslims countries, and that many men have distorted the meaning of this law to dominate women. I think this is a dangerous practice because Muslim women will never have the right to be independent in their own countries (Violeta’s worksheet, April 2).

Violeta’s critical statement referred to how some Muslims cultural groups have twisted the initial principles of the Sharia law in order to establish patriarchal hegemony on women through intimidation and physical abuse. These reflections showed that learners analyzed how the Arab world has different cultural viewpoints and values about human rights, respect for life, equality, and justice, and how many children are indoctrinated by the cultural construct that homophobia and misogyny are normal ideologies of their national identity.

⁷ ISIS: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

ICC was also developed critically with topics of deep culture that were more closely related to learners' own lives and expectations. When reading the news "Marriage 'no longer the foundation stone of family life'" (Bingham, 2013) and "Now, the Bad News on Teenage Marriage" (Kershaw, 2008), learners were also critical about marriage as a deep-rooted tradition in many cultures. Margarita stated that the news informed that the traditional belief in having sex and children only after getting married had almost disappeared in Great Britain because young generations had become more individualistic and had embraced their own moral code about marriage (field notes, April 9). Camilo added to the discussion that, according to the news, 48% of teenagers in Great Britain who married before 18 tended to divorce within 10 years. Clashing views took place about this topic because, while Margarita and Anahí believed that teenagers should follow the traditional norms to have sexual relations and children after getting married, Camilo and Violeta argued that marriage was just an imposed norm, and that there should not be any kind of impediment for young couples to have sexual relations before getting married. Similarly, Margarita and Anahí defended the idea that "if a couple really loved, they should marry because it was a serious decision to confirm real love and commitment." Camilo and Violeta counter-argued that "real love did not require a legal marriage, and that marriage never guaranteed true love and happiness" (Field notes, April 9).

It can be observed that the news caused adverse reactions based on participants' individual and collective values on marriage. The fact that two participants defended traditional views on marriage and the other two had more liberal opinions constituted a clear example of how learners addressed conflictive topics of deep culture, since they discovered that beliefs about marriage have changed over time, and that marriage is not always a fixed, congratulatory, and shared cultural practice. In the questionnaires, learners wrote that this topic was an important deep cultural issue that enhanced their ICC because they were influenced by their cultural and personal views on marriage.

In general, this finding showed that learners interpreted and evaluated critically controversial themes and values from other cultures associated with power, discrimination, gender, and marriage. They not only became intercultural learners through the incorporation of news in the English learning process, but were able to use the foreign language to discuss those complex cultural meanings at a critical level.

News empowered learners to compare cultural practices between their own and other cultures.

Data in the field notes and the questionnaire showed that learners, as intercultural individuals, were able to compare cultural values and behaviors among other cultures and their own as presented in the news while questioning what they believed were morally right or wrong. For instance, the news about racism and racial tension in today's US, allowed them to analyze how stereotypes imposed on African-Americans were similar to those imposed on black people in their own country, Colombia:

Many American think that blacks are dirty, lazy, and less intelligent than whites. It is a similar opinion we have of blacks in our country (Field notes, March 26).

We are racist when we reject black people and say they are lazy and "bullisiosos." We create bad opinions about them and these classifications ruin their life conditions without better opportunities ... Also, Americans have similar unjust opinions about blacks (Camilo's artifact, March 26).

Learners were able to discuss cultural stereotypes assigned to black people in two different cultural sites associated with low levels of intelligence and negative traits of their personality. Learners recognized that they, like many other people, created pejorative and insulting perceptions of other cultural groups without justification. They became aware that the spread of these generalized stereotypes ultimately defamed and marginalized blacks, and that their opportunities to improve their life conditions in a world controlled by the western white hegemony were reduced due to racist labels. Learners concluded that Colombia was also a racist country that despised and marginalized minority groups such as blacks and indigenous people.

Furthermore, the discussion about the current racial tension in the US and the historical research that these learners did about slavery in the American south in the past, led them to establish relationships about the history of slavery in Colombia:

There was slavery in Colombia, too, as you know. Spanish people brought many African people as soon as they colonized us, I think in the XVI century. Spanish not only slaved Africans, but all the Indian tribes, and they raped women and killed blacks and Indians who disobeyed their rules (Camilo, Field notes based on audio recordings, March 26).

Learners found out and compared similar ideological, but unfair and questionable views about slavery and racial discrimination imposed and practiced as normal precepts in two distinct cultural settings in

the past. The fact that they criticized those ideological precepts show how these learners were able to discuss deep and conflictive cultural concepts about race that have transformed through the history of these two nations, but that still affect negatively the situation of many African-Americans and African-Colombian citizens who continue being discriminated in the present because of racist attitudes that still prevail in today's societies.

Interestingly, Margarita and Anahí said that in the same way that some Colombian people discriminated against other ethnic communities, including blacks, indigenous groups, and *mulatos*, Colombians and Latinos were, in turn, discriminated against by whites in the US, since Latinos often suffered from derogatory stereotypes and were looked down when they went to that country (Field notes, March 26). Moreover, learners discussed that racist positions in the US were even worse than in Colombia because the news reported several cases in which some white Americans had killed black people in the US, like the case in South Carolina where a white man went into a black church during a bible study and killed nine black parishioners in 2015. This event led learners to not only discuss that racism is a problem in many nations, including their own culture, but that hatred was an immoral practice that generated murders against minority groups in the US. Learners analyzed how an overdeveloped country such as the US still had conflicts related to race and multiculturalism.

Another example that showed how learners made comparisons between their own culture and the British culture was when they discussed the two pieces of news about the decline of marriage in England:

I conclude that young generations in England and in Colombia have more liberal views on marriage. Many don't want to marry and they have sex before getting married. The concept of the family has changed. Young people want to have sex and enjoy life before they marry (Margarita's artifact, April 9).

Our culture is influenced by the liberal views on marriage in other countries such as England and the US. Marriage is not the first option to have a family. Many have sexual relations and have children without getting married. Thus, marriage is not that sacred like it was in the past (Violeta's questionnaire, May 7).

Data indicate that language learners were able to compare deep cultural meanings and practices as they questioned how England, the US, and Colombia have changed strict traditions of marriage and the concept of the family through time. These comparisons generated

controversial discussion about how younger generations are breaking traditional moral standards and how culture transforms over time. These cultural comparisons also evidenced how EFL learners developed ICC when being encouraged to study conflictive and deep cultural topics through critical approaches based on debate and contestation, rather than studying neutral and representative aspects of surface culture.

Limitations of the study

The short time to collect data was one of the main limitations due to the fact that participants lacked time to meet more often. They had to work and study during week days, so the only possibility was to hold the conversation club on Saturdays. However, this case study represents a further practical step of how EFL learners can enhance critical ICC through different materials and resources.

It is also important to clarify that this research project identified aspects that indicated how participants were able to enhance initial levels of intercultural awareness because it cannot be assured that they became complete intercultural learners with this single experience. The conversation club was an educational space, a sort of artificial context that attempted to create awareness of diverse cultural beliefs and ideologies belonging to deep culture. ICC is fluid and context-dependent, and participants were not exposed to real intercultural exchanges with people from other cultures in which they might have behaved and reacted differently as intercultural speakers. Therefore, in EFL classrooms, intercultural competence should be understood as “a model for the acquisition of ICC in an educational context [that] includes educational objectives because it has educational dimensions; it includes specifications of locations of learning and of the roles of the teacher and learner” (Byram, 1997, p. 70). In fact, the conversation club in which this study was conducted held educational specifications and objectives: The role of news articles as authentic culture-based materials to enhance English learners’ ICC in an EFL context. More research on incorporating news and other documents in EFL education to develop ICC is needed in larger educational settings in Colombia.

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Conclusions

This research study indicates that including news in the EFL context can enhance learners’ ICC development at a critical level. News are authentic language in use that can increase cultural understanding of controversial events and ideologies of deep culture,

namely discrimination, racism, misogyny, homophobia, prejudice, and stereotypes that continue affecting human relationships in a so-called globalized society.

This study showed that the news reported by *U.S. News*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Clarion Project*, and *The Telegraph* helped EFL learners to develop relevant aspects of their ICC. They acquired *knowledge* of the current political and social climate and identity of several countries. They enhanced some *critical skills*, including interpreting, comparing, and analyzing individual and collective behaviors, actions, and beliefs in their own culture and other foreign cultures, such as England, the US, and Syria. The third aspect is that learners created *attitudes*, namely readiness and empathy for other human beings that not only suffered from social injustice and prejudice, but whose lives were subjected to strict cultural norms.

This research claims that encouraging learners to become intercultural through controversial topics of deep culture and through the incorporation of real world events reported in the news should be a more common practice in EFL education. It is a fact that EFL materials and topics to learn about target cultures often include emblematic, happy, and surface elements of culture, but those materials rarely encourage learners to discuss issues of identity, prejudice, social injustice, oppression, and power which also shape and transform all cultural groups worldwide. Helping learners foster their ICC requires more work in the English classroom. News is one of the potential options that can facilitate it. However, the debate is open to find other possible resources that may enhance ICC so that students can be prepared to participate actively in intercultural communication. Learning a language does not only mean to learn the linguistic system, but to act as intercultural speakers that understand, deal with, and resist, if necessary, cultural boundaries in a world that is still a long way from really being an intercultural and a more inclusive globalized space.

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Appendix A

Sample of data collection instruments, Artifact: Worksheet 1

Topic: Race relations in the US

Read the news about race tensions in the US today in the following web page:

“America has a big race problem” (Nesbit, 2016).

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-03-28/america-has-a-big-race-problem>

Critical opinions based on reading

1. What cultural information does the news article contain about issues of race in the US?
2. What causes the race tension between whites and African-Americans in the US? Why does this tension continue in the present?
3. What stereotypes have been created about African-Americans' identity and race? Why?
4. What is your personal opinion about the race conflicts in the US? Is it right or wrong?
5. What information was new for you in terms of ideologies and beliefs about race in the US?

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Periodicity. GiST is published in English bi-annually by ÚNICA, Bogotá Colombia. The January- June issue includes articles accepted from October to January of the year of the publication, and the July- December issue articles accepted from the previous April – July of the year of publication.

Submission of articles. Authors must submit documents exclusively and directly via the platform of Open Journal Systems (OJS). Users must register, and articles should be submitted by clicking on the link “online submissions.” Submissions are received in the dates established and published by GIST. Submissions to GIST can be sent via:

<https://gistjournal.unica.edu.co/index.php/gist/issue/view/36>

Documentation required. Additionally, authors must attach these documents via the OJS platform.

- 1) Letter addressed to the Editor of GiST Journal, requesting the evaluation of the article.
- 2) The Letter of Copyright Assignment Agreement and Conflict of Interest Statement, both signed by the author(s), verifying that the article is original, and that it has not been published or submitted to another journal for consideration. This format is available on GIST’s page, in the Editorial section, also in the OJS platform.
- 3) CV for each author including studies, professional experience, current position, and institutional affiliation. In addition, each author’s full name should be given in the order in which they wish to appear.

Article Presentation Format

Language. The article should be in English.

Tone. Articles should present scientific, scholarly, and professional research on language education. All biases towards gender, sexual orientation, racial, or ethnic groups should be avoided, as should all prejudiced statements involving disabilities or age. Historical and interpretative inaccuracies (quoting a work inappropriately) are not acceptable.

Length. At least 15 but no more than 20 pages.

Software. The article should be submitted in a recent version of Microsoft Word.

Style. Authors should follow the *Publication Manual of the APA* (Sixth Edition, 2009) for writing style in general as well as references. Some key aspects of the general APA style include:

- a. Using just one space, not two, between all words and sentences.
- b. Using a ½ inch (five to seven space) indentation on every paragraph.
- c. Placing reference citations within the text (and not as a footnote).
- d. Spacing in-text references according to the example: (Johnson, 2003).
- e. Keeping direct quotations to a minimum. When included, following the APA guidelines for short quotations (less than 40 words, identify the quotation with quotation marks as part of the main text format, and include the page number of the source), and long quotations (more than 40 words, use block paragraph format for the quotation and include the page number of the source).
- f. Placing punctuation *within* quotation marks, according to the example: ...word.”
- g. Using the 12 point Times New Roman font, for readability.
- h. Double-spacing the entire text.
- i. Utilizing commas before the word *and* or *or* in a series of three or more items.
- j. Using digits (e.g., 10; 78; 394) only for numbers 10 and above. Other numbers under 10 may be written out (e.g., four, nine, seven).
- k. Differentiating in the format used with a *table* and a *figure* in the graphics which accompany one’s article.
- l. Implementing the editorial “we” or “I” (with the active voice), which is perfectly acceptable nowadays, and even preferred over the use of the passive voice.
- m. Using the five levels of APA heading, (which are not to be numbered).

Although we encourage authors to use the reference lists of previously published GiST Journal articles as a model, seven general examples follow. Please notice that each reference includes the authors name, date of publication, title of the work, and publication data.

- Martínez, A. A., Jones, B. B., & Schmidt, C. C. (1997). Título de artículo en español [Title of article translated into English]. *Name of Journal*, 8(3), 492-518.
- Chang, F. F., & Donovan, P. P. (Eds.). (1985). *Title of work*. Location: Publisher.
- Martínez, A. A. (2009). Title of chapter. In E. E. Godoy (Ed.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.
- Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. doi:xx.xxxxxxxx
- Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. Retrieved from <http://name.of.website>
- Chang, F. F. (2000, July). *Title of paper or poster*. Paper or poster session presented at the meeting of Organization Name, Location.
- Martínez, A. A. (2002, October 12). Title of article. *Name of Newspaper*, pp. B2, B6.

Graphic Aides. Original tables, figures, photographs, graphics, or other digital files which are necessary for comprehension are encouraged. Graphics should be original and may not be reproduced from copyrighted material. Graphics may be included in the text of the article in the place where they should appear. All figures and tables should be black and white.

Title. The article's title should be brief and allow readers to identify the topic and content easily.

Origin of the Article. It is necessary to specify if the article is the result of research, a graduation thesis, an essay, or critique. In the case of it being a product of a research project, the author should indicate the project title, the financing source, sponsoring institution, and project phase.

Abstract. All abstracts should be in English and in Spanish. The abstract should include the scope and intention of the paper, with a concise description of the methodology, supporting theories, general results, and main conclusions.

Keywords. There is a maximum of seven keywords, which must be presented in English as well as Spanish.

Types of Articles

1. **Scientific or technological research article:** A document which presents in detail the original results of a research project. The structure generally contains seven important sections: and abstract, an introduction, a review of the literature, the methodology, the outcomes, the conclusions, and a reference list.
2. **Reflective article:** A document which presents in detail the results of a research project from the analytical, interpretive, or critical perspective of the author, on a specific topic, with clear references to the original sources.

3. **Review Article:** A document which is the result of research in which the results of certain research projects which have or have not been published are analyzed, systematized, and integrated together with the objective of demonstrating advances and developmental tendencies. This type of manuscript is characterized by its presentation of a careful bibliographic summary of at least 50 references.

Peer Review Process

As GIST is a bi-annual publication, the Editorial Committee publishes two calls for papers, in approximately April and November of each year. GIST then receives submissions until the published deadline, and carries out the following process with each submission:

The Editor carries out a preliminary evaluation before assigning peer reviewers, with the purpose of verifying that the article complies with the established criteria and guidelines for presentation of articles. This revision is usually completed within a three-week period.

In the case of articles that do not comply with the standards for presentation, according to the specifications of the journal, the Editor requests that the authors adjust the article in order to prepare it to be reviewed by peer reviewers. Authors are given a two-week period to make the requested modifications, and re-send the manuscript again to the Editor for consideration. Once the Editor has verified that the article fits the standards of presentation and specifications of the journal, the process of peer review may begin.

The Editor informs authors of the decision to submit the article to peer review or not within one month.

Articles that fulfill the presentation requirements are submitted to anonymous, double-blind peer review by experts in the field. This means that authors do not know the identity of the reviewers, and vice versa.

The Editor, with the help of members of the Editorial Committee, assigns peer reviewers according to the specific topic of each article. The Editor then invites peers to conduct the review, and once these individuals accept, they are informed as to the procedure for accessing articles in the OJS. In this same message, reviewers are informed of the expected time period and proposed deadline for the review, approximately one month after a reviewer agrees to conduct the evaluation. It is the hope to always conduct the peer reviews in a timely fashion; nevertheless, adjustments may be made to ensure reviewers' participation.

In order to carry out the evaluation, peer reviewers complete the evaluation form, and in this way, recommend the article for publication or not as well as specifications for revision, if this is recommended. The results of this evaluation serve as input for the Editor and Editorial Committee to decide if the article is publishable, publishable with minor adjustments, publishable with major adjustments, or not publishable.

Once the evaluation is complete, the Editor communicates with the author(s) and informs them of the decision that has been made, indicating whether or not the article will continue in the revision process. Authors have a one-month period to adjust the article and send the revision once again to the Editor. The Editor then reviews the article and reaches the final decision as to whether the revised version will be accepted for publication, bearing in mind its revision according to the input received from the peer reviewers, and the Editor's own independent criteria.

The Editorial Committee will decide on the publication of an article according to the following criteria: the fulfillment of the above stated conditions, methodological and conceptual rigor, originality, scientific quality, and relevance.

If the article is accepted for publication, the Editor proceeds with the editing and proofreading process. Once the final version of the article is completed, it is sent to the author for final approval, and is then forwarded to the design team for its preparation.

Relinquishing of Rights and Distribution of Published Material

The publication of articles in GIST implies that authors relinquish all rights to the article and its content. Authors also authorize GIST to promote and distribute the article via the means it deems appropriate, be it in print or electronically. For this purpose, authors should sign and send both the letter of relinquishment, and the declaration of conflict of interest upon submission of the article. These formats are available in the OJS platform of the Journal.

Code of Ethics and Good Practices

The Editorial Committee of GiST Education and Learning Research Journal, as part of its commitment to the scientific community, strives to guarantee the ethics and quality of its articles. The publication takes the code of conduct and good practice of the Committee of Ethics in Publications (COPE) as its point of reference, which defines standards for editors of scientific journals, as well as the legal and ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the sixth edition of its Style Manual.

All parties involved in the publication of the journal (Editor, Committees, Authors, and Peer Reviewers) must accept and adhere to the ethical guidelines and principles outlined here.

Editor Obligations and General Responsibilities

The Editor of the journal is responsible for ensuring strict compliance with the policies and principles of the journal. Specifically, the Editor is expected to act in an ethical manner in the following aspects:

Decision making. The Editor guides all decisions regarding articles submitted and published according to verifiable criteria of impartiality and fairness, taking into consideration the primary objectives of the journal.

The works submitted are evaluated objectively, based solely on the scientific merit of their content, without discrimination in regards to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, nationality or political persuasion.

Confidentiality. The Editor is committed to the principle of confidentiality and anonymity in communications between Editor and Authors, and Editor and Peer Evaluators. The Editor shall not disclose information related to the article or its process with third parties or colleagues not related to the journal, except in cases when an expert opinion is required, and in which the express permission for this purpose is granted by the author(s). The Editor shall not use the results of research of articles not accepted for publication for his or her own benefit or that of others, except with express permission from the author(s).

Communication. The Editor shall receive and respond to complaints, petitions, and comments in a reasonable amount of time. This also applies to the publication of corrections or modifications stemming from the editing process of published articles.

Compliance. The Editor strives to comply with the editorial policies of the Journal, and the publication of each online and print issue according to its established publication schedule.

In the same fashion, to:

- Consult the opinion of the members of the Editorial Board and Committee.
- Generate initiatives of support and constantly improve editorial practices.
- Support initiatives to educate researchers on issues of publication ethics and other ethical aspects of the journal.
- Take responsibility for the process of all articles submitted to the Journal, and develop mechanisms of confidentiality and peer evaluation up to the point of publication or rejection by the journal.

Other principles to follow include:

Peer Review Process and Editorial Decisions. The decision to publish or not shall be established via the process of peer evaluation, according to the “double blind” method in order to guarantee that the evaluation process that is free of conflict of interest between the parties. This rigorous procedure allows peer reviewers to value the technical quality, originality, and scientific contribution of the articles, among other aspects, and at the same time provides authors with the means to improve the article. For this revision process, a sufficient number of peer reviewers will be provided, selected from qualified area experts, with the intention of allowing for a more critical, expert, and objective editorial decision- making process.

Editing and Publication Schedule. The Editor provides for the fulfillment of the editing and publication schedule of articles accepted for publication. Upon the publication of each issue, the Editor and the editorial team accept responsibility for the promotion and distribution of the journal to its readers, subscribers, authors, peer reviewers, and other organizations with whom the institution holds agreements, as well as the data bases and national and international indexing services.

General Editor Obligations and Responsibilities

Authors must present their articles in the link indicated on the OJS-web page, according to the guidelines for the presentation of articles established by the journal. Authors are responsible for the ideas expressed in the articles, and for the ethical appropriateness.

Originality, plagiarism and exclusivity. Authors must explicitly state that the article is original in its creation, and that every effort has been taken to respect the intellectual property of those third parties cited within. Articles must not be reprints, nor published in other journals. Further, authors must declare that the findings are original in nature, that no plagiarism exists, nor distortion or manipulation of the facts.

Exclusivity. Articles submitted to the journal must not be simultaneously submitted to other publications.

Citations and references. Authors must ensure that they have received express permission for the use of material they do not own, including the reproduction of charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, photographs, etc. All sources must be cited appropriately, with complete references provided.

Authorship. Articles with more than one author should order authors' names in hierarchical fashion, indicating by this the degree of function, responsibility, and contribution to the article. By the same token, mention must be made to any individuals who have made significant scientific or intellectual contributions to the research, composition, and editing of the article.

Responsibility. All authors submitting articles must assume full responsibility for their work, and ensure that it presents an exhaustive review and discussion of the most recent and relevant literature.

Research ethics. Research studies must use methodology that ensures that subjects are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to those principles of the code of conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA), GIST highlights the following: discussion of the limitations of confidentiality and the safekeeping of the same, minimization of the intrusion and invasiveness in individuals' privacy, conservation of data and informed consent to research, record, or film. Further, the names of institutions or individuals should be avoided, even if the author has gained permission for their use. If their mention is considered necessary, the author must submit signed authorization for their inclusion. The names of the

researchers and participants shall likewise be omitted from the article. It is suggested that authors use pseudonyms, for example in case studies.

Conflict of interest. The Editor shall not consider articles that possibly represent a real or potential conflict of interest, resulting from financial or other relationships of competition or collaboration between authors, companies, or institutions mentioned in the article.

Errors in articles published. Any error or imprecision shall be communicated by the editorial team, and the necessary corrections in the online version of the article made.

Obligations and General Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers:

In the revision process, peer reviewers shall adhere to the following principles:

Confidentiality. Peer reviewers shall not share any information with third parties related to the article or its publication process. In such case that an external opinion may be necessary, reviewers shall seek express written authorization from the Editor in Chief, explaining the reasons. By the same token, reviewers shall not use the content of non-published articles for their own benefit or that of others, except with the express authorization of the authors. The violation of the principle of confidentiality constitutes bad practice by the reviewers.

Contribution to quality. Individuals who commit to evaluating articles submitted to the Journal shall carry out a critical revision, without bias, using clear, non-offensive language, with the intention of guaranteeing scientific and literary quality, according to the area of expertise.

Time management. Although the Journal has a maximum time allotted for the revision process, articles should be evaluated as soon as possible in the hopes of optimizing the revision and editing process. At the same time, peer reviewers who feel that they are unable to fulfill their function as evaluators, either because of lack of expertise, time or possible conflict of interest, shall communicate this immediately to the Editor or editorial team through regular channels.

Detection of errors and bad editorial practices. Reviewers shall pay particular attention to gaps in references to literature or authors that they feel need to be included. At the same time, if in the process of revision, it is possible to detect bad practices on the part of authors, peer reviewers are under the obligation to inform the Editor so that he or she may proceed in accordance with the ethical principles of the journal.

Additional Information

Compensation. The author will receive three copies of the edition in which his/her article shall appear.

Concerns. Communicate with the Editor through e-mail or by telephone, please. Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, International: (57-1) 281-1777 ext. 1296; In Colombia: (05-1) 281-1777 ext.1296

Waiver. Every article shall be subject to the review of the Editorial Committee. The Editor reserves the right to make formal modifications to articles through the editing process.

Editorial Norms. The contents of the articles are the exclusive responsibility of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GiST or ÚNICA. Any article published in GiST may be quoted as long as the source is clearly referenced.

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