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# Editorial

**Carlo Granados-Beltrán, PhD\***

**T**hese are difficult times for all of us. It is our wish that all our contributors, readers, reviewers, and members of our editorial and scientific committees are all right and protected. Fortunately, in this process of reinvention this health emergency has triggered, we have been able to continue with many of our academic pursuits. This new edition of GiST Journal gathers a wide variety of articles ranging from topics such as vocabulary and pronunciation to identity and gender.

The first contribution comes from Turkey by **Aksakalli and Yağiz** who shared their experience exploring pre-service teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation and the outcomes of teaching pronunciation to this population. The second article, by **Ramos-Holguín and Peñaloza-Rallón**, aims to show a phenomenological approach to study the experience of female Colombian authors in the process of writing academically. **Çetin Köroğlu**, also from Turkey, explored how digital short stories could influence to improve listening skills. In the same line of research on skills, **López-Páez** contributes to the study of the impact of oral pushed output hypothesis on the promotion of intermediate students' oral production.

The article by **Alimorad** from Iran explores the relation between gender and educational level and plagiarism. After, **Lucero-Babativa**, from Colombia, shares his research on interactional identities and their link with classroom interaction in English language teacher education. **Cabaleiro-Cerviño and Vera**, from Spain and Chile contribute a literature review which analyzes issues about the impact of educational technologies on higher education. Following this line of educational technologies, **Rodríguez, Vargas-Macías and Sánchez Sáenz** also contribute a literature review in relation to the ways digital games could be adapted and integrated in educational contexts.

**Arias-Cepeda** studies the identity of indigenous English teachers and how its has been invisibilized in Colombian ELT in connection to a lack of understanding of what bilingualism means in the Colombian context. Then, also from Colombia, **Cote-Parra**

shares his reflection upon the teaching of research to undergraduate foreign language students. To close this issue, **Connolly** contributes an exercise on error analysis of a common mistake of Spanish-speakers: adjective-noun order.

We want to thank the continuous support provided by the members of our editorial and scientific committees, authors, and readers. We hope that you find these articles enjoyable and useful.

**\*Carlo Granados-Beltran PhD** Editor in Chief- holds a PhD in Education from Universidad Santo Tomás, an MA in British Cultural Studies and ELT from the University of Warwick and an MA in Applied Linguistics to TEFL from Universidad Distrital. He is the Academic Director at the BA in Bilingual Education at ÚNICA. He has been teacher of the Language Department at Universidad Central, the BA programmes in Spanish and Languages and Spanish and English at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and the BA in Modern Languages at Universidad Javeriana. Also, he is guest lecturer for the MA in Language Teaching at UPTC

# The Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Development of Phonological Processing and Evaluation of Their Attitudes toward Pronunciation<sup>1</sup>

El Desarrollo del Procesamiento Fonológico y de la Evaluación de la Actitud de Profesores en Formación de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera en Formación hacia la Pronunciación

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating EFL pre-service teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation and pronunciation teaching. Another purpose was to explore the outcomes of pronunciation instruction of EFL pre-service teachers' phonological development and, based on the findings, to provide suggestions taking learners' pedagogical needs into consideration. The study was conducted using a quantitative research design. 107 EFL pre-service teachers participated in the phase of questionnaire responding of the study, while 86 of whom participated in the interventional phase of the study. For fourteen weeks, one of the researchers provided EFL pre-service teachers with pronunciation instruction focusing on segmental and suprasegmental features in English pronunciation. The results revealed that the participants had generally positive attitudes toward proper pronunciation in target language, which means that participants agreed upon the importance of pronunciation in target language and perceive pronunciation as a vital component of language learning and teaching. As to the interventional findings, it was found that the participants displayed significant improvement in articulation of vowels and consonants. In addition, the present study also found out that the participants' post-test scores at the suprasegmental level (word-stress, intonation comprehensibility) were significantly higher than their pre-test scores.

**Key Words:** second language; English pronunciation; L2 pronunciation; pronunciation education; teaching segmentals; teaching suprasegmentals; phonological improvement; attitudes; EFL pre-service teachers.

## Resumen

Este estudio tiene como propósito investigar las actitudes hacia la pronunciación y la enseñanza de pronunciación de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera en formación. Otro propósito era explorar los resultados de la instrucción de pronunciación sobre el desarrollo fonológico de los profesores y, basado en los resultados, proporcionar sugerencias al tener en cuenta las necesidades pedagógicas de los aprendices en consideración dentro de la investigación. El estudio fue desarrollado usando un diseño de investigación cuantitativa. 107 profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera en formación participaron en la fase de respuesta al cuestionario, mientras que 86 de los cuales participaron en la fase de intervención del estudio. Por catorce semanas, uno de los investigadores proporcionó a los profesores en formación una instrucción sobre características segmentales y suprasegmentales en la pronunciación de inglés. Los resultados revelaron que la participación tuvo actitudes positivas hacia la apropiada pronunciación en la lengua objetivo, lo que significa que los participantes acordaron sobre su importancia y lo percibieron como un componente vital del aprendizaje y enseñanza del idioma.

Finalmente, los resultados demostraron que los participantes tuvieron una mejoría significativa en la articulación de vocales y consonantes. Además, el presente estudio también encontró que los puntajes de pruebas posteriores sobre el nivel suprasegmental (estrés de la palabra, comprensibilidad de la entonación) fueron significativamente más altos que en la prueba inicial.



Palabras clave: Segunda lengua; pronunciación en inglés; pronunciación de segunda lengua; enseñanza de segmentales; enseñanza de suprasegmentales, mejoría fonológica, actitudes, profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera en formación.

## Resumo

Este estudo tem como propósito pesquisar as atitudes em relação à pronúncia e ao ensino da pronúncia dos professores de inglês como língua estrangeira em formação. Outro propósito era explorar os resultados da instrução de pronúncia sobre o desenvolvimento fonológico dos professores e, baseado nos resultados, proporcionar sugestões ao levar em consideração as necessidades pedagógicas dos aprendizes em questão dentro da pesquisa. O estudo foi desenvolvido usando um desenho de pesquisa quantitativa. 107 professores de inglês como língua estrangeira em formação participaram na fase de resposta ao questionário, enquanto que 86 dos quais participaram na fase de intervenção do estudo. Por catorze semanas, um dos pesquisadores proporcionou aos professores em formação uma instrução sobre características segmentais e suprasegmentais na pronúncia de inglês. Os resultados revelaram que a participação teve atitudes positivas em relação à apropriada pronúncia na língua objetivo, o que significa que os participantes acordaram sobre sua importância e o perceberam como um componente vital da aprendizagem e ensino do idioma. Finalmente, os resultados demonstraram que os participantes tiveram uma melhoria significativa na articulação de vogais e consoantes. Além disso, o presente estudo também encontrou que as pontuações de provas posteriores sobre o nível suprasegmental (estresse da palavra, compreensibilidade da entonação) foram significativamente mais alto que na prova inicial.

**Palavras chave:** Segunda língua; pronúncia em inglês; pronúncia de segunda língua; ensino de segmentais; ensino de suprasegmentais; melhoria fonológica; atitudes; professores de inglês como língua estrangeira em formação.

## Introduction

With the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT), intelligible communication has been attracting renewed attention within the field of second and foreign language teaching, and pronunciation has begun to be recognized as one of the most crucial aspects of intelligible communication (Alastuey, 2013; Elias, 2000; Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 1999; Sifakis, 2014). A basic level of pronunciation is required for effective communication and for preventing comprehension problems, misunderstandings and communication breakdowns (Roccamo, 2015). In case of inadequate phonological skills, learners might be judged by listeners negatively in terms of their overall language ability as well (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Similarly, pronunciation is highly related to prestige and plays an important part in social interactions. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, good pronunciation prevents learners from being recognized as foreigners (Lord, 2008) and promotes learners' group identity (Gatbonton, Torfimovich & Magid, 2005). Every human being wants to belong to a particular group to be able to have similar worldviews and behavioral norms. In such a situation, L2 accent can be considered as an indicator of a learners' degree of ethnic affiliation. Due to insufficient empirical research into pronunciation within the field of applied linguistics, many teachers remain skeptical about the integration of pronunciation into language classrooms and pay little attention to pronunciation teaching (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Having identified teachers' tendency toward the integration of pronunciation into language classrooms, Derwing and Munro (2005) made an appeal for more extensive research into pronunciation to improve pronunciation researchers', language learners' and teachers' knowledge of the nature of pronunciation and its impacts on communication as well as social identity and linguistic competence.

By investigating EFL pre-service teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation and pronunciation teaching as well as the impacts of pronunciation instruction on their pronunciation skills and phonological awareness, this study may shed more light on the issues of English pronunciation in Turkish EFL context. The rationale of the study is mainly based on the notion that little attention has been paid to pronunciation in language teaching process. To fully understand the nature of issues regarding pronunciation in Turkish EFL context, further investigation into pronunciation teaching is required. Therefore, this study may provide a further understanding of pronunciation teaching in language teaching programs in terms of different population and setting.

## Literature Review

In many EFL/ESL settings, compared to the language skills such as grammar, reading or vocabulary which are taught individually, language teachers may neglect pronunciation and consider that it should be taught in higher levels. Much of the research dedicated to pronunciation teaching has indicated that pronunciation is regarded as the “*Cinderella*” of language teaching (Kelly, 1969, p. 87) since linguists and philologists have paid attention to other aspects of language more than to pronunciation. Despite this fact, its crucial role in intelligible communication has led researchers to investigate pronunciation instruction from different perspectives such as goals, priorities, challenges and needs in the field of pronunciation teaching.

Pronunciation in the second language gives a clear idea of language ability to encompass the differentiation from the production of sounds. This framework includes the segmental and suprasegmental levels. While the segmental frame is more effective in the area of accent, the suprasegmental frame forms an important element of oral communication such as stress, rhythm and intonation as well as intelligibility, fluency and naturalness in pronunciation. These two important elements in pronunciation are a must for healthy communication. (Hinofotis & Bailey, 1980) While inaccurate pronunciation at the individual sounds are often compensated provided that intelligibility is ensured, it may result in significant problems in some cases due to lexical confusion or lack of differentiation (Wilner, 2007; Labov & Hanau, 2011). The potential of miscommunication due to segmental errors meanwhile may cause discomfort (Fayer & Krasinski, 1987) and tendency to stop the communication (Singleton, 1995). Suprasegmental (i.e. stress, rhythm, intonation) features are other speech components, which affect intelligibility, which Munro et al. (2006, p.112) defines as “the extent to which a speaker’s utterance is actually understood”.

However, Derwing and Munro (2015) highlight that recent years, practice and research have considerably focused on intelligibility rather than accent related issue. They attribute this intelligibility priority over accent-based approach to the fact that few L2 speakers can achieve native-like pronunciation in another language. Isaac and Trofimovich (2012) likewise state that L2 speakers’ intelligibility achievement is more important than sounding nativelike without accent. However, though intelligibility and accentedness are partially independent (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995) both phenomena are closely related. Therefore, these segmental and suprasegmental features of a language may be an effective instructional instrument through a cognitive function. Educational support is one of the variables which affect L2 learners’ cognitive attainment in pronunciation (Saito, 2015a)

Given the influence of age (Saito, 2015b), amount of L2 exposure (Flege, 2009, Moyer, 2004), individual differences (Dörnyei, 2006), learning style (Baran-Lucarz, 2012) on L2 phonological processing, explicit learning acts a role through processing

capabilities and long-term memory (Baddeley, 2012) it becomes a necessity particularly for the late language learners (Long, 2015). Research evidence has supported the effectiveness and functionality of pronunciation instruction with a form-focused on L2 learners' pronunciation improvement (e.g. DeKeyser, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, & Fleming, 2014).

Learning and achievement are affected by psychological variables in many areas of language. Pronunciation is one of the domains in which attitudes and beliefs determine learning choices, priorities and perceptions. Affective variables such as motivation and attitude can affect L2 pronunciation attainment (Tsunemoto & McDonough, 2020). Individuals with positive attitudes towards the importance of accurate pronunciation displayed better profiles of L2 users (Huensch & Thompson, 2017). Besides, confident L2 speakers can show positive attitudes towards pronunciation learning (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2019). Gained positive attitudes meanwhile can lead to less anxiety to pronounce better and improve current proficiency (Sardegna, Lee, & Kusey, 2018).

The efficacy of pronunciation instruction, either explicit or implicit, is one of the most salient issues examined within the field of pronunciation teaching. Although there were very few studies related to the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction until the 1960s; with the appearance of new language teaching approaches and a wide range of researchers emphasizing the importance of pronunciation instruction, the tendency has changed and pronunciation has become a research topic (Yağız, 2018). At the turn of 21st century, much more emphasis was placed on the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction. Various studies provide evidence supporting that there is a positive correlation between pronunciation proficiency and pronunciation instruction. (Arrieta, 2017; Camus-Oyarzun, 2016; Chiba, 2012; Couper, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Elliott, 1995; Huthaily, 2008; Kissling, 2015; Roccamo, 2015; Thomson & Derwing, 2014; Tlazalo Tejeda & Basurta Santos, 2014; Zamora, 2015).

There appears to be a clear consensus among pronunciation researchers that pronunciation is worth mentioning within the field of language teaching. To give an example, Couper (2003) examined the efficacy of explicit pronunciation teaching by conducting an experimental study and the findings of the pre- and post-tests revealed a clear improvement in learners' pronunciation accuracy on the reading and speaking tasks undertaken in the study. Saito (2012) also emphasized the value of pronunciation instruction on pronunciation skills of language learners. Investigating impacts of instruction on L2 pronunciation development through a research synthesis of 15 quasi-experimental studies, Saito (2012) provided results referring to the positive effects of instruction on both improving segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation and enhancing perceived comprehensibility. Bringing the biological and pedagogical variables to the forefront in the acquisition of phonology, Elliott (1995) carried out a study on the effects of formal instruction in pronunciation. The

analysis of the data showed that pronunciation instruction had positive effects on learners' accuracy of pronunciation.

Based on the findings of the studies mentioned above, it seems clear that even devoting only a relatively little time to pronunciation teaching in language classrooms can lead to beneficial results in learners' perception and production skills. Thus, teachers can diagnose students' pronunciation difficulties, raise their awareness of pronunciation and enable them to practice pronunciation patterns and observe their own learning process.

Some studies, on the other hand, provide counterevidence that there is not a close relationship between pronunciation instruction and phonological competence (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Harris, 2002; Kennedy, 2008; Kissling, 2013). The explanations for this may be learner differences, instructional focus, aims, type and duration of instruction given and assessment procedures (Thomson & Derwing, 2014). To give an example, Harris (2002) supports that pronunciation improvement occurs resulting from exposure to target language rather than explicit formal instruction on pronunciation. Similarly, Kennedy (2008) suggests that pronunciation training based on prosodic features may not always lead to positive changes in intelligibility and pronunciation.

Given the controversial ideas regarding the effectiveness of pronunciation training in the relevant literature, it can be deduced that there is still a need for exploring the issues of pronunciation in language teaching. Since pronunciation teaching has regained its status in improving general language competence, this notion should be investigated in terms of different perspectives to increase language learners' phonological awareness and improvement as well as general language skills.

## Research questions

1. What are the attitudes of pre-service teachers of English language toward pronunciation and pronunciation instruction?
2. To what degree is the pronunciation instruction effective on pre-service English teachers' segmental and suprasegmental domains of L2 oral proficiency?

## Methodology

### Research Design

In this study, a quantitative research design was used. Quantitative research designs can be classified into two major categories: experimental and non-experimental research designs. An experimental study was conducted because in experimental studies “researchers seek to test whether an educational practice or idea makes a difference for individuals” (Creswell, 2014). This study tried to determine the effect of pronunciation instruction (independent variable) on production skills (dependent variables) implementing an intervention. In other words, an experimental design was the most appropriate way to identify a cause-effect relation. Experimental research designs are divided into two main groups: strong experimental research designs and weak experimental designs which are also identified as quasi-experimental design.

Among types of quasi-experimental designs, one-group pretest-posttest design was used in this study. Although a lack of some type of comparison is considered as a negative factor, this design is widely used in educational research (Campbell & Stanley, 2015).

A pretest (O1) is administered to a single group of participants before giving an experimental treatment condition (X). The posttest (O2) is then implemented. The difference between pretest and posttest is interpreted as an indicator of the effectiveness of treatment condition. The weakness of one-group pretest-posttest research design is that extraneous variables including history, maturation, instrumentation and regression artifacts may influence posttest results. As such, the difference between pretest and posttest may not be completely attributed to an independent variable, which makes it a weak design. To minimize this weakness and potential threats, the researchers employed “The Pronunciation Attitude Inventory” (Elliott, 1993) as a quantitatively descriptive tool at the end of the intervention.

### Participants

107 undergraduate students participated in this study. The participants’ ages ranged in from 18 to 20 and were in the first year of their four-year degree program in the English language teaching department at a state university. This department was selected since the students were prospective teachers of English who have considerable enthusiasm to learn more and develop their linguistic competency in English. Given the entry requirements for EFL departments, it can be considered that their proficiency levels in English were of upper-intermediate and pre-advanced level. It should be noted that in questionnaires related to the participants’ attitudes toward pronunciation, it was decided to use pseudonyms to comply with ethics in quantitative research.

## Pronunciation attitude inventory

With the aim of collecting quantitative data of the study about pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation, "The Pronunciation Attitude Inventory" was implemented. The inventory originally developed by Elliott (1993) and adapted by Roccamo (2015) was the most commonly used data collection instrument in the studies investigating language learners' attitudes toward pronunciation of target language. The last two items of the inventory used by Roccamo were dropped out of the inventory used in the present study for the reason that they were open-ended questions, and, thus, the removal of these items would not influence the validity and reliability of the instrument. The present inventory includes 13 statements about pronunciation and it was designed in the form of five-point Likert scale ranging from "always and almost always true of me" to "never and almost never true of me".

## The rubric

A pronunciation rubric was used to assess learners' performances in reading aloud recordings obtained through the pre-test and post-test. To adapt a rubric suitable for the purposes of the current study, the relevant literature was examined and all the similar rubrics were found and evaluated in terms of the content, aim and categories they had. Taking the aims and research questions of the present study into consideration, a rubric was adapted using the rubric developed by Ma (2015) and including 6 categories. However, two categories -rhythm and sentence stress- were dropped out of the present rubric because only intonation and word-stress were taught in pronunciation classes. Also, comprehensible speech was among the issues taken into account and discussed in the present study, and, thus, it was aimed at exploring how the pronunciation instruction would affect the participants' comprehensibility. Therefore, the category of comprehensibility was added into the rubric as the fifth category. For the purpose of ensuring whether or not the rubric adapted as a first draft was appropriate to use in the study, a rubric assessment tool was developed. To ask for their comments on the rubric adapted, this tool was sent to 5 language instructors who were experts in their profession and had adequate knowledge of English pronunciation. The language instructors gave feedback on the rubric. Among the instructors, there was a consensus about the rubric, which it was appropriate to be used in the study. The rubric adapted involved 5 categories including vowels, consonants, intonation, word-stress and comprehensibility.

## Data Collection Procedure

Before proceeding with data collection, permission was sought from the English Language Teaching Department of Atatürk University. The administration of the

department accepted this request and allowed the researcher to work with the first-year classes of the department for both giving pronunciation instruction and collecting data by means of inventory, and pre-/post-tests.

Subsequent to the required permission from the department, a pretest was administered at the outset of the study to explore what the participants' levels of the use of English pronunciation at the segmental and suprasegmental levels was. The pre-test included items measuring the learners' level of pronunciation competence and comprehensibility.

During the first two weeks of the semester devoted to pronunciation teaching, the participants were presented with two paragraphs extracted from a text and they were asked to read the same text in the classroom one by one. All the recordings in the study were saved using a voice recorder.

After completing the pre-test process, pronunciation instruction started and lasted for 12 weeks in the fall term. The students received a total of 36 hours of pronunciation instruction each of which included fifty-minute pronunciation lessons. The teaching syllabus included the teaching of segmental and suprasegmental features of English including the articulation of vowels and consonants as well as intonation and word-stress forms. The lessons focused on the correct articulation of English sounds by first listening and then trying to imitate on their own. After practicing the articulation of the sounds, the students reinforced these sounds using within the words. The consonants and vowels that do not exist in Turkish language were especially emphasized in lessons and practiced more with extra materials and videos to enable students to articulate them correctly. The students were encouraged to practice English sounds correctly in and out of the classroom with additional exercises. After completing the teaching of segmental features, intonation and word-stress forms and rules were provided by instructor using the examples and exercises in the book chosen for the pronunciation teaching period.

A post-test was administered at the end of the study to all the participants. This post-test included the same procedures as in the pre-test. After that, the students were informed that they would participate in a pronunciation attitude inventory.

The administration of the inventory took place at the end of the semester for enabling students to develop certain types of attitudes toward pronunciation during educational term. The participants were asked to read and respond the whole inventory in 15 minutes.



## Rating Procedure

The recorded samples gathered from the participants were rated by two raters who were native speakers of English. During the rating process, a 5-point Likert type scale was employed.

All the recordings were transferred from the voice recorder to the computer. Pre-tests and post-tests were sent to a different file created for each student. After that, the computer files and rating sheets were submitted to the raters to enable them to rate each recording.

Some of the recordings were excluded since they had some technical problems. For example, some students did not participate in either pretest or posttest. Likewise, there occurred some uncontrollable situations such as sudden noises in the outer environment like a motorbike or shouting people. The rest of the recordings of 86 participants were rated by the native speaker of English.

## Analysis

Cronbach' Alpha reliability analysis was conducted to identify the reliability of the research instruments. The results revealed that Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the measurements obtained from the questionnaire was 0,78. A desired critical alpha value should be at least 0,70 to consider a reliability coefficient to be acceptable. In the analysis of pre-/post-tests, percent agreement of two raters was calculated for inter-rater reliability. By this way, it was found that percent agreement was 88%. This means that the ratings of the raters were reliable.

SPSS 23 was used to analyze the data. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was conducted to see whether each dependent variable was normally distributed and the results are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1.* Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>		
	Statistic	Df	P
Inventory	,389	107	,372
Pre-test	,293	86	,277
Post-test	,275	86	,298

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the table above, it was found that the data were normally distributed. In this respect, it can be concluded that the normality assumptions were met for all of the variables. Therefore, parametric tests were conducted to analyze the data.

After identifying the normal distribution of the data related to pre-service English language teachers' attitudes toward English pronunciation, mean and standard deviation values were presented. Reversed scoring was employed for the items 3, 9, and 13 in the questionnaire since they were negatively worded questions. In the process of interpreting mean, a scoring system was used in which the interval width of 1.00-1.80 showed "very low-*strongly disagree*", the 1.81-2.60 interval showed "low-*disagree*", the 2.61-3.40 interval showed "medium level-*not sure*", the 3.41-4.20 interval showed "high-*agree*", and the 4.21-5.00 interval showed "very high-*strongly agree*".

For the purpose of identifying the potential differences between or among the mean scores in the data set, Paired Samples t-test was adopted. As for the analysis of variance and the homogeneity of the data set, Levene's Test was used as a precondition for parametric tests such as t-test. According to the results obtained by Levene's Test, it was found that the variance of each independent variable was homogeneous.

Paired samples t-test, which is a parametric test, was adopted to examine if there was any change in the students' pronunciation. Paired samples t-test should be performed on the ratings of pre-tests and post-tests of each participant because this type of statistical test compares the means of two repeated measures for statistical significance. Pronunciation instruction provided was the independent variable while improved comprehensibility, vowels, consonants, intonation and word stress were the dependent variables.

## Results

### Results of Pronunciation Attitude Inventory

The mean and standard deviation values related to pre-service English teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Values related to Attitudes toward Pronunciation

n= 107		SS
Items		
1. I'd like to sound as native as possible when speaking English.	3.98	.99
2. Acquiring proper pronunciation in English is important to me.	4.31	.85
3. I will never be able to speak English with a good accent.	4.12	1.12
4. I believe I can improve my pronunciation skills in English.	4.57	.75
5. I believe more emphasis should be given to proper pronunciation in class.	3.99	.90
6. One of my personal goals is to acquire proper pronunciation skills and preferably be able to pass as a near-native speaker of the language.	4.20	.97
7. I try to imitate English speakers as much as possible.	3.95	1.03
8. Communicating is much more important than sounding like a native speaker of English.	3.70	1.05
9. Good pronunciation skills in English are not as important as learning vocabulary and grammar.	3.79	1.43
10. I want to improve my accent when speaking English.	4.58	.81
11. I'm concerned with my progress in my pronunciation of English.	3.73	1.28
12. Sounding like a native speaker is very important to me.	4.26	.97
13. I do not practice a native-like accent in class because of how other students in class would perceive it.	3.32	1.21
Total	4.04	.55

\* Reversed scoring was employed for the items 3, 9, and 13 in the questionnaire since they are negatively worded questions.

Table 2 shows EFL pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the development of proper pronunciation skills in the target language. The results indicated that pre-service English teachers had positive attitudes toward pronunciation. It seems that participants agreed upon the importance of pronunciation and perceive pronunciation as a vital component of language learning and teaching. A careful look at the items individually portrays significant findings regarding phonological issues in language teaching. Participants believed that attaining a native-like accent is highly important and item 12 indicates that they expressed a desire to sound like a native speaker when speaking in the target language. This result shows the connection between their attitudes toward their own accent and classroom practices such that they believed

teachers should pay more attention to proper pronunciation in classroom practices for promoting the attainment of a native-like accent. Item 6 supports this conclusion since participants strongly agreed that one of their personal goals is to acquire proper pronunciation to pass as a near-native speaker of the target language.

On the other hand, one question in this area referred to participants' attitudes toward communication. Item 8 asked pre-service EFL teachers to rank whether communication is more important than native-like accent. The results of this item displayed that majority of the participants found communication more important than sounding like a native speaker, which prioritizes pronunciation for efficient communication. Nevertheless, more respondents care much about native-like accent. A paradox can be seen when examining the results of items 3 and 4 in the table above. On the one hand, item 3 addresses students' feelings of helplessness, showing that most of the participants believed their pronunciation will never be good.

Besides, item 4 on the inventory revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that they can improve their pronunciation skills. What is striking in the table above is that although participants found good pronunciation important, they did not consider it as a vital aspect of language instruction as other skills such as grammar and vocabulary. Results of item 13 displayed how other students' perceptions of participants' L2 accent influence the desire to practice L2 accent in the classroom. Participants believed that they avoid practicing phonological aspects because of the fear of negative evaluation by their peers in the classroom. In general, participants recognized that native-like accent and proper pronunciation are crucial and essential. They also emphasized language teaching practices including teaching of proper pronunciation.

## Results of pre-/Post-Tests

Paired Samples t-Test was performed to find out if there was a significant difference between the pre-tests and post-tests scores of the EFL students. The results were shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Paired Samples t-test Results for Pronunciation Scores of the Pre-test and Post-test of Pre-service Teachers

Dimensions	Test	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Vowels	Pre-test	86	2.25	.71	85	-12.397	.000
	Post-test	86	2.83	.65			
Consonants	Pre-test	86	2.29	.72	85	-11.684	.000
	Post-test	86	2.91	.63			
Intonation	Pre-test	86	1.85	.70	85	-11.963	.000
	Post-test	86	2.42	.61			
Word Stress	Pre-test	86	2.09	.62	85	-12.142	.000
	Post-test	86	2.67	.59			
Comprehensibility	Pre-test	86	2.31	.74	85	-13.555	.000
	Post-test	86	3.01	.76			
Total	Pre-test	86	2.16	.61	85	-17.654	.000
	Post-test	86	2.77	.57			

According to the results shown in Table 3, the ratings of pre-service teachers' reading aloud performances in pre-tests and post-tests displayed a significant difference in overall mean of all the participants' pronunciation competency ( $t(\text{total})=-17,654$ ;  $p<0,05$ ). This means that after the pre-service language teachers received pronunciation instruction, they showed highly significant improvement in overall pronunciation skills.

Given the results of the categories of the rubric individually, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the ratings of each category in pre-test and post-test, which means that pre-service language teachers improved significantly in articulation of vowels, consonants, word-stress, intonation. Likewise, the results revealed a significant difference for comprehensibility between pre-tests and post-test ratings ( $t(\text{comprehensibility})=-13,555$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), which means that the pre-service English language teachers also displayed highly significant improvement in their comprehensibility.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The study grants significant insights into how pre-service EFL learners perceive pronunciation and pronunciation instruction contributes to pronunciation skills. First, it revealed that EFL pre-service teachers had generally positive attitudes toward pronunciation and its teaching. This viewpoint suggests that pre-service EFL teachers seem to be open to the belief that proper pronunciation should be emphasized in language classrooms. This finding appears to comply with that of Counselman (2010) who referred that the participants of his study are concerned about their pronunciation and they believed they can develop their pronunciation through instruction and practice, which shows similarity to the participants' beliefs in this study.

In this study, the highest mean scores indicate that sounding like a native speaker is valuable for pre-service EFL teachers. This finding seems to run counter to that of Kang (2010). The findings in her study showed that only a small number of participants sought to be native-like speakers of the target language. This means that participants mostly preferred being intelligible when speaking in the target language. However, the findings of the study conducted by Coşkun (2011) were very consistent with those of the present study. Coşkun (2011) asserted that the participants in his study agreed on the belief that English language teaching in classroom environment, especially for the purpose of attaining native-like pronunciation, is considered very significant. Similarly, concerning the relationship between the desire to learn pronunciation and pronunciation development, Elliot (1993) suggested an important finding which reveals that students' attitudes are remarkably effective factors in the acquisition of pronunciation of target language. Students are inclined to have better pronunciation of target language if they are more concerned about their pronunciation.

To provide a summary of the discussion about pre-service English language teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation and pronunciation teaching, it can be commented that poor pronunciation skills lead to misunderstanding and distraction in communication as well as being marked or divergent. The participants generally displayed positive attitudes toward pronunciation component in language teaching. Such positive attitudes can be explained by the fact that when language learners can practice the target language with correct pronunciation, they enhance their willingness to communicate. Therefore, pronunciation should be integrated into general language instruction, pronunciation knowledge is necessary to make language users process and comprehend other speakers' speech easily.

The analysis of pre-test and post-test revealed that pre-service EFL teachers improved significantly their phonological skills following the pronunciation training. A number of studies can be provided from the relevant literature supporting that pronunciation skills and comprehensibility can raise through explicit pronunciation instruction as stated in this study. (Derwing and Munro, 2005; Gordon & Darcy, 2016;

Jeske, 2012; Kennedy & Trofimovic, 2010; Lepore, 2014; Venkatagiri & Levis, 2007; Yoshida, 2010; Zamora, 2015). For example, Jeske (2012) conducted a study to provide evidence for this issue by teaching the relevant vowels to a group of students from two different schools sharing the same L1 and age of first exposure to L2 English but differing in amounts of L2 exposure each week. Results of the study indicated that the students who received larger amounts of L2 pronunciation instruction improved their pronunciation of vowels more than those who were provided less amounts of pronunciation instruction. González Bueno (1994) provided the language learners with a segmental-based pronunciation instruction, and pre-/ post-tests before and after the instruction were performed with the participants. The comparison of the results of the pre-test and post-test showed that there was a significant difference between pre- and post-test in the experimental group while the control group showed no improvement in target sounds, which supports the results of the present study.

The positive impacts of explicit phonological instruction on the students' comprehensibility were also worth mentioning in the discussion of the overall effects of pronunciation training on language learners' speaking skills. The present study indicates that after receiving pronunciation instruction, the students have had more comprehensible speech. Saito (2011) provided similar results maintaining that explicit pronunciation instruction has significant positive effects on comprehensibility. Venkatagiri and Levis (2007) provided support to the same notion based on the findings of their study which summarized that speech comprehensibility was significantly improved due to the greater amount of explicit pronunciation instruction. The results of the present study are notable, this is because they demand a stronger part of pronunciation training including segmental and suprasegmental features in language classrooms to provide the overall pronunciation skills and comprehensibility.

This study raises certain implications for pronunciation teaching. First, more classroom-relevant research should be carried out on pronunciation to establish the most efficient ways of teaching it and to identify the factors that contribute to it. It is likely that proper pronunciation is the paramount concern for language learners and many teachers are not aware of the significance of pronunciation for intelligible communication and social identity. For this reason, it can be suggested that language teachers should resort to the empirical evidence in the creation of pronunciation syllabi rather than relying on their own intuitions. Of more significance are the learners' considerable exposure to certain pronunciation aspects, their motivation for learning a particular pronunciation norm, and creating opportunities for them to notice the importance of pronunciation. Ideally, teacher training programs need to provide language teachers with adequate background to help them diagnose their students' pronunciation needs and problems and interpret research findings to establish their applicability for pronunciation teaching.

## Limitations

The current study had some limitations of which important reason was perhaps the inventory of the instruction. Though it has been often argued that pronunciation instruction should not be confined to segmental level, suprasegmental features are more important in terms of intelligibility. However, since L2 teachers may be less effective in teaching of L2 pronunciation, the researchers can be a constraint for ideal pronunciation instruction. Another limitation is related to the longitudinal observation of the instruction effectiveness. Despite 14-week instruction this study did not measure the pronunciation improvement in the long term. This can be a research question for further research. The third limitation is related to research design selection, that is, to observe a cause and relationship, experimental design is needed to reach more reliable results. However, due to formal educational requirements, using more rigorous experimental groups (i.e. control vs. treatment groups) would be unethical and unfeasible in an L2 classroom. For this reason, the current study had to adopt a quasi-experimental design. A further study can be conducted with a sample of different groups who are not in officially educational positions such as academics, private course takers and businesspersons.



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# Central Events and Causal Connections: A Narrative-Inquiry Study among Colombian Female Scholars in their Processes as Writers<sup>1</sup>

Eventos Centrales y Conexiones Casuales: Un Estudio de Investigación Narrativa entre Académicas Colombianas en su Proceso como Escritoras.

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## Abstract

In the Colombian context there has been an increase in the interest for publishing in high impact academic journals. This is due to various factors such as institutional requirements, hiring requirements, categorization of teachers and academic visibility. The purpose of this research-based paper, as a decolonial report, is to portray the central events and the causal connections of three female Colombian authors in their process as writers for academic purposes. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews that emphasized on Van Manen's (1997) four lifeworld existential dimensions that include lived time, lived space, lived body, and lived relation. These dimensions helped us uncover the essences of lived experience. Results indicated that central events and causal connections affect the authors' experiences in their process as writers. The key ingredients female authors judge as important events were social interactions with mentors and the context.

**Key words:** publishing; lived experiences; narratives; decoloniality; academic writing; writing process; academic visibility

## Resumen

En el contexto colombiano se ha incrementado el interés en publicar en revistas de alto impacto. Lo anterior debido a aspectos tales como requerimientos institucionales, requisitos de ingreso, categorización docente y visibilidad académica. El objetivo de este trabajo investigativo, visto como un reporte decolonial, es dar a conocer los eventos centrales y las conexiones causales de tres autoras colombianas en su proceso como escritoras de documentos académicos. La información se recolectó a través de narrativas, registradas mediante entrevistas a profundidad que enfatizaron las cuatro dimensiones de los existenciales del mundo propuestos por Van Manen (1997) que incluyen el tiempo, el espacio, el cuerpo y las relaciones vividas. Estas dimensiones nos ayudaron a descubrir la esencia de las experiencias vividas. Los resultados indican que existen eventos centrales y conexiones causales que afectan los procesos de las autoras como escritoras. Los ingredientes clave en estos procesos son las interacciones sociales con mentores y el contexto.

**Palabras clave:** publicación; experiencias vividas; narrativas; decolonialidad; escritura académica; proceso de escritura; visibilidad académica

## Resumo

No contexto colombiano tem se incrementado o interesse em publicar em revistas de alto impacto. O anterior, devido a aspectos tais como requerimentos institucionais, requisitos de ingresso, categorização docente e visibilidade acadêmica. O objetivo deste trabalho investigativo, visto como um reporte descolonial, é dar a conhecer os eventos centrais e as conexões causais de três autoras colombianas em seu processo como escritoras de documentos acadêmicos. A informação se coletou através de narrativas, registradas mediante entrevistas a profundidade que enfatizaram as quatro dimensões dos existenciais do mundo propostos por Van Manen (1997) que incluem o tempo, o espaço, o corpo e as relações vividas. Estas dimensões nos ajudaram a descobrir a essência das experiências vividas. Os resultados indicam que existem eventos centrais e conexões causais que afetam os processos das autoras como escritoras. Os ingredientes fundamentais destes processos são as interações sociais com mentores e o contexto.

**Palavras chave:** publicação; experiências vividas; narrativas; descolonialidade; escritura acadêmica; processo de escritura; visibilidade acadêmica

## Introduction

Mitchell (1996) asserted that “writing is a process of discovering and creating meaning” (p. 39). Effective writing demands a number of things: a high degree of accuracy to avoid ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and to the potential reader (Hedge, 2005).

As such, writing is a complex process that entails diverse kinds of knowledge. In fact, as stated by Mur Dueñas (2012), more often than not writing has been marked by more than linguistic structures and rules; it carries with it a history of identity, belonging, and culture. We can even argue that writing is a process of self-discovery and appropriation that is transformative and interactive. In this sense, writing, as stated by Lea and Jones (2011), implies the understanding of institutional systems, familiarity with genres, mastery of processes, etc. In other words, writing is more than just a skill or a competence, it is a culture which is lived differently among individuals and co-created with others.

Scholars usually talk about two kinds of writing: the academic and the private. Academic writing, according to Shannon (2011), is related to any kind of formal written production submitted for academic publication. On the topic of academic writing, Mauranen, Pérez-Llantada, and Swales (2010) coined the phrase “publish in English or perish”. For non-native English-speaking countries, publishing in English has become a mark of status and power over publishing in their native language, which could be seen as a representation of the coloniality academic English writing might represent.

Writing in English is meant to increase research visibility and impact, which is why Colombian journals now ask for the abstract to be written in two languages, English and Spanish. Cárdenas (2014) asserted that the increase of publication in academic journals is directly linked with the need to make academic work visible. Additionally, salaries and promotions are also linked to publishing in national and international journals, which will require writing in English. Funding and travel will also depend on the authors’ ability to display their research in high standing journals. Furthermore, research groups are ranked on a scale of A1 (being the highest) to C (being the lowest) based on the academic activity of each group. This includes, among many other aspects, publishing in English.

Quilindo, Calvache, and Delgado (2018) indicated that the dissemination of research results usually occurs when scientific articles are published in peer reviewed journals that utilize statistical methods (biometrics) to analyze the impact of each article. Biometrics helps to find the H-index, which indicates scientific performance

by analyzing the number of times that an author, publication, or journal has been cited. In such a way, the H-index measures scholars' productivity. In terms of academic journals, the SCOPUS data base has the largest number of citations, which make research articles easy to search for and track by the academic community. Needless to say, more than 80% of the articles visualized in SCOPUS were written in English. Albarillo (2014) found that 90% of the articles published in SCOPUS and JSTOR between 1996 and 2012 were in English. According to Albarillo, "Non-English publications do exist but are less visible at the international level, and non-English-language scholarly indexes exist, but are difficult to discover and relatively unknown in the English-speaking world" (p. 81). Because of this, non-native English-speaking students and professionals are being pushed more and more to publish everything from their undergraduate monographs to laboratory articles in English.

The push toward publishing in English is directly connected to the fact that English has become the lingua franca of research. However, it is worth noting that publishing also requires knowledge in a specific type of English. According to Mauranen, Pérez-Llantada, and Swales (2010), "Although English is the global lingua franca of academic discourse, most research in academic English is oriented towards the written language, native speakers of English, and the normative tenets of Standard English as used in academia" (p. 638). Consequently, Colombian authors are also expected to accept and utilize Standard English when writing for publication.

Considering the previous, it is essential to understand how Colombian authors are coping with the push to publish in English. More specifically, it is of dire need to comprehend how women, who have been historically underrepresented in academia, live the process of becoming published authors in Colombia. In the following small-scale narrative inquiry<sup>3</sup> research, three female scholars from a public university in Colombia told their stories about the central events in their process as writers. All three women have published in high standing national and international journals and directed research groups. By asking them to tell their stories about their individual writing processes, we might gain insight on how they became published authors in the English language. We proposed the following research question: *What do women's narratives reveal about the central events and causal connections in their process as writers for academic purposes?* Therefore, we sought to understand how these women linked "central events" (Omanson, as cited in Trabasso & van den Broek, 1985, p. 613) to their process as writers.

In order to contribute to our understanding of the lived experiences and the central events of these three scholars, we focused on a deep description of what

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<sup>3</sup> Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that narrative inquiry is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural context.

it means existentially to be in the world, as women who are pushed to write academically in English. This implied achieving a level of abstraction from the data in order to comprehend meanings of particular lived experience. That is why, in the in-depth interviews, we considered Van Manen's (1997) four lifeworld existential dimensions: lived time (temporality), lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), and lived relation (relationality or communality). Temporality accounts for the subjective time in which the experience took place; Spatiality refers to the location or environment of the experience; corporeality is the sense of the physical self; and relationality is associated with the relationship we maintain with others and how we connect to others and to ourselves in the world.

## Literature Review

### Coloniality and Decoloniality in Academic Writing

Quijano (2000) stated that coloniality deals with the development of capitalism as a neutral process that imposes an Eurocentric classification system. Along the same lines, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2018) pointed out that coloniality can be defined as a vertical global power structure, whereby some people enjoy the privileges and benefits of living under modernity and others suffer the negative consequences of the 'darker side' of the same modern world, called 'coloniality'.

Restrepo and Rojas (2010) affirmed that coloniality is maintained alive in books, the criteria for academic performance, cultural patterns, common sense, self-image of people, and aspirations of the self, among many others. The authors further asserted that subjects breathe coloniality all the time and every day. The same authors further stated that there are three main types of coloniality: knowledge, being, and power.

The first, coloniality of knowledge, is based on the insight that colonial societies have systematically vanished other kinds of knowledges, such as indigenous' knowledges and farmers' knowledges. Second, the coloniality of being, is focused on the distinction between superior and inferior human beings based on their race. Certain groups of people can be considered objects, or they can constitute the invalidity of existence. In other words, they can be invisible or naturalized as objects or sub-humans. The third, coloniality of power, is a concept addressed by Quijano (2000), who assured that one of the main axes of power is the social classification of the world's population. This classification is based on a concept of "race" in which people interact in a relationship of inferiority or superiority. In other words, people are socially classified in a hierarchy. Quijano (2000) also argued that this classification aligns with a structure of control that stands on capitalism. It is to say, according to the social classification people are typified, they can be part of the labor force who produce commodities for the

world market. Meanwhile, other people are part of the dominant group in charge of controlling the labor force.

The push to write in English for academic journals can be seen as a colonial practice. As Kumaravadivelu (2014) stated, intellectuals do not have a choice, rather they have to conform to the Western ways of knowing and as such the way scholars construct their languaging (Maturana, 2007) is mediated by Western structures. In other words, they need to rely on Western narratives to validate their knowledge. As such, this can be considered coloniality of knowledge and power because a single discourse system is being validated. In fact, Mignolo (2011) pointed out that the concept of coloniality of power guides us to understand how the colonized peoples were subjected to an Eurocentric knowledge system.

That is why this research report serves as an unpacked decolonial perspective (Mignolo, 2011) on what it is to have to cope with colonial practices based on the struggles that the process represents. To address decoloniality, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) mentioned that it produces students and staff members who question the false notions of 'objectivity' and 'universal truths' that enable Western knowledge to project itself as a neutral knowledge. Decoloniality is a way of thinking, knowing and doing as it implies concrete actions. As such, diverse authors acknowledge the importance of addressing diverse strategies to cope with coloniality (Mignolo, 2011; Granados-Beltran, 2016; Maldonado-Torres, 2010; Díaz, 2010). All in all, the previous authors promote a decolonial option that advocates for action-oriented strategies that result in epistemic decolonialization and the re-signification of knowledges.

## Gender and Academic Writing in English in Colombia

Historically, academic writing has been shaped by a long tradition of Western patriarchal ideologies. Standard, native-like English is preferred over other language repertoires. Likewise, the structures and rules of academic writing have been established by the dominant group. In academic writing, we witness the coloniality of knowledge and power. Furthermore, coloniality of being is also present given that women and minorities have been historically excluded and underrepresented in academia. Thus, Western masculine ideologies have traditionally shaped academic writing, thereby, excluding other forms of writing. Hélène Cixous, a French writer, poet, professor, and pioneer of the post-structuralist feminist movement coined the term *écriture féminine* [feminine writing]. According to Cixous (1976), masculine forms of writing dominated over feminine forms of expression; she wrote the following,

Let me insert here a parenthetical remark. I mean it when I speak of male writing. I maintain unequivocally that there is such a thing as *marked* writing; that, until now, far more extensively and repressively than is ever suspected or admitted, writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural – hence political, typically masculine – economy; that this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over<sup>4</sup> (p. 879).

From Cixous' (1976) perspective, feminine writing was being oppressed by masculine structures, for which she encouraged women to write about their emotions as a way to free themselves. In academic writing, emotionality and subjectivity are almost always suppressed for objectivity. Much is left to be understood in terms of the impact the colonization of academic writing has had on female scholars and publication. What we do know is that women continue to be underrepresented as grant recipients, first and last position authors, and in high-ranking employment positions. For example, Fine and Shen (2018) looked at the percentage of men and women in the Neuroscience doctoral program at the University of Washington. The number of women enrolled was 55%, which exceeded the number of men (45%). However, female representation decreased dramatically in high ranking positions and publications (see Figure 1).

### Number of women in neuroscience

Women and men now receive neuroscience PhDs in about equal numbers. But in what's been called the 'leaky STEM pipeline,' women haven't advanced as far toward equity in academic careers. However female underrepresentation is even more extreme in high-profile journal publications.

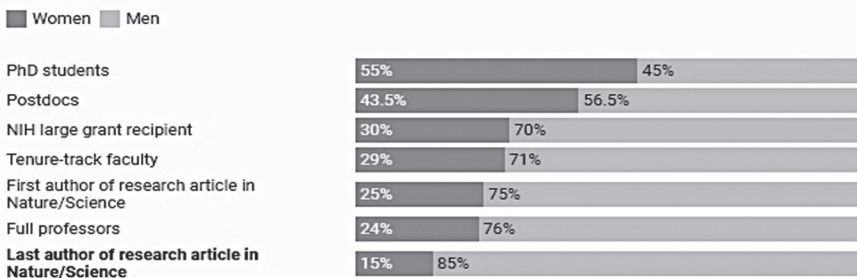


Figure 1. Taken from Fine and Shen (2018).

<sup>4</sup> Translation done by Cohen & Cohen (1976).



For this study, a database was used to “predict the gender of first and last authors on over 166,000 articles published between 2005 and 2017 in high-profile journals that include neuroscience, our own scientific discipline” (Fine & Shen, 2018). First and last name author positions are crucial because they mean recognition and visibility. By having fewer women as first and last name authors, the academic community may continue to perpetuate the idea that men are the main participants in all major research. In turn, less visibility also means less probability of being promoted into higher level positions. This holds true for other careers, in which female participation continues to decline after college.

In Colombia, the number of female graduates has surpassed male graduates in the fields of Medicine, Education, Social Sciences, and Accounting (Cepeda & Barón, 2012). Other fields like Mathematics and Engineering continue to be male-dominated. Nevertheless, the latest statistics released by Colciencias (Colombian Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation) in 2017 demonstrated that 1,072 women were acknowledged as research leaders in the country, which is less than half in comparison to male researchers. Although the percentage of Colombian female published authors is still unknown, we know that researchers’ rank is directly connected to their ability to publish in high ranking journals.

Although writing for academic purposes has been a focus for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) community in Colombia (Anderson & Cuesta-Medina, 2019; Barletta, 2007; Cárdenas, 2014; Correa & Echeverri, 2017; Gómez, 2011; Ramos, Quintero, & Moreno, 2013; Seloni, 2017), very little is understood in terms of the impact Western patriarchal academic writing has had on Colombian female writers and vice versa. Additionally, it is unclear how women, being a majority in many fields, are negotiating and transforming the language and publication process.

Because of this, we took a special interest in working with Colombian women who have published in English. We asked three female scholars at a public university in Colombia to tell us about their writing experiences from childhood to adulthood. We sought to understand the central events that marked their process as writers. Two key aspects differentiate this small-scale research study from others. The first one is that it was a narrative inquiry study, and the second is that writing was seen from a holistic and transformative point of view.

By situating the study from a narrative inquiry perspective, we were acknowledging that each woman had a different story and voice to share. As researchers, our role was to listen and to amplify these voices that have been historically and socially repressed, thereby, uncovering other ways of knowledge, power, and being. As a complement, we chose to listen to all of the women’s processes as writers throughout their lives. Doing so meant that the native language and foreign language remained connected as part of a holistic process.

## Methodology

The following research study was framed under the qualitative approach because it was situated, participant-oriented, holistic, and inductive (Richards, 2009). Specifically, it was situated because it was related to the local realities of each of the narrators, so the conclusions cannot be generalized. It was participant-oriented since the participants were sharing their own realities, which were related to how they interpreted their own writing processes. Additionally, the study was holistic in the sense that it involved a narrative analysis from the perspective of the whole being. We looked at the past, present, and future events in order to understand a historical and socially co-constructed perspective on writing. Finally, the study was inductive given that all the information came from the narrators' voices and not from an initial hypothesis.

In terms of a research paradigm, we situated this study under a critical viewpoint, which states that reality is "shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values", and it is "crystallized over time" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.198). In other words, we understood that reality was not a finite truth, but rather it was shaped by multiple factors. Likewise, we believe that the research process, the researchers, and the narrators have their own subjectivities. Thus, the aim of this study was not to generalize female authors process as writers, rather it was to display these subjectivities as part of our human nature.

## Approaching the Study

For this study, we utilized narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). With narrative inquiry we understood that each narrator had lived their process as writers differently. According to Bamberg (2010), "When narrators tell a story, they give a 'narrative form' to experience. They position characters in space and time and, in a very broad sense, give order to and make sense of what happened—or what is imagined to have happened" (p. 3). In telling the story, the narrator tries to interpret a 'central event' and find causal connections to how one thing led to another. Because of the nature of the narrative, it was impossible for one narrator to tell the same exact story as another.

In order to listen and collect the stories, we followed Van Manen's (1997) four lifeworld existential dimensions. The author suggested that human life entails four fundamental configurations known as existentials. They are time, space, body, and other human beings. These Existential dimensions relate to an approach that helps us comprehend life experiences. In other words, those dimensions allow researchers to uncover human life experiences.

These existentials guided us in comprehending the data obtained through in-depth interviews. In this sense, we did not intend to categorize, count, search for patterns, or code the data. Instead, we wanted to bring our awareness to some of the experiences lived by three diverse women in their process as writers. In fact, Heidegger (2003) argued that everything in life is a matter of lived experiences. In the case of this study, those experiences were given meaning to deeply comprehend and make sense of the events the authors have lived. We wanted to acknowledge and echo these women's voices because, as Ricoeur (1996) stated, recent narrative researchers have stressed the relevance of voice in the educational field, where the interpretations that the subjects make about themselves become the central focus of investigation.

The in-depth interviews we developed were focused on the following statement: "Tell me about your writing process from the beginning". We emphasized on aspects related to the lifeworld existentials (Van Manen, 1997). Then, we asked about the subjective time or temporary levels in the narrators' experiences (lived time), the feelings they went through and experiences they faced (lived body), the places and spaces where the experiences took place (lived spaces), and the relationships with others and critical people involved in the process (lived human relationships). In this study, we positioned ourselves as women who are part of the academia and who have gone through struggles when writing academic papers in English. We were also aware of the fact that these positions, as stated by Berger (2015), may impact the study. In fact, we noticed that the respondents were willing to share their experiences with us.

Because of our positionalities, we considered some of the principles of reflexivity. According to Berger (2015), reflexivity is the researcher's conscious effort to be attuned to one's own reactions to respondents and the way in which the research account is constructed. Mason (1996) and Porter (1993) explained that reflexivity helps researchers become aware of the potential effects of such positionalities during the process and in the findings of the study.

Each interview was audio-recorded to play it back multiple times. Our focus was on finding instances of 'central events' and their causal connections. A "central event" by definition is both "causal and purposeful" (Omanson, as cited in Trabasso & van den Broek, 1985, p. 613). For the most part, the narrator will reference and evaluate these events more frequently than 'noncentral events'. Being able to connect 'central events' to an outcome is part of telling a story, which "[is] an important part of narrative discourse structure" (van den Broek, Linzie, Fletcher & Marsolek, 2000, p. 711). Additionally, we used member checking in which we validated our interpretation by going back to the narrators and sharing the data. In our analysis, we drew out causal chains (Trabasso & Sperry, 1985) that identified the initiation of the stories, 'central events' connected to each other, and the outcome of the individual's writing processes.

While most narrative inquiries begin with telling stories, that is, with a researcher interviewing or having conversations with participants who tell stories of their experiences, “a more difficult, time-consuming, intensive, and yet, more profound method is to begin with participants’ living because in the end, narrative inquiry is about life and living” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 478).

## Participants: The Three Female Scholars

For this study, we chose three women who had published in English in international Q1 or Q2 journals or in national indexed journals. The three women are full-time professors at a public university in Colombia in the fields of Chemistry and Languages. Additionally, they held high ranking positions at the university, such as being laboratory directors, coordinators, and research group leaders. In the section below, we provided the characteristics that identified each narrator.

**Persona<sup>5</sup>: The Scientist.** She has a Ph.D. in Chemistry and has been working at the university for 14 years. She is a laboratory and research group director. She studied her undergraduate and master’s in Colombia, and she finished her doctoral studies in the United States. Currently, she conducts research in her field, advises master’s and doctoral theses, and teaches undergraduate and master’s courses. Most of her publications are in English and have been accepted by Q1 and Q2 international journals.

**Mik: The Coordinator.** Mik has been working for the university for 14 years. She coordinates several language programs at the university. She supervises about 30 full-time professors and 60 part-time teachers. She holds a master’s from the same university, and she also directs a group of young researchers. Apart from her managerial roles, she teaches undergraduate language courses at the university. Mik has published in high standing ELT journals within Colombia. Additionally, she is a poet and writes creative pieces.

**Juliana: The Director.** Juliana has been working at the university for 12 years. She completed her doctoral studies at the same university. She is a director of postgraduate studies, and she is one of the founders and leaders of a research group in her area. She teaches undergraduate and master’s courses, as well as directing numerous monographs, master’s, and doctoral theses. Juliana is well-known in her community for her expertise in research and pedagogy. She has co-authored several textbooks and articles on language teaching and pedagogy. She publishes at least once a year in national indexed journals.

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<sup>5</sup> The names that appear in this study are pseudonyms provided by the participants. Keeping in mind ethical considerations, all the participants have signed a consent form.

## The Stories

In the following section, we provided excerpts from our interviews with the three women. We looked at each narrator's story individually as we understood that they would be unique. We also transcribed the stories and chose central events that were recalled by the narrator several times throughout their story. After identifying the central events, we separated the statements within the story with a number. We used discourse markers, such as *bueno*, *porque*, *entonces*, *o sea*, and *y* [well, because, so, in other words, and], as guides to separate the statements for causality. In the case that the narrator did not mention a discourse marker, but the statements were dissimilar in intention and meaning, we proceeded to separate them. In other cases, the narrators used discourse markers, but the statements were similar. So, the statements were not separated. Thus, we primarily relied on our evaluation and member checking to separate statements for causality. To visually represent the data, we drew causal chains (Trabasso & Sperry, 1985) to indicate causal connections between statements. Circled numbers represent statements that lead to a conclusion, while unclosed numbers were statements that had no concluding result. Statements on the same line indicate temporal, or lived time, similarities.

## Results

### Persona: The Scientist

Persona began by telling us the issues in research and writing within Colombia and the sciences. She mentioned three key problems, which she continually refers to throughout her narrative: belief of insignificance, belief of grandeur, and lack of resources. She explained the first issue as,

[So that little bit that you are applying, like what for? It is like nothing. I think this is called the insignificance of the Hispanics]. (Persona, Personal interview)

She believed that the first hurdle in writing in English was the feeling of irrelevance that Spanish speakers face when publishing and writing in English. She referred to the second hurdle, belief of grandeur, as the idea that only top scientists in the field can publish. Finally, the lack of resources, such as laboratory equipment, reagents, and funding, limit the quality of research and results obtained.

We were able to identify a central event that Persona referred to several times, which was her experience in her doctoral program in the United States. She mentioned her laboratory director as a key agent in her story. The figure (Figure 1) and story below showed the causal connections she made between her initiating statement in line 19 and her conclusion line 41.

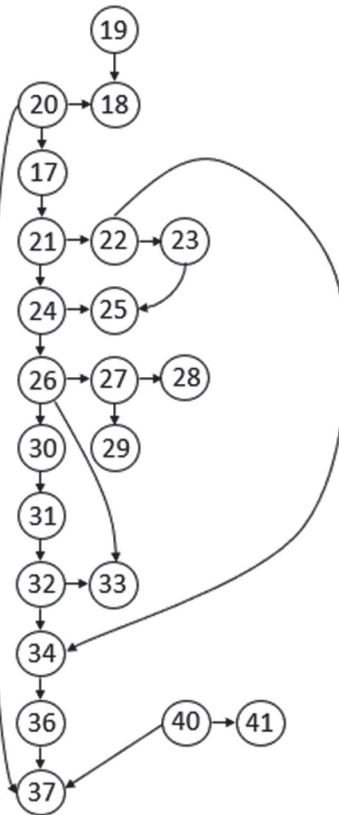


Figure 2. Persona's causal chain showing the connection of events in her doctoral program experience

- 17 Entonces yo había escrito un artículo
- 18 yo creo que soy unas de las pocas personas que yo hago proyectos Colciencias y no publico
- 19 así me hayan dado plata para escribir un libro
- 20 porque primero pues qué va a aportar, como nada
- 21 y quien me lo hizo cambiar, mi jefe en Estados Unidos
- 22 que me hizo ver, mira, que es lo importante, si tú tienes un hilo conductor tú no puedes hacer unos experimentos solo porque tú sabes hacer cosas, unos experimentos como yo voy a mezclar aquí, voy a subir allá, ¿sí? Como desordenados, o desorganizados más bien

- 23 porque ellos pueden tener cierto orden, pero no tienen ninguna orientación, o sea como desorganizados, sin una orientación, o un punto final
- 24 entonces lo que él me dijo fue: lo primero que vas a hacer es una idea, o sea yo tengo una idea, yo hacía unos experimentos
- 25 pero sin hilo conductor, o sea, desorganizados, sin un fin
- 26 entonces el que me dijo lo que tú vas a hacer es que vas a hacer, te vas a imaginar cuáles son las figuras que quieres tener allí, la figura 1, la figura 2, la figura 3 (dibuja ejemplo de figuras en un papel)
- 27 claro, yo en Estados Unidos tenía todo el equipo que yo quisiera,
- 28 entonces allá yo me podía imaginar cuanta locura y era perfecto, ¿sí?
- 29 porque usted tiene todo
- 30 entonces qué hacía yo, entonces ya con esto yo le daba un orden
- 31 y él me ayudaba organizar, como, okay, entonces vas a hacer esto, pero esto no me está saliendo, como muy, o sea pues sí, pero como que no
- 32 entonces me decía a través de esto vas a hacer otro experimento
- 33 y vas a ver que esta figura mejoró, ¿sí?
- 34 él me enseñó a pensar así
- 35 entonces yo ahora como pienso con mis estudiantes
- 36 entonces bueno, entonces yo así logre escribir cinco *papers* en Estados Unidos
- 37 de los cuales no he publicado el primero
- 38 pero a mi realmente, hay otra cosa, eso no lo tiene todo el mundo, pero yo me ha dado cuenta de que la mayoría de investigadores somos así,
- 39 pero no solamente los colombianos, o los hispanos, por creernos como menos cosa, si no en general.
- 40 yo vi eso en los hindúes, vi eso en muchos americanos de ciencia
- 41 allí está el *paper*, pues se publicará cuando se pueda. Eso, cuál es el afán. ¿Sí? porque nosotros hacemos investigación

Persona began with the first time she published an article. She did not expand on this, rather she talked about how she failed to publish her work, which she attributed to her belief of insignificance. She then mentioned her laboratory director as the agent who changed her way of thinking. His role in teaching her how to tell the 'science story' in her papers is fundamental in organizing her research. In fact, her director's contribution released a causal chain reaction of organization, planning, editing, and revision of her work (lines 24, 26, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, & 37).

One important aspect in Persona's narrative was that despite her director's key role in changing her way of thinking (line 21), she mentioned that she did not publish any of the five papers that she had written. Because of this, her initial beliefs outweighed her director's significant influence. However, in listening to the rest of her narrative, we found that her director had shaped her tremendously in the way she organized her research. She mentioned in line 26 that her director had told her to imagine the figures she wanted to see in her research. These figures referred to the methods of research, such as Gas Chromatography (GS), Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), and Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM).

Even though she lacked all of the methods of research she had in the United States, she still adapts this idea of organization in her context. Furthermore, she mentioned in line 35 that this is how she teaches her students. In the interview, she stated that she uses the figures method to organize her research and papers, but the context limits her use of SEM and TEM due to their high cost. Therefore, she and her students must adapt to the context, which ultimately leads to a less rich discussion in the research and article. Toward the end of her story, Persona revealed a final reflection on the publication process. In line 38, she mentioned that the delay in publishing papers is not necessarily connected to a feeling of insignificance among Spanish speakers. Rather, she witnessed that other researchers from different nationalities (lines 39 to 40) lacked an immediate need to publish in English since researching was more important. Based on Persona's narrative, we see that her inhibition to publish comes from personal and outside factors. From a personal point of view, Persona feels her research and writing is insignificant. Meanwhile, she prefers research over publishing her work. However, her lack of resources also inhibits the quality of her and her students' results, which diminishes the type of journals she can publish in.

### **Mik: The Coordinator**

Mik began by stating that she had always liked to write. She mentioned this at least five times in her initiation. She continued to talk about writing from a structured standpoint, such as mentioning organization, APA guidelines, and coherence. However, she later opened up about her writing ability and interest. In doing so, we were able to identify a central event in her life as a writer: her father's poetry readings. Figure 2 shows the causal connections in Mik's story about her father.



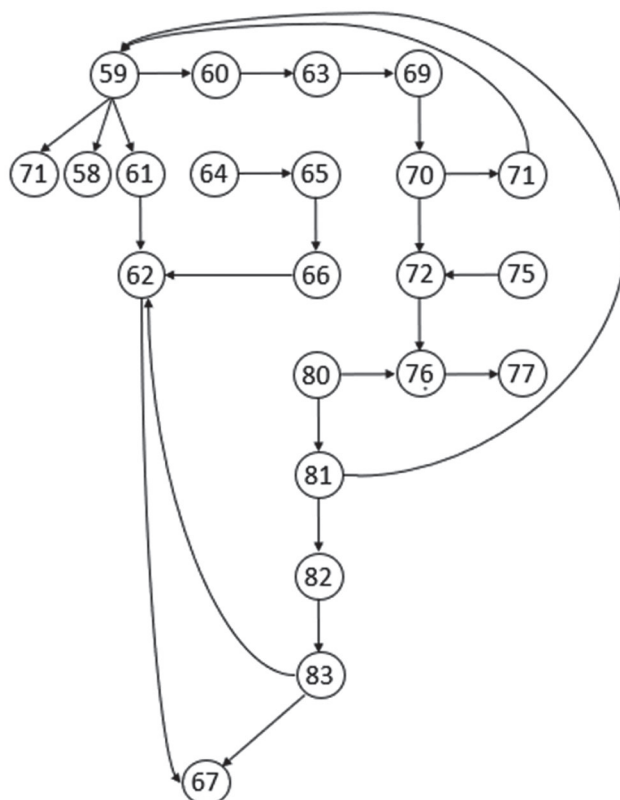


Figure 3. Mik's causal chain showing the connection of events in her father's poetry reading

58 Sí, sí. Mire que yo le admiraba eso a mi padrecito

59 decía mucha poesía. ¿Sí?

60 nos sentaba y nos decía

61 y yo (gasp) yo lo admiraba. Yo decía tan bonito

62 tal vez saqué muchas cosas de mi papi

63 porque mi papi le gustaba muchos los idiomas

64 mi papá sabía varios idiomas

- 65 él tenía muchos libros de varios idiomas  
 66 y nos leía  
 67 por eso fue que como yo dije, (gasp), muestre me gusta como los idiomas, me gusta como los idiomas  
 68 porque él nos leía  
 69 y tenía muchas cosas, y yo uuuy tan bueno  
 70 los papás saben mucho  
 71 mi papá yo lo admiraba y lo admiro todavía.  
 72 él era como una enciclopedia andante  
 73 y él también me enseñó a trabajar, a manejar la máquina de escribir  
 74 él me enseñaba, tenía su maquinita  
 75 y me la prestaba  
 76 y me dictaba oraciones el toto tororoto toma tinto en un tintero (laughs) y una cantidad  
 77 y al cabo de un instante se deslizaban por su superficie de las aguas azules  
 78 y entonces aprendía  
 79 y cogía agilidad  
 80 pero fíjate que allí está la poesía, por ejemplo ese pedacito  
 81 y él decía cosas tan bonitas  
 82 entonces como que le prende a uno eso  
 83 y yo también como que quería hacer lo mismo

Mik recalled her father reading to her and her siblings twice (lines 66 & 68). In her story, Mik mentioned that she admired her father because he read to them (lines 58, 61, & 71). As she described her father, she mentioned several statements that were temporally connected rather than causative. For example, her father sitting his children down (line 60), liking languages (line 63), and having many things (line 69) were all temporally connected. In lines 74 and 75, Mik told us about how her father taught her how to use the typewriter. Lines 76 and 77 are poetic verses that her father would read to her while she typed. She mentioned that this exercise helped her learn (line 78), which in turn caused her agility in working the typewriter (line 79). It is in line 80 that she mentioned that the poetry was in her father's verses. Eventually, her father's verses resulted in awakening the love for poetry in her (line 82). The final conclusion was that she wanted to be like her father (line 83), which led to her choice in becoming a language teacher (line 67).

From Mik's narrative, we could see two contrasting ideas. The first is her present-day structured way of writing. She emphasized the organization of the text, APA guidelines, and vocabulary as necessary in publishing a paper. However, Mik's history with writing is less connected to the rigorous structures of language and more with the fluidity and rhythm of her father's poetry. Based on her admiration for her father (line 50), Mik acquired many of the things that represented him, such as a love for poetry, languages, and writing. From her causal chain, we were able to interpret that agents, such as her father, play a profound role in developing one's interest in writing at a young age. Nevertheless, Mik exemplifies the coexistence of two different but simultaneous worlds, that of being a structured writer for academic purposes while maintaining her poetic side inspired by her father.

### **Juliana: The Director**

Juliana's writing process was marked by four central events. Her story was unique in the sense that she told a direct sequence of events beginning from childhood. Three of the four central events had a negative cause and effect relationship. We found it admirable that despite the multiple negative causalities, she had an overall positive perspective on writing and publishing. From her narrative, we identified the following central events: when Juliana learned to read as a child, the verbal abuse she faced as a fifth grader, her disappointment in her literature class, and when she published her first paper.

The first central event focused on her childhood when she was in kindergarten. She could not read, which was something she associated with not being able to write. Because of this, her kindergarten teacher told her mother that if she did not read, she would not pass the school year. The effect was that her mother gave her a newspaper, which Juliana ended up reading on her own. From this first central event, we identified two key agents: the kindergarten teacher and mother. We also identified motivational causality in the first event given that her teacher's discourse motivated the narrator's mother and narrator to reach a goal: to read (see Annex 2).

The second central event was the most traumatic. In fact, the narrator referred to this event several times throughout her story. In fifth grade, she was hit and verbally abused by her teacher because her teacher believed she had horrible handwriting. This event unleashed a causal chain related to her teaching practices today. She explained that despite her age, she still recalled this episode. In line 18 (see Annex 2), she related this event to having marked her writing. In addition, she avoids writing on the board (line 19), brings printed handouts (line 21), uses the computer (line 22), and apologizes when she writes on the board (line 24). Later, she mentioned this event once more when she concluded her story about her first published paper. She said,

[because before this, I think that the things I wrote were the letters I wrote my mom with spelling errors] (Juliana, Personal interview)

After nine statements, the narrator continued to explain her fifth-grade event, which she concluded in line 97 by saying,

[I think those first steps really marked me] (Juliana, Personal interview)

Interestingly, we see how the act of writing itself, as in handwriting, and reading are directly connected to a process of writing. The third central event was related to her undergraduate program. She had anticipated her literature class, and she associated this class with being able to write and write from the self. Unfortunately, her teacher verbally abused the class. Due to this event, the narrator mentioned that she told her students she disliked literature. In addition, she attributed this event as the cause for being unable to write as a means to express herself. She added the following,

[I did not write. In other words, I did not develop that writing part] (Juliana, Personal interview)

In this case, Juliana makes a distinction between academic writing and creative writing, both of which she mentioned could be developed. The final central event was the moment she began to publish and write in English. We mapped out the causal chain for this event in Figure 4. Her process began when she entered the master's program (line 43), which was a different experience than her previous events because they appreciated her work (line 47). She had to complete a small-scale research project (line 50) for her professor, which motivated her need to write a paper (line 53). She went back in her story to explain a critical time within her context. The narrator mentioned that at the time, English journals in her field were nonexistent or unknown (lines 55 & 56). This statement was temporally connected to her studying the master's (line 43), though they were not causally connected. Nonetheless, they were both independent causes for her writing and publishing her first paper (line 85).

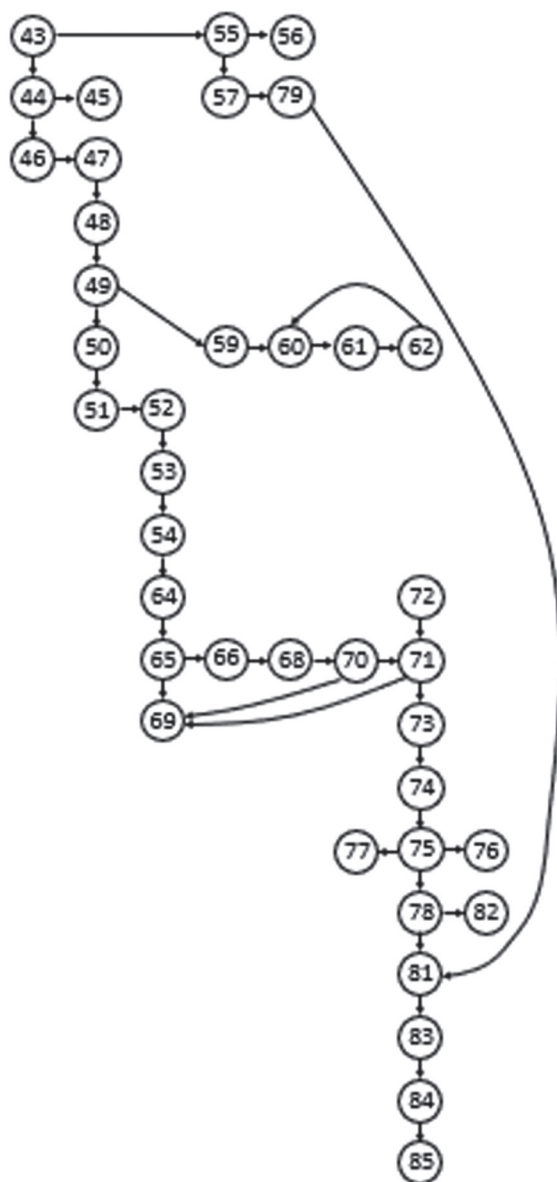


Figure 4. Juliana's causal chain showing the connection of events in the moment she published her first paper.

- 43 después entonces empecé a estudiar la maestría y
- 44 estando en la maestría pues había que escribir muchos papers, ¿no? así como les toca a ustedes.
- 45 entonces, en cada materia había que escribir papers y
- 46 allí la situación fue diferente porque pues ya ya me empe...,
- 47 o sea, valoraban primero mucho lo que yo escribía
- 48 entonces me iban corrigiendo cosas y bueno
- 49 y un profesor, que se llama XXXXXX<sup>6</sup> que fue mi profesor de una materia que se llamaba testing, evaluation and testing,
- 50 y nos puso hacer un small-scale research project.
- 51 Y yo lo hice con una compañera con unos niños de un colegio rural y
- 52 era básicamente mirar qué tanto lo que proponía la institución tenía que ver con lo que proponía la profesora y con lo que los niños necesitaban. Era como evaluar esas tres cosas y mirar, pero una cosa muy pequeñita
- 53 entonces hicimos eso
- 54 entonces al final del semestre entonces
- 55 ah, pero bueno antes de decir todo lo que pasó a final de semestre, esa era la época en que en Colombia apenas las revistas, porque Colombia tuvo una época en que la gente escribía para otras editoriales o porque querían escribir
- 56 pero, las revistas no eran famosas, no había revistas en nuestra área. No había revistas en inglés, mejor dicho,
- 57 sino que esa fue la época, estamos hablando de hace 20 años, uysh, salieron las revistas a florecer en nuestra área
- 58 y este profesor que te cuento entonces, había una revista de la Universidad XXXXX que se llama Journal XXXX y estaba naciendo la revista. Este era su número dos
- 59 y este profesor entonces cuando vio nuestro trabajo llegó y dijo
- 60 él nos quería mucho a mi compañera y a mi
- 61 que éramos las más jóvenes del curso, porque molestábamos mucho en clase
- 62 éramos unas niñas, es que yo tenía 20 años, éramos unas niñas en clase, y era más joven que yo, entonces éramos muy chiquitas
- 63 y él nos quería mucho

---

<sup>6</sup> We used XXXXXX to replace the names of the teachers, universities, and journal to maintain the narrator's anonymity.

- 64 y nos dijo, no, por qué no publican ese trabajo que ustedes presentaron. Por qué no lo mandan a Journal XXXXX para que lo publiquen
- 65 y nosotras simplemente no lo podíamos creer, quedamos como ¿huh?
- 66 o sea, realmente ¿esto vale la pena? Que publiquemos, pues no, unas cosas que habíamos hecho como tan,
- 67 pues sí lo habíamos hecho a conciencia, ¿no? Pero no era la gran investigación ni nada
- 68 entonces hicimos el ejercicio y lo pasamos a Journal XXXXXX
- 69 tal cual él no lo devolvió
- 70 porque hasta ese momento no habíamos entendido
- 71 como era la primera vez que íbamos a escribir algo formal, digamos, diferentes a los trabajos de la universidad
- 72 no habíamos entendido que la forma de escribir un artículo no era la misma que uno hace un trabajo, una cosa es un trabajo y otra cosa es un artículo
- 73 entonces lo pasamos así
- 74 nos lo evaluaron
- 75 y nos lo devolvieron con 25,000 correcciones, con muchas correcciones
- 76 muy amables
- 77 pero con muchas correcciones, muchas, muchas
- 78 y nosotras vimos eso y dijimos no esto
- 79 pero resulta que la editora de la revista, la profe XXXXXXXX, que todavía es la editora de la revista, XXXXX era profesora de nosotros también en la maestría
- 80 entonces cuando nosotras recibimos todo eso
- 81 llegó y dijo ya se los devolvieron con la evaluación, espero que lo corrijan y me lo vuelvan a mandar
- 82 entonces eso como que nos forzó, porque nosotras cuando vimos las evaluaciones, las correcciones, dijimos como que ya dejemos así
- 83 pero cuando ella nos dijo eso, dijimos como le vamos a quedar mal a la profe
- 84 y bueno lo arreglamos
- 85 y finalmente ese fue el primer artículo que yo escribí en mi vida

In her story, two key agents appeared as motivators in her writing process. The first was the professor who asked her to send her paper to Journal XXXX (line 49). She went back in her story to provide information as to why he had motivated her and her classmate (lines 60, 62, & 63). His appreciation for the narrator and her classmate caused him to invite them to send their paper to Journal XXXX. She explained the submission process, particularly how she had received many corrections. Given the high volume of edits needed to publish, she and her classmate decided not to fix the paper. The second agent was another teacher (line 79), who also happened to be the editor of Journal XXXX. After seeing that the narrator and her classmate had submitted their paper, the teacher expected them to fix the paper and resubmit. Not disappointing the teacher (lines 82 & 83) became the main cause for fixing the paper (line 84), which led to a successful publication (line 85).

In terms of education and teaching practices, we identified a teacher who has adapted her teaching methods as a cause of traumatic childhood events. Juliana's ways of teaching are inclusive and promote non-traditional forms of writing. The narrator's resilience in her field, despite negative causality in central events, demonstrated her vocational spirit to teach and research. Later on, she mentioned how her doctoral program helped her break out of structured ways of thinking. In turn, she has become an advocate of researching and writing from our own individual perspectives and positions. She mentioned that her doctoral program,

[has helped me now that I direct theses to not be so square about it, instead I tell them (students) that there are many possibilities]. (Juliana, Personal interview)

In failing to have a positive central event in her childhood that shaped her writing, she adapted her own way to write within her context. Her own writing style has helped shaped other writers in the field, in addition to promoting new ways to look at research and writing. Her context has also allowed her to question standardization in academic writing and research.

## Discussion and conclusions

When we began this study, we were unsure what we would discover. The narrator and their stories extended way beyond the limits of our initial research question: *What do women's narratives reveal about the central events and causal connections in their process as writers for academic purposes?* To answer the question, the three female scholars revealed that the key ingredients in their process as writers were social interactions with other agents and the context.



All three women mentioned agents in their process as writers. In Persona's central event, her interaction with her director helped shape her research. Even in the interview, Persona wrote out figures and lines to explain her process as a writer. For Mik, it was her meaningful interaction with her father when she was a child. Through her father's poetry readings, Mik discovered a love for writing that she carries with her today. Her father's readings and knowledge of languages were also pivotal in her decision to become a language teacher. As for Juliana, agents were present in both positive and negative causalities. During her childhood and undergraduate program, the key agents were her teachers, who unfortunately mistreated her. Their actions caused negative effects, which were later displayed in her lack of confidence as a writer and in her choice of teaching practices. Later on, her teachers in the master's program, as well as her doctoral program, gave her motivation and self-confidence to write and publish.

From all of the three women, we see the profound implications teachers and parents have on the writing process. Additionally, we noticed that all three women relied on validation from an agent to verify that they were on the right path. Among all the women, the central agent happened to be a mentor who has had more experience in the field. Persona had her director, Mik recognized her father, and Juliana talked about her teachers and mother. These mentors provided the narrator with guidance, as well as motivation to continue in the writing process.

The second aspect that emerged from the narratives was the importance of the context. Both Persona and Juliana explicitly mentioned how the context shaped research and writing. For Persona, the context made a big difference in the discussion of results. Without the necessary equipment and funding, she is forced to turn down her undergraduate students' requests to use particular methodologies. She also has to constantly readjust her research. She may have started out with five figures (five methodologies), but her context limits her to only three figures. Persona believed that this has profound implications when publishing given that the validity of the discussion could be questioned if it lacks methodologies.

In addition, other cultural factors exist within the sciences in Colombia, which she mentioned as issues in the dissemination of research. For example, Persona's belief of insignificance associated with being Hispanic (and possibly a woman in the sciences) prevented students from writing about their research. Secondly, she mentioned that Colombian professors in the field are closed off to providing information when they have reached a sense of grandeur. She mentioned the following,

[In this country there still exists a lot of difficulty (dissemination of knowledge). In other words, here a professor can do a doctorate program at the Universidad XXXXX and believes that his doctorate makes him a genius. And I say, you haven't done anything. And the student goes and asks him a question on how to write this or that. And he doesn't respond because he knows too much]. (Persona, Personal interview)

From interviewing Persona, we noticed that the culture of the context sets the stage for many power relationships that shape writing. These power relationships, which can even extend beyond the country, halt the dissemination of research within the country. In addition, she mentioned that local journals provide limited information on what should be changed during the evaluation process.

In the case of Juliana, her master's program was being carried out at the same time Colombian English and language journals were emerging. The presence of local language journals has allowed many students and professors to make their work visible. These journals seem to embrace new waves of thought, which has made an impact on teaching in other countries as well. Unlike the culture behind writing in the sciences, writing in local language journals builds the writer's confidence to continue publishing. They strive to show the writer's work in the academic arena, which is evident in relationships between authors, evaluators, and style correctors. Juliana even mentioned that the evaluators were nice despite all the corrections, and she even had a one-on-one interaction with the editor of the journal. Juliana further stated that,

[once you are an evaluator, you recognize a lot more, many things, and you become humbler]. (Juliana, Personal interview)

Once again, we see a different side of research that is focused on nurturing the writer-researcher. Certainly, local journals are promoting, questioning, and negotiating the standardization of research and Academic English. As Mauranen, Pérez-Llantada, and Swales (2010) mentioned, "Academic language conveys new, often abstract, concepts and thoughts, which participants also co-construct in their discussions and argumentation" (p. 640). Therefore, academic writing is being transformed by society, interactions, and the writers themselves at a local level.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that central events and their causal connections are crucial in the process of writing. They shape the writer's identity and teaching practices. Of course, these central events and causal connections do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they are aided by the narrators, agents, and social context. Much work is still left to be done in the fields of academic writing, the individual writing process, and causality. Though the narrators have expanded our insights on some of the cultural factors that shape writing, each factor could be explored through further interviews. Additionally, we can continue using narratives to understand other writing processes, such as that of foreign language undergraduates, research group investigators, and directors within the local context. This could provide more information on how the language gap is being bridged among local researchers.

From the narratives, we also noticed that each research field has a distinct culture, which is worth exploring. Even within the same field of study, gender, status, and age seem to affect the individual's writing process. Of course, these factors also determine the researcher's visibility, especially when we continue to see women and

minorities underrepresented in academia. Ethnographic studies could help determine the implications that these cultural factors have on the dissemination of knowledge, publication acceptance, and transformative change in research. In addition, further research is required in the field of language teaching, given that the agent is a major part of the individual's writing process. Ultimately, research in language teaching could help yield more constructive and transformative ways to teach academic writing that question traditional, standardized methods. In doing so, the idea would be to promote the author's voice, while introducing the author to the socio-cultural components that make each writing style unique. A greater reliance on the author's individual writing process rather than prescribed writing methods could result in longer lasting motivation. As you can see, the work is plenty, which is why this ending can only be the beginning.

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# Effects of Digital Short Stories on the Development of Listening Skills: An Action Research<sup>1</sup>

Los Efectos de las Historias Digitales Cortas en el Desarrollo de Habilidades de Escucha: Una Investigación Acción

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## Abstract

The present research aimed to find out whether digital short stories can improve language learners' listening skills. The purpose of this study was to figure out student teachers' perceptions of digital short stories' implementation into language classrooms. Specifically, the current research aimed to investigate whether digital short stories are useful to develop language learners' listening skills in English. The research is action research in design. The study used pre-test and post-test, a written structured interview to collect data and it included both quantitative and qualitative components. The interview consisted of six open-ended questions. Achievement tests and t-test were used to analyse quantitative data. On the other hand, content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The data were collected in 2016-2017 academic years at a state university, Turkey. Participants were preparatory class students of English language teaching department of the university. In the treatment process, digital short stories were used for eight weeks, which were written by various famous American authors and voice recorded by American native speakers of English. Additionally, weekly worksheets and hand-outs were prepared by the researcher. Results showed that digital short stories provide satisfactory content, supports vocabulary learning, improves language learners' listening skills, helps participants to gain familiarity with complex grammar structures and makes students more familiar with different cultures. Furthermore, participants were satisfied with digital short stories and they thought these digital stories are useful to improve their listening skills.

**Keywords:** Digital short story; English language teaching; listening skills; student-teacher.

## Resumen

La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo descubrir si las historias cortas pueden mejorar las habilidades auditivas de los estudiantes de idiomas. El propósito de este estudio fue descifrar las percepciones de los estudiantes-profesores sobre la implementación de historias digitales cortas en el aula. Específicamente, el objetivo es investigar si los cuentos digitales son útiles para desarrollar las habilidades auditivas de los estudiantes de inglés. El estudio es investigación acción en el que se implementaron unas herramientas de recolección de datos, como: un pre-test y un post-test, una entrevista estructurada y se incluyó tanto componentes cuantitativos como cualitativos. La entrevista consistió en seis preguntas abiertas. Las pruebas de rendimiento y la prueba t se utilizaron para analizar datos cuantitativos. Por otro lado, el análisis del contenido se usó para analizar los datos cuantitativos. Los datos se recolectaron en el año académico 2016-2017 en una universidad estatal en Turquía. Los participantes fueron estudiantes de la clase preparatoria del departamento de enseñanza de inglés de la universidad. En el proceso, las historias digitales cortas se usaron por ocho semanas, las cuales fueron escritas por varios autores americanos famosos y grabadas por hablantes nativos americanos de inglés. Además, hojas de trabajo y folletos fueron preparados por el investigador. Los resultados mostraron que las historias digitales cortas proporcionan un contenido satisfactorio, apoyan el aprendizaje de vocabulario, mejora las habilidades de escucha de los estudiantes de lengua, ayuda a los participantes a ganar familiaridad con estructuras gramaticales complejas y hace

que los estudiantes estén mas familiarizados con diferentes culturas. Además, los participantes quedaron satisfechos con las historias digitales cortas y ellos opinaron que las historias son útiles para mejorar sus habilidades de escucha.

**Palabras clave:** historias digitales cortas, enseñanza de inglés, habilidades de escucha, estudiante-profesor.

## Resumo

A presente pesquisa teve como objetivo descobrir se as histórias curtas podem melhorar as habilidades auditivas dos estudantes de idiomas. O propósito deste estudo foi decifrar as percepções dos estudantes-professores sobre a implementação de histórias digitais curtas na sala de aula. Especificamente, o objetivo é pesquisar se os contos digitais são úteis para desenvolver as habilidades auditivas dos estudantes de inglês. O estudo é pesquisa ação no que se implementaram umas ferramentas de coleta de dados, como: um pré-teste e um pós-teste, uma entrevista estruturada e se incluiu tanto componentes quantitativos como qualitativos. A entrevista consistiu em seis perguntas abertas. As provas de rendimento e a prova t se utilizaram para analisar dados quantitativos. Por outro lado, a análise do conteúdo foi utilizada para analisar os dados quantitativos. Os dados se coletaram no ano acadêmico 2016-2017 em uma universidade estadual na Turquia. Os resultados mostraram que as histórias digitais curtas proporcionam um conteúdo satisfatório, apoiam a aprendizagem de vocabulário, melhora as habilidades de escuta dos estudantes de língua, ajuda os participantes a ganhar familiaridade com estruturas gramaticais complexas e faz que os estudantes estejam mais familiarizados com diferentes culturas. Além disso, os participantes ficaram satisfeitos com as histórias digitais curtas e eles acharam que as histórias são úteis para melhorar suas habilidades de escuta.

**Palavras chave:** histórias digitais curtas, ensino de inglês, habilidades de escuta, estudante-professor, estudantes universitários

## Introduction

The field of education has been revolutionized and reshaped by technology. Unexceptionally, language pedagogy has been constantly changing due to technological development. Nowadays, language learners can easily access literary texts, novels, short stories, poems or teaching materials. Technological developments have changed the form of these elements as well. For instance, novels are voice recorded by native speakers, so EFL learners can easily download and access to these electronic versions wherever they want. According to Kledecka Nadera (2001), reading texts can be transformed through computer software programs, which enable to add sound, graphics, photographs, animations, video, a direct link and reference to dictionaries for better understanding and comprehension. These computer technologies make the target language more alive and concrete (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Additionally, all of these technologies advance language learners' skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In this respect, new forms of teaching materials lead to new teaching styles in language classrooms. Brown's research (2001) reveals that students mostly spend their time at school through listening. Therefore, language teachers need to provide them with skills and strategies for effective listening skills.

Krashen (1985) discusses that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear. So, language acquisition is achieved mostly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is vital in achieving understandable language input. Similar discussion is made by Piaget that infants learn language items by hearing and basic reflexes in sensorimotor stage in 0-2 year (Piaget, 1970). Along the same line with these theories, when children's developments are observed, it is seen that they first listen and then start to speak. They speak before they read and as the last skill writing comes after reading. This sequence can be explained with Piaget's (1970) cognitive developmental model. It is clear that all among the language skills, listening is the first one to develop (Lundsteen, 1979). Similar to children's first language development, foreign language learners need to listen in a conscious and deliberate way, before they speak (Anderson & Lynch, 2003).

At this point, it needs to be clarified that defining listening as a passive skill would be misleading (Anderson & Lynch, 2003; Lindsley & Knight, 2006). In the communication process, the listener as receiver decodes the message through linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, understands, answers and replies that all these roles prove it is an active skill. According to Güleç and Durmuş (2015), the listener combines and organizes what he/she heard with his/her background knowledge and structures the information mentally. It is clear that hearing is passive but listening is an active process (Kline, 1996). The importance of listening skills in language classrooms may be listed as follows;

- Input is provided through listening skills and learning begins with understanding input at the right level. Thus, it is crucial to lead learning.
- Interaction is a must to achieve understanding in language classrooms and spoken language provides interaction to both speaker and listener.
- Understanding authentic spoken language is a challenge for language learners because they hear the language as native speakers use it.
- Language teachers can easily draw learners' attention to new vocabularies, structures, and interaction patterns through listening practices (Rost, 1994).

The importance of listening skills should not be disregarded by teachers in language classrooms because it is crucial to develop other language skills and somehow they are bonded to each other (Hansan, 2000, Rost, 2002, Wolvin & Coakley, 1997, Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004). If an example is needed to be given, better speaking skills can be taught through listening skills because people cannot communicate face to face unless both types of skills are developed together (Rost, 2002). As Hansan (2000) stated that "listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of other language skills" (p.138).

Even though listening skills have crucial roles, these skills are often neglected and poorly taught in language classrooms (Çiğerci & Gültekin, 2017). Related researches show that language learners perceive listening as one of the most difficult skills in which to improve (Graham, 2006). Listening is a complicated process in nature which requires background knowledge, linguistic awareness and positive aptitude to interpret the input with natural speed (Buck, 2001). Related researches indicate that there are various problems related to listening skills. Problems with listening skills are commonly noted as difficulty in the monitoring of understanding. Listening process consists of various steps. Firstly, and yet crucially sounds should be heard clearly by the listener. The second step is recognizing the sounds that are parts of a word. Thirdly, words are needed to connect to their meaning. As the fourth step, listeners need to remember what each word means in the target language. As the final step, the listener needs to understand the concept of all of the words together (Mendelson, 1994). İbtisam Ali (2016) states that three aspects are the most problematic in listening exercises. Firstly, some language learners may have difficulty to understand everyday speech with different accents. They may misunderstand certain sounds. Secondly, some language learners may lack fundamental listening skills and strategies to get the necessary information for completing the given task.

The last possible problem is that listening content may be culture-specific or include complex language terms to grasp the meaning. Additionally, processing of incoming information during a speech takes place at the pauses. During the speech, listeners create mental messages which are stored in their brain. Storage of mental message is

known as false recognition memory, which is one of the most important features of listening skills (Rivers, 1992). According to Cook (1996), memory limitations are as important factors as learners' ability to understand the L2 speech because all listening comprehension relies on storing and processing of information in the mind. That's to say, language learners experience difficulties in listening because of processing information in the second language. Language learners generally face problems such as poor monitoring of understanding, problems in speech segmentation, recognizing familiar vocabularies in the speech flow and inability to combine background knowledge with newly received information during the speech (Ofsted, 2011). Another problem with listening skills in a foreign language is related to the teaching phase of listening skills.

At this point, Mendelson (1994), suggests three possible reasons why listening skills are neglected and poorly taught. The first reason is that listening skills are considered as they can be improved when language learners listen to their teachers during teaching. The second reason is that language teachers do not feel comfortable about teaching listening skills because it requires additional efforts and expertise. When an EFL learner exposed to a traditional audio recording in language classroom (which provides only the sound), the listener is limited in reception (Gough, 1993). In this vein, as the last reason, traditional listening materials are not adequate and efficient to teach listening skills in language classrooms (Mendelson, 1994, Gough, 1993). Listening exercises become principally comprehension tests which generally requires the grasping of specific details rather than the general meaning of the given text. This kind of listening activity makes students feel less successful if they feel that they understand a few sets of vocabulary of listening materials. Additionally, research carried out by Ofsted (2011), revealed that language teachers tend to use textbooks as sources of listening materials and activities. Even though, language teachers have begun to use internet as a source for listening activities recently, without effective and necessary pedagogical strategies, internet-based sources for listening skills development will not be as effective as pedagogically designed listening materials (Jones, 2008).

However, listening exercises can be enriched by combining them with literary texts and current fruitful and useful technological tools. Thus, literary texts especially short stories appeal language learners' attention, emotion, interest, and their imaginary world. In addition to this, short stories make language learners able to think from other perspectives and develop their sense of aesthetics. Additionally, short stories support language learners reading abilities, motivate them to participate in exercises and enable language learners to discover different cultures through context. With the help of developing technologies, it is easy to find and create various formats of literary texts. Digital tools have been used to convert literary texts into more colourful, enjoyable and appealing sources for language classrooms. Although there are numerous studies which show the use of short stories and computer usage in L2 education, short stories'

integration into computer technologies in L2 education is quite limited. At this point, the current research aims to integrate digital short stories into listening practices in language classrooms. The current study additionally investigates language learners' perspectives of this new trend through the use of semi-structured interviews. The present research is guided by the following research questions;

1. Do digital short stories have any effects on the development of preparatory class students' listening skills?
2. Whether preparatory class students' have a positive attitude towards the use of digital short stories for listening exercises?

## Related Research

Digital short stories have potential benefit to develop language skills but there are few studies on their effects and usage especial in listening skills (Çiğerci & Gültekin, 2017). A research was carried out by Yılmaz (2015) in Turkey. In this empirical study, the researcher aimed to scrutinize the use of short stories via computer technologies in teaching and learning the English language. Researcher's objective is two-fold: to examine how short stories could be used through computer programs in teaching and learning English and to collect data about students' perceptions of this technique via semi-structured face-to-face interview. In the scope of the study, three different computer programs (Jing, Screencast, and Instant Messaging) and three short stories (A Dead Woman's Secret by Guy de Maupassant, Eveline by James Joyce, Hills like White Elephants by Ernest Hemingway) were used. During the study 35 ELT students studying at a state university in Turkey carried out a number of pre-reading/ writing, while-reading/writing, and post-reading/writing activities and tasks suggested by different scholars in the field. The researcher used content analysis of the 12 semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that the implementation of short stories through computers in language classrooms have some very positive effects on learners' language learning process: drawing attention, raising curiosity, cooperation and giving/receiving feedback, improving reading and writing skills, and increasing L2 motivation. It can be inferred from the results that digital short stories are quite effective to develop listening skills of foreign language learners. In addition to this, these digital stories enable language learners to develop reading and writing skills as well. Another research is carried out by Hassen (2016).

The purpose of his study was to measure the effects of using podcasts in enhancing EFL learners' listening comprehension. For the sake of accepting or rejecting the hypothesis, which imply that podcasts will help EFL learners to develop their listening comprehension, a questionnaire was distributed to fifty (50) third-year students of English at Mohamed Khader of Biskra, in addition to an interview that was conducted

with four (4) oral expression teachers from the English department of the same university. The results showed that podcasts can help EFL learners to enhance their listening comprehension. Furthermore, the findings revealed that video podcasts are more effective than audio podcasts in terms of listening development. Thus, the use of visual and verbal inputs contributed to develop better listening comprehension skills of language learners in terms of the gist and contextual guessing. Additionally, with the help of video podcasts students were able to recall information when sounds aided with visuals.

Another research was carried out by Cığerci and Gültekin (2017) about digital short stories' effect on listening skills development. They aimed to investigate the effect of digital stories on the Turkish (mother language) listening skills of fourth-grade students. Mixed methods were conducted and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected after 8 weeks' treatment process. The results revealed that a significant difference was found between the post-test listening comprehension scores for the experimental and control groups. The qualitative data of the research revealed that digital short stories help to create more engaging and motivating classrooms for listening skills development. Abidin et. al. (2011) carried out a research to investigate the effects of digital stories on the listening comprehension skills of pre-school students in a foreign language learning context. The experimental group watched digital short stories and at the end of the research post-test results indicate a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. One other research was carried out by Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) to understand whether ICT enhanced short stories effective on 6 years old participants' understanding of spoken English.

The findings of the research indicated that the experimental group outperformed control group in final test administration. The results indicate that digital short stories draw language learners' attention regardless of their age by providing more realistic features of target language. Thus, multimedia technologies include not only linguistic features but also paralinguistic features such as body language, mimicry, and gestures (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). A master thesis was carried out by Jimmy (2013) to investigate the effectiveness of digital stories on listening skills development. In study, participants were exposed to digital stories one a week and the treatment phase lasted for eight weeks. Before watching digital short stories, forty pictures which were taken from digital stories were shown to participants as pre-test. After they watched the same pictures were shown again as post-test. Researcher wanted participants to speak and write about the pictures. Results of the study showed that participants' listening skills improved and they gave positive feedback about the administration. Digital stories promote participants' imagination and make them more motivated by combining visuals and audio (Cığerci and Gültekin, 2017). When considering age of the participants in Jimmy's research who were year three students of a public school, they had less concentration span. However, the researcher stated that digital stories motivated the participants.



Tamjid and Hassanzadeh (2012) also investigated impact of digital stories on listening skills development in their quasi experimental research. Totally, forty, 11-14 year- old female students participated in that study. An experimental group with 20 students were exposed to digital stories and a control group with 20 students were treated in traditional listening materials and both groups were tested in terms of listening skills development. Findings of the study showed that experimental group outperformed in the final test. In their research, combination of text, sounds and images provide rich, stimulating and authentic learning environment to experimental group. Besides, students had chance to receive target language through multiple channels such as audio, video and graphics.

According to Küçüköğlu and Sarıçoban (2011) short stories are the most preferred ones in language classrooms that digital versions offer more effective learning opportunities with the help of developing educational technologies. In addition to these studies, other researchers have investigated digital storytelling's effects on other language areas such as reading, writing and speaking skills in foreign language teaching and mother tongue development. These studies on the development of writing skills in foreign language education (Abou Shaban, 2015; Abdollahpour & Asaszadeh, 2012; Chuang, Kuo, Chiang, Su & Chang, 2013), and studies on the development of writing skills in mother language education (Baki, 2015; Foley, 2013; Çıralı, 2012).

## Method

The purpose of this study was to find out student teachers' perceptions towards digital short stories' implementation into language classrooms. Specifically, the present research aimed to investigate whether digital short stories were useful to develop student teachers' listening skills in English. The current research was designed in the form of an action research and one group pre-test and post-test design were utilized. The pre-test was administered before the treatment phase which lasted 8 weeks and then post-test was administered. Additionally, the study used a written structured interview to collect qualitative data. Totally, 24 student teachers of English participated in the study, who were 7 males and 17 female students of the English language teaching department at a university. The participants' ages varied from 18 to 21. It was supposed that participants have the same educational background because they have studied at state schools in Turkey. Additionally, participants' listening proficiency levels were supposed to be nearly the same that was concluded through their listening proficiency tests administered at the beginning of the term.

## Procedure

Vandergrift's pedagogical cycle (2004, 2007) was utilized in the current study. The treatment process lasted 8 weeks. Each week, a digital short story was selected as an authentic listening material. Suitable for Vandergrift's pedagogical cycle pre-activities were prepared such as mind-maps, brainstorming, vocabulary lists, visuals related with the story, highlighting necessary key vocabulary words. These pre-listening activities were used to activate students' prior knowledge and encourage them before the listening phase. In the listening phase, students were expected to complete assigned tasks such as while listening and after listening. Pre-prepared handouts were given to students. As the last phase, the post-listening stage took place. At this stage students' reflection and evaluation, skills were aimed to develop through post-listening activities such as discussion, speaking and writing activities.

## Materials

The following digitalized short stories were selected for the treatment; Transients in Arcadia by O. Henry, The Blue Hotel by Stephen Crane, The Fall of the House of Usher by Edgar Allan Poe, The Devil and Tom Walker, by Washington Irving and A Horseman in the Sky by Ambrose Bierce. Handouts and extra listening exercises were prepared for each digital short story and administered based on Vandergrift's pedagogical cycle. All of the digital short stories that were used in the current research were downloaded or used from various websites. Thus, the digital short stories were read and voice recorded by native speakers of English. The digital short stories were retrieved from digital platforms.

## Data Analysis and Results

Data were obtained through pre-test and post-test and 6 written structured interview questions to measure the perspectives towards the use of digital short stories and digital short stories' effects on listening skills development in a preparatory class at the ELT department. The results of pre-test and post-test were analysed through SPSS program. A listening skills achievement test was administered as the pre-test and post-test those were adapted from IELTS listening practice books. A t-test was utilized to measure the difference between pre-test and post-test. Interview responses were analysed through content analysis which is a research method used to identify patterns in an oral or written record of communication. The results showed that participants' answers heavily focused on three categories and they thought that digital short stories were effective to develop these aspects. These categories are language skills development, literature related development, and cultural development.

## Test Scores of the Experimental Group

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group attained about 5 points increase between pre-test and post-test mean score.

*Table 1.* Results of the Listening Comprehension Test (pre and post-tests)

<u>Test</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>
Pre-test	24	26.51	2.98	.68
Post-test	24	31.34	1.68	.67

Table 2 shows that participants experienced highly effective listening skill development and there is a significant development between pre-test and post-test results. After the treatment process, there was a significant difference on behalf of the experimental group (4.312,  $p < .05$ ).

*Table 2.* T-test results for the experimental group

<u>Test</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Pre-test	24	0.415	0.610
Post-test	24	4.312	0.000

## Participants' perspective towards listening activities with digital short stories

As mentioned above, content analysis was used to analyse participants' responses to a written structured interview. The qualitative data were analysed through three main categories and their sub-categories. Detailed information is provided below.

### First category: language skills development

The first category was determined as language skills development because nearly all of the students related digital short stories with an aspect of language learning. According to participants, the digital short stories are so valuable to develop their vocabulary, grammar, listening and pronunciation skills. Students' mentions and their rates were presented below:

Table 3. Language skills development mention rate

N.	Items	Total Mentions
1	Beneficial to improve listening skills	20
2	Support vocabulary acquisition through the context	16
3	Helpful to spell and pronounce unknown vocabularies correctly	10
4	Helpful to gain familiarity with complex grammar structures	5
5	Pronunciation development	23

As Table 1 presents all of the participants thought that digital short stories were useful for pronunciation development. The item was mentioned 23 times in students' interviews. The second highly mentioned item was 'beneficial to improve listening skills' which has 20 mentions. It showed that participants were satisfied with digital short stories and prepared teaching materials. Additionally, they thought that these digital short stories supported their vocabulary acquisition because of the rich context of literary texts. Besides, they thought that these short stories presented complicated grammatical structures and made them familiar with these structures. Few of participants' responses to interview questions are presented below:

Firstly, digital short stories contributed a number of benefits to our listening exercises because these short stories were so interesting and attractive. So, when I listened to these short stories, I enjoyed and wanted to listen again. Additionally, these short stories helped to improve our listening skills owing to effective pronunciation (S. 1).

Yes, these stories exactly improve my pronunciation (S. 2).

They are beneficial for us. For example, at the beginning of this year, I couldn't understand listening activities, now I can generally understand them (S. 3).

After we listened to stories, there were questions and activities about them and they helped me improved my listening in detail skills (S. 4).

## Second category: literature related development

The second category was determined as literature related development of participants because the teaching materials were chosen among well-known American short stories of famous writers. For this reason, teaching materials were expected to develop participants' perceptions towards literary texts, narration, genre, and style. As expected participants presented detailed data about the second category which is presented below through table 2.

Table 4. Literature related development

N.	Items	Total Mentions
1	Focus on gist, content, and details	21
2	Satisfied with the theme, topic, and plot	18
3	Eager to learn American literature	20
4	Recommend digital short stories for listening activities	20
5	Interesting and exciting listening exercises	15

As table 2 presents, nearly all of the participants mentioned that they could easily focus on short stories' gist, interesting details and they were satisfied with the content. Hence, 'focus on gist, content and details' item was mentioned 21 times in participants' interview responses. Other mostly repeated items were 'Eager to learn American literature' and 'Recommend digital short stories for listening activities' that reveal participants were eager to listen to more digital short stories for listening exercises and these short stories made them more eager to learn literature. As the participants were student-teachers of English, hopefully, they will implement such classroom applications into their future classrooms as well. Additionally, this inference was supported by other two items which are 'Satisfied with the theme, topic, and plot' and 'Interesting and exciting listening exercises' because these items were repeated 18 and 15 times in interview responses of participants. Few of participants' answers are presented below:

Yes, I like American writers because their minds were powerful and impressive. Also, I like themes, plot, and topics of digital short stories. Teachers should use these stories for listening activities (S. 1).

I like the topic of each story because stories are exciting and draw my attention. Language teachers should use these stories to make listening more enjoyable (S. 2).

I think stories are funny, exciting and topics of stories different from each other (S. 3).

### Third category: cultural development

As it is a well-known fact, cultural elements are mostly conveyed and presented in a nation's literature, art, history, songs, and language, etc. So, short stories whether they are written, oral or digital include a nation's cultural figures and elements. For this

reason, the third category is determined as cultural development. The third category includes three items which are 'discovering other cultures', 'Being aware of cultural differences between their own culture and others' and 'empathy'. The results of the third category are presented by table 3 below:

*Table 5. Results for cultural development*

N.	Items	Total Mention
1	Discovering other cultures	20
2	Being aware of cultural differences and similarities between their own culture and others	15
3	Empathy	10

The results for 'discovering other cultures' indicated that participants were aware of discovering other cultures through digital short stories because the item was repeated 20 times in their responses to interview questions. Additionally, participants were aware of the fact that each culture is unique and quite different from each other even if they have some similarities. The item 'Being aware of cultural differences and similarities between their own culture and others' was mentioned 15 times in participants' responses. The last item of the third category is 'empathy' which was repeated 10 times. Some students mentioned as if they had been the character of stories which show they developed their empathy skills. Few of students' responses are presented below:

These stories are useful to understand cultural things from America and its history because there are lots of details in these stories (S. 1).

When I listen to a short story I generally think like that what I would do in that case. Sometimes, I get really excited (S. 2).

Some of the stories inform us about American history or racism, after these activities I do some search about details. I'm really fond of history (S. 3).

The data of the current study analysed by using content analysis and three categories were created to analyse the data efficiently. The first category 'language skills development' includes 5 different items. The second category 'Literature related development' includes 5 different items and the third category 'cultural development' includes 3 items. The results for each item of categories were presented above in details. In general, the results indicate that student teachers of English who study at preparatory classrooms are quite satisfied with the treatment process in different aspects. Participants thought that digital short stories developed their language skills especially pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Besides, they thought that digital short stories provided useful and exciting information about different cultures. Additionally, they stated that these short stories made them more curious to learn more about other cultures. As Brown (2001) stated that listening to stories not only stimulates our senses but also it challenges our minds. So, minimizing the effects of digital short stories to learning and experiencing literature would be unfair.

## Conclusion and pedagogical implications

Through the present study's treatment phase participants were encouraged to grasp the meaning of digital short stories by using a combination of both the bottom-up and top-down approaches. As previously mentioned, digital short stories were selected and additional teaching materials were prepared suitable for these approaches. As a novel approach to developing listening skills digital short stories offers language learners listening practice, cultural awareness and sense of literature. Digital short stories are used for various teaching purposes. Firstly, it provides quality teaching content and lessons to students who need to develop listening skills. Language teachers are able to reach a wide range of digital short stories through the internet, online libraries, various websites, and applications. Additionally, language teachers can read short stories loudly and record their voices through voice recording applications and then they can add extra videos, pictures and comprehension questions to their own digital short stories.

They can digitalize short stories by technological tools and make them more interactive and effective for listening skills. Besides, the availability of different variants of digital short stories allows language teachers to select and provide language learners with a suitable sort that fit both their level and interests. As Gjuzeleva (2015) stated that language teachers need no expert skills to use literature in language classrooms. Additionally, language classrooms have become more interactive and communicative that using literary text for only to read, retell or translate would be an error. On the contrary, these extremely rich texts and their valuable content should be used to develop students' cultural awareness and understanding, should serve as an initiator for a discussion, evoke language learners' imagination and develop their language skills (Gjuzeleva, 2015). Language teachers should be trained on how to use and integrate literary texts into their teaching materials through in-service training. If the benefits and gains of using literary texts explained enough, they will eventually use them.

Moreover, digital short stories are alternative teaching sources to enhance the learning capacity of learners who have different learning styles. Similar to Verdugo and Belmonte's (2007) point of view, including graphics, pictures, sound effects in digital short stories enhances both students' attention and motivation towards oral

input in foreign language classrooms. Additionally, being exposed to digital short stories made participants more engaged and active during the treatment phase. The results made us able to answer research questions of the study; digital short stories are effective to develop the listening skills of participants. Besides, the participants have positive attitudes towards using these materials in foreign language classrooms. Thus, participants of the present study were student teachers of English, they may utilize digital short stories in their teaching profession as well. Moreover, the treatment phase provided an effective application of these content rich materials.

In a nutshell, digital short stories should be used to foster listening skills, communicative skills, language skills and cultural awareness of language learners. The current research shed light on how to use digital short stories to develop listening skills through digital short stories due to basic approaches of this area. However, digitalized short story research can be conducted in other areas as well.



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# The impact of Oral Pushed Output on Intermediate Students' L2 Oral Production<sup>1</sup>

Impacto de la Producción Oral Inducida en la Producción Oral de Estudiantes de Nivel Intermedio

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## Abstract

With the advent of communicative methodologies, the promise to develop both fluency and accuracy was made as a goal for teaching and learning English as an international language. However, it did not happen (Richards, 2008). In an attempt to equalize students' both semantic and syntactic competence, this study investigates the impact of Swain's (1985) oral pushed output hypothesis on EFL intermediate students' L2 oral production under a mixed method approach. The participants were 16 seventh grade EFL students from a private school in Ibagué, Colombia that were randomly assigned to an output and a non-output group. For five weeks, the output group underwent oral pushed output activities while the non-output group was merely exposed to comprehension activities. Quantitative and qualitative instruments to collect the data included pretest and posttest, audiorecordings, stimulated recalls, and interviews. Results revealed that although pushing students to produce meaningful oral output does not promote significant noticing of their linguistic problems in past narrative forms, students can modify more oral output through one-way pushed output activities than two-way activities and equalize their semantic and syntactic competence since they can engage in both processings. Additionally, students perceived oral pushed output as an affectivity regulator in L2 oral production and as a trigger of exposure to L2 vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

**Key words:** Pushed Output Hypothesis; Oral Production; Fluency; Accuracy; Semantic Processing; Syntactic Processing.

## Resumen

Con la llegada de las metodologías comunicativas, se hizo la promesa de desarrollar la fluidez y la precisión como objetivo para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés como idioma internacional. Sin embargo, esto no ocurrió (Richards, 2008). En un intento de igualar la competencia semántica de los estudiantes con la sintáctica, este estudio investiga el impacto de la hipótesis de la producción oral inducida de Swain (1985) en la producción oral de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera de nivel intermedio bajo un enfoque de métodos mezclados. Los participantes fueron 16 estudiantes de inglés de grado séptimo de un colegio privado en Ibagué, Colombia que fueron asignados aleatoriamente a un grupo de producción y a uno de no-producción. Durante cinco semanas, el grupo de producción se expuso a actividades orales de producción inducida, mientras que el grupo de no-producción fue expuesto únicamente a actividades de comprensión. Los instrumentos cuantitativos y cualitativos para recolectar la información incluyeron pruebas de entrada y salida, grabaciones de audio, recuerdos provocados y entrevistas. Los resultados revelaron que aunque inducir a los estudiantes a realizar producción oral significativa no promueve una observación significativa de sus problemas lingüísticos en formas narrativas en pasado, los estudiantes pueden modificar más producción oral a través de actividades de producción inducida no correspondidas que de actividades bilaterales e igualar sus competencias semántica y sintáctica al involucrarse en ambos procesamientos. Adicionalmente, los estudiantes percibieron la producción oral inducida como un regulador afectivo en su producción oral y como un detonador de exposición a vocabulario, gramática y pronunciación de la lengua objeto.

**Palabras Clave:** Hipótesis de la Producción Inducida; Producción Oral en la Segunda Lengua; Fluidez; Precisión; Procesamiento Semántico; Procesamiento Sintáctico.

## Resumo

Com a chegada das metodologias comunicativas, fez-se a promessa de desenvolver a fluidez e a precisão como objetivo para o ensino e a aprendizagem de inglês como idioma internacional. Entretanto, isto não ocorreu (Richards, 2008). Este estudo pesquisa o impacto da hipótese da produção oral induzida de Swain (1985) na produção oral de estudantes de inglês como língua estrangeira de nível intermediário sob um enfoque de métodos misturados. Os participantes foram 16 estudantes de inglês de sétima série (oitava série no sistema educativo de 12 anos) de um colégio particular em Ibagué, Colômbia que foram designados aleatoriamente a um grupo de produção e a um de não-produção. Durante cinco semanas, o grupo de produção se expôs a atividades orais de produção induzida, enquanto que o grupo de não-produção foi exposto unicamente a atividades de compreensão. Os instrumentos quantitativos e qualitativos para coletar a informação incluíram provas de entrada e saída, gravações de áudio, lembranças provocadas e entrevistas. Os resultados revelaram que mesmo que induzir os estudantes a realizar produção oral significativa não promove uma observação significativa dos seus problemas linguísticos em formas narrativas em passado, os estudantes podem modificar mais produção oral a través de atividades de produção induzidas não correspondidas que de atividades bilaterais, e igualar suas competências semântica e sintática ao envolver-se em ambos os processamentos. Adicionalmente, os estudantes perceberam a produção oral induzida como um regulador afetivo na sua produção oral e como um detonador de exposição a vocabulário, gramática e pronúncia da língua objeto.

**Palavras Chave:** Hipótese da Produção Induzida; Produção Oral na Segunda Língua; Fluidez, Precisão; Processamento Semântico; Processamento Sintático.

## Introduction

The advent of communicative methodologies for teaching a foreign language in 1970 attempted to improve the teaching practices and develop skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Methodologies such as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), and TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) promised to develop both fluency and accuracy as goals for teaching and learning English as an international language. However, as Richards (2008) affirms, fluency-based methodologies did not generally manage to help learners develop communicative competence as well as linguistic competence on an equal basis. The issue on what to do about grammar in language learning and teaching was not resolved then. Programs with great deal of input and frequent use of authentic communication determined that learners were developing fluency at the cost of accuracy (Higgs & Clifford, 1982), showing thus good communication skills, but poor grammar proficiency together with high fossilization levels. As Gass (2003) notes, although second and foreign language English learners have been able to comprehend what they listen and read in communicative methodologies, most of them fail to produce the written or oral message they want to convey.

## EFL Teaching context in Colombia

In Colombia, public and private schools as well as English institutes have witnessed issues like the above-mentioned. Since the 90s, EFL teachers' attempts to keep learners away from form-focused methodologies, influenced by Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis claims as well as the communicative competence, have led them to implement input-based and fluency-based methodologies (McDougald, 2009) such as CLIL. This methodology aims at having students learn about a subject content through a target language; that is, social studies, biology, chemistry, geometry are taught in English without putting a focus on L2 syntax (Marsh & Langé, 2000). Thus, a great usage of such methodology has drawn teachers' attention more to students' fluency and comprehension (semantic competence) than to their accuracy and production (syntactic competence). Such inequality of competences development, as Higgs and Clifford (1982) state, does not allow students to produce enough L2 output or to be aware of the errors in their interlanguage since instructors do not focus on providing enough feedback on L2 syntax.

The present research study sets out to address the aforementioned issue of competences inequality by investigating the impact of Swain's (1985) pushed output hypothesis and its three functions on 16 Colombian EFL students' L2 oral production employing a mixed method. It is worth noting that, to the best of my knowledge, research examining the effect of oral pushed output has not been conducted within a



Colombian context. I considered it would be interesting not only to analyze whether the hypothesis' claims would be supported or refuted by research in this Colombian setting, but also to gain students' perceptions towards it. This enquiry is different with regard to previous studies described in the literature review section since it involves: L2 oral production, a mixed method approach, the examination of the three output functions, multiple output activities, and insights gaining of students' perceptions towards pushed output. Thereby, this study attempts to answer the following main question: *What is the impact of oral pushed output on students' L2 oral production?* Moreover, four sub-research questions are intended to be answered in this research study: 1. *Do output group students outperform significantly students in non-output group in terms of noticing?* 2. *What type of oral pushed output activity (one-way or two-way) leads to more hypothesis testing episodes?* 3. *What metalinguistic reflections do learners engage in after performing oral pushed output activities?* 4. *What are the students' perceptions towards oral pushed output?*

The present study is also undertaken to test the following null hypotheses in order to answer research sub-research question one and two: *H01: Oral Pushed Output participants do not outperform participants in non-output group in terms of noticing.* *H02: Two-way pushed oral output activities do not lead to more hypothesis testing episodes than one-way oral pushed output activities.*

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Research intended to investigate the effect of pushed output on L2 acquisition and linguistic accuracy has been sharply increasing over the past three decades (e.g., Basterrechea, García & Leaser, 2013; Ellis & He, 1999; Garcia-Mayo, 2002; Izumi, 2002; Izumi and Bigelow, 2000; Leaser, 2004; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993; Rezvani, 2011; Shehadeh, 2003; Sitthitikul, 2017; Suzuki and Itagaki, 2007; Uggen, 2012). However, such studies have merely focused on written output and on one of the functions (the noticing function) using quantitative methods; giving little attention to the other two functions (hypothesis-testing and metalinguistic) of the hypothesis. Other studies have yielded results that are inconsistent with Swain's claims (e.g., Izumi and Bigelow, 2000; Rezvani, 2011; Uggen, 2012) and they are attributable to the limited number of output tasks, the short-term treatments, and the learners' foreknowledge about the task to accomplish. Treatment written output activities in such studies have mostly been text reconstructions. Few studies have investigated the effect of pushed output hypothesis on students' oral production (Mamaghani & Birjandi, 2017; Byrne & Jones, 2014; Sadeghi & Edalati, 2014), yielding findings that are consistent with Swain's claims on grammatical accuracy development, but weak due to short period of implementation of pushed output, lack of interactive tasks, and the absence of the other output functions (hypothesis-testing and metalinguistic).

## Pushed Output Hypothesis

The perspective held in second language acquisition (SLA) in the early 1980s involved the notions around Krashen's (1985) comprehensible input hypothesis. As a result, rooted on its premises, L2 teachers began to favor the act of providing learners with extensive input-rich environments and fluency-based instruction arguing that L2 was only acquired effectively, as Krashen (1982, 1985, 1998) established, through interesting, meaningful and relevant input (e.g., reading and listening material learners are provided with).

Nevertheless, Swain (1985, 1995, 1998, 2005) formulated the pushed output hypothesis as a reaction to Krashen's by establishing that comprehensible input alone was not sufficient for L2 acquisition, especially for the development of learners' linguistic competence. While she was conducting research with French immersion students in Canada, she observed that despite students had spent years in immersion programs still had short target-like abilities as well as less grammatical proficiency (syntactic competence) than their native-speaking peers. Swain hypothesized that what learners needed in order to enhance grammatical competence was opportunities to be pushed in L2 production. She claimed that language production, be it written or oral, played a paramount role in the L2 acquisition process. It forces students to move from a purely semantic analysis of the language (as in comprehension) to a syntactic analysis of it (as in production). This movement allows learners to stretch their interlanguage and improve their grammatical competence as long as such an output is meaningful and contextualized. Ever since, many researchers and teachers have increasingly paid attention to output and considered it to have a crucial role in ESL and EFL teaching and learning. The term "pushed" means being obliged to perform beyond ones' normal comfort level (Nation, 2011) and "pushed output" refers to the type of output that "reflects what learners can produce when they are forced to use target language accurately and concisely" (Ellis, 2003, p. 349). According to several scholars, when learners know they have to speak, they are pushed to pay more attention to what is in the input. If they never have to speak, they might be content with always processing the input only for meaning. But if they know that there will be production pressures on them at some point, they may become more active processors of how something is said and not just what is said.

Swain (1993, 1995, 1998, 2005) has further explored more about such a hypothesis and suggested three functions that output serves in the output hypothesis and in SLA provided that it is meaningful and contextualized:

1. The noticing function: Swain and Lapkin (1995) hypothesized that under certain circumstances, output promotes noticing and pushes learners to process language more deeply, with more mental effort than does input. The learners are in control when they produce language output, and can play more active roles in their

learning; thence, when attempting to produce the target language (vocally or silently), learners notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say (they do not know how to say or write precisely the meaning they wish to convey), leading them to identify consciously their linguistic problems and lacks of knowledge, focusing on something they need to discover about their L2. Such a process involves the usage of previous linguistic knowledge in ways it had not been used before and contributes to the enhancement of accuracy.

In examining the noticing function, Izumi (2002) and Basterrechea et al., (2013) investigated whether output prompted learners to notice certain grammatical features on subsequent input using a carefully designed multi-stage text reconstruction and a dictogloss task as treatment for the experimental group, allowing the learners to compare their first production with the input subsequently received. Basterrechea et al., (2013), however, were also interested in the type of reflections the collaborative group engaged in while reconstructing the text in pairs. Results in both studies revealed that such pushed output tasks affected noticing when students became aware of differences or gaps between their interlanguage and target language forms. Additionally, participants' attention was drawn to the events in the text, i.e., content.

2. The hypothesis-testing function: Swain states that language output is an essential way for learners to test hypotheses about the target language. In other words, learners semantically modify or confirm their output (test their hypothetical output) in response to feedback received during fruitful interaction and negotiation of meaning with their peers or teacher; prompting, thus, higher accuracy.

To examine how output can lead to learners' L2 hypothesis testing and output modification, Shehadeh (2003) implemented a picture description task to collect data from sixteen nonnative students in the UK. He audio recorded learners' interactions and examined hypothesis testing episodes. Having them Back-to-back, NNSS (non-native speakers) described the picture to a NSS (native speakers). Results revealed that students tested out their output hypotheses on L2, i.e., experimented which target linguistic form sounded better, appealed for assistance, and requested information every 1.8 minutes.

3. The metalinguistic (reflective) function: Swain maintains that through the production of language, reflection on others' or one's own target language use (L2 output performance) is triggered. Also, she argues that language output enables learners to engage in syntactic as well as semantic processing; that is, to internalize knowledge and raise awareness on forms, rules, function, and meaning of the target language provided that the language production context (task) is communicative, leading thus to learner's deeper understanding of L2 and accuracy development.

In investigating the metalinguistic reflection function, Garcia-Mayo (2002), implementing text reconstruction as a treatment as well, aimed to determine the

effect of output in the metalinguistic function. Learners' interaction was codified and language related episodes (LREs) were identified. She discovered that output tasks promoted learners' attention to form and got engaged in features targeted by the text reconstruction. In the same fashion, Suzuki and Itagaki (2007) examined the type of metatalk learners engaged in after performing writing output-oriented tasks. Intermediate and advanced Japanese learners of English wrote about their thinking processes after having received explicit correct solution feedback. The metalinguistic reflections shed light on the way they had noticed linguistic forms and how they had tested hypothesis, supporting thus Swain's (1995) output hypothesis. Results revealed that learners' metalinguistic reflections enabled them to internalize linguistic competence and allowed them to engage in syntactic processing, essential in SLA.

## Methodology

### Research design

A mixed method is applied in this study following a true experimental research design with the purpose of interpreting and describing the data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. According to Creswell (2014), true experimental designs involve the random assignment of participants to each group in the study. Researchers in this design provide a treatment to one (experimental) group and withhold it from another group (control group); then, they analyze how both groups score on the outcome and determine whether it was the treatment and not other factors that influenced that outcome. In this enquiry, the researcher randomly assigned the 16 participants to an experimental (output) group and a control (non-output) group. Table 1 below summarizes the description of the research design in this study and the purpose of both qualitative and quantitative traditions in this study.

Table 1. Summary of Research Design

Research Design	Research Traditions	Research Objectives
Mixed method	Quantitative	To determine whether participants in the oral pushed output group outperform significantly participants in non-output group in terms of noticing.
		To analyze what type of oral pushed output activity leads to more hypothesis testing episodes
	Qualitative	To describe the metalinguistic reflections the learners engage in after performing pushed IGAs
		To unveil students' perceptions towards oral pushed output.

## Context

The study was conducted in a private school from Ibagué, Colombia. The school is comprised by 280 students in an only-existing shift. The school implements CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning) from pre-school to sixth grade; therefore, the textbooks used in the English class enact this methodology. Then, from seventh grade to eleventh grade, a grammar-focused textbook and methodology is developed. This context was selected for the present study purposes because this school exposes students over six years to a fluency-based methodology, and then they are expected to undergo a grammar-focused textbook and methodology. According to the school teachers, under the implementation of such a methodology in those early grades, accuracy is not demanded from students, being this the likely cause by which they show high fossilization levels.

## Participants

The sample of the study consists of 16 seventh grade intermediate level learners (B1) as recommended by their English teacher. Participants' ages range from 11 to 12 years and their strata ranges from three to five. That is, they are medium-class students. The selection of such a population was encouraged by the fact that, similar to what Swain (1985) observed in the Canadian immersion program, these students show low syntactic processing compared to their high semantic processing; that is, their accuracy was shorter than their fluency on L2, as mentioned by their English teachers.

## The L2 linguistic form

The target forms emphasized in this study are two of the English past narrative forms: past progressive and simple past tense. By the time output group participants were exposed to a five-week treatment, they had received merely input of these target linguistic forms. That means participants were aware of the target forms receptively but did not have productive mastery of them.

## Data collection procedure

### Pretest and posttest

Shuttleworth (2013) conceives pretest and posttest design as a pivotal method to compare participant groups and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of treatments or interventions. In this study, the pretest was used to identify students' grammatical errors and writing them down and it was administered in the participants' classroom with the researcher and their teacher's supervision soon after the participants were assigned to the output and non-output groups and four days before starting the treatment. Such pretest involved eight gap-filling short anecdotes and fourteen multiple-choice items comprising the L2 linguistic form and it was aimed at determining both output and non-output participants' noticing of those errors made in the forms.

### Audio-record

Button and Lee (1987) explain that the use of tape recordings is a practical strategy for making the data collected through conversation available for extended analysis. These recordings can be implemented in qualitative, quantitative or mixed approach research and must be transcribed subsequently. In this study, the audio-recordings were used in the treatment while participants performed the oral pushed output activities and they were transcribed later in order to analyze, code, classify, and categorize qualitatively the participants' LREs to answer sub-research question three. Furthermore, they were used to identify and calculate quantitatively the participants' hypothesis testing episodes (HTEs) in both one-way and two-way oral pushed output activities to determine which one led to more output modification or HTEs. Finally, such audio-recordings were implemented to gain qualitative insights from participants' perceptions towards oral pushed output through interviews.

## Stimulated recall

According to Suzuki and Itagaki (2007), learners are interviewed by the researcher in a stimulated recall; further, using meta-language, they converse about learners' decision-making and thinking processes (e.g., lexical choices, linguistic structure chosen, or activity content) while performing the output task and reflect on how they solved their task. They were undertaken in this study to gain qualitative insights on the metalinguistic reflections the students engaged in while performing the pushed output treatment. It took the form of a semi-structured interview in which learners were asked in Spanish language what they were paying attention to during the performance of the oral pushed output activities as well as what they were thinking of when they stopped in specific moments during the performance.

## Interviews

Interviews were used in this study to qualitatively inquire into participants' perceptions on oral pushed output to answer the sub-research question four and were applied to the eight output group participants six days after the posttest was administered. Additionally, they comprised two open-ended questions in Spanish language related to what participants thought about the oral pushed output activities in the treatment as well as how they felt while performing them.

## Application and Treatment Materials

The current study was carried out at a private school in Ibagué, Tolima, Colombia during a seven-week period. First, the researcher handed the seventh-grader minor participants the informed consent letter. Two days later, the researcher assigned the participants randomly to output and non-output groups and administered the pretest. During the following five weeks, the researcher asked output group participants one by one or in pairs to come out of the classroom for some minutes to perform three types of information gap activities (2 one-way and 1 one-way) that pushed them to produce oral L2 output. Such types of activities were performed three times during the treatment and their content was changed in the three occasions. First, in the picture-based storytellings, the student was given a set of pictures that composed a story and was asked to tell with their words the story shown in the whole portrayal and sequence of pictures. Second, in the retelling activity, students spent a few minutes reading a passage silently and, then, without looking back at it, started retelling the information to the researcher. Third, in unstructured role-plays, student A was given an assigned task and role and learner B was too. Based on the information given, they simulated a scene. The selection of these three types of activities was motivated by the benefits they have showed in pushed output research, according to Izumi and Izumi (2004), Shehadeh

(1999), and Nation and Newton (2009). Likewise, Nation and Newton (2009) claim that the aim of pushed activities is to make students produce L2 in a way that is beyond their normal comfort level (i.e., pushed way). This is achieved by exposing students to unfamiliar topics and by depriving students from preparation and planning for the production of the target language. These participants were prompted by the researcher after the appearance of an inaccurate use of a past narrative form using the implicit feedback strategy *recast*. Lyster (1998) defines recasts as the interlocutor's repetition of the student's ill-formed utterance while adjusting their intonation to highlight the error (e.g., *They **were** walking*). It is worth noting that the three types of activities together with these implicit feedback strategies were piloted by performing them on 6 students who had similar characteristics of the study sample but not included in it, showing reliability to the researcher.

On the other hand, the non-output group was exposed to comprehension activities, i.e., activities that did not push them to speak such as picture sequencing and answering of reading comprehension questions. These participants performed such activities each week during the five weeks of the treatment and their content was different in the five occasions. Once the treatment ended, the researcher interviewed the output group participants and administered the posttest to both groups. Figure 1 summarizes all of the abovementioned stages through the study schedule.

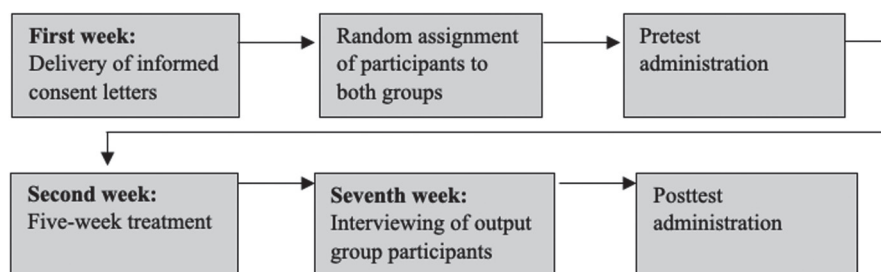


Figure 1. Summary of the schedule of the study.

## Data analysis and Interpretation

### Research question one

The researcher and the participants' classroom teacher, i.e., second rater, identified, wrote down and compared the grammatical errors made in the target forms in the pretest with those in the posttest to calculate the number of linguistic forms noticed. Both raters agreed on all of the scores they gave to each of the participants as part



of the inter-rater reliability. Quantitative data from such noticing episodes was statistically analyzed using a descriptive statistics approach to determine if pushed output participants did better on noticing than participants in the non-output group. Data distribution was normal. Table 5 portrays the descriptive statistics of the means of output and non-output group on noticing. Table 6 illustrates the independent samples t-test results of means scores difference.

*Table 2.* Descriptive Statistics of Output and Non-output group on Noticing of past narrative forms

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Noticing	Output	8	6,7500	4,39968	1,55552
	Non-output	8	4,8750	1,95941	,69276

Table 2 indicates that mean scores in noticing between output and non-output group were somewhat different. Nevertheless, to determine if the means scores difference was statistically significant or not, as shown in Table 6, an independent samples t-test was run (The mean difference is significant at ,05 level and below).

*Table 3.* Results of Independent Samples T-Test for Noticing of past narrative forms of Output and Non-output group

t-test for Equality of Means								
		t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Noticing	Equal variances assumed	1,101	14	,289	1,87500	1,70281	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed	1,101	9,672	,297	1,87500	1,70281	-1,77716	5,52716
							-1,93662	5,68662

As it can be seen, although in Table 2 the mean score of the output group (6,75) was higher than the mean score of the non-output group (4,87), Table 3 illustrates that the results of the independent samples t-test did not show any significant differences in the mean scores of noticing between output and non-output group since the sig. level of the test was ,289 ( $P = ,289$ ), which was greater than the critical value (research confidence interval) ,05 ( $P > ,05$ ). In other words, pushed output participants did not outperform non-output participants in terms of noticing of their linguistic problems in the targeted linguistic forms. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was not rejected. This result does not provide empirical support to Swain's (1985, 1993, 1995) claim

on the noticing function that output promotes learners' noticing of their linguistic problems. By the same token, this finding does not either coincide with previous studies described in the literature review on the effects of pushed output hypothesis which yielded positive findings for students' noticing of different linguistic forms such as those of Izumi (2002), Basterrechea, García, and Leaser (2013), and Sadeghi and Edalati (2014), and Mamaghani and Birjandi (2017). Nevertheless, the result of this question is in line with and adds up to the negative results trend in studies investigating the effect of output on noticing such as Rezvani (2011), Sitthitikul (2017), Izumi and Bigelow (2000), Song and Suh (2008), and Uggen (2012), noted in the literature review.

The negative result on the noticing function as part of the sub-research question one in this study might be attributable to the way the researcher applied the implicit feedback with students during the performance of the pushed output activities. Recasts may not have drawn students' attention to linguistic problems efficiently. After students produced an ill-formed utterance, the researcher would immediately repeat it in a correct way and students modified their output and kept on performing the activity. However, the researcher did not adjust his intonation or made a considerable pause to highlight the error as Lyster (1998) proposes. This might not have provided students enough time to be sufficiently aware of the linguistic error they just made.

## Research question two

Quantitative data from the hypothesis testing episodes (HTEs) identified in the audio-recording transcriptions was also statistically analyzed using the same aforementioned program to determine what type of oral pushed output activity (one-way or two-way) leads to more HTEs. As there were 2 one-way and 1 two-way oral pushed output activities, 1 one-way and 1 two-way activity were considered as variables in the employment of the independent samples t-test for equality purposes in the mean scores analysis of HTEs. Data distribution was normal. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics of the means scores of output group participants' HTEs in both activities and table 5 displays the independent samples t-test results of means scores difference.

*Table 4.* Descriptive Statistics of Output group participants' Hypothesis Testing Episodes in One-way and Two-way Output Activities

	Activity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HTEs	One-way	3	15,6667	4,50925	2,60342
	Two-way	3	6,6667	2,08167	1,20185

As shown in this table, the mean scores of HTEs in the one-way output activity that involved three picture-based storytellings (15,6) are seemingly greater than the mean scores of HTEs in the two-way output activity that involved three unstructured role plays (6,6). To ensure whether or not the observed difference was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was performed (see Table 5).

*Table 5.* Results of Independent Samples T-Test for Output group participants' Hypothesis Testing Episodes in One-way and Two-way Output Activities

t-test for Equality of Means								
		t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Noticing	Equal variances assumed	3,139	4	,035	9,00000	2,86744	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed	3,139	2,815	,056	9,00000	2,86744	-1,03871	16,96129
	Equal variances assumed	3,139	4	,035	9,00000	2,86744	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed	3,139	2,815	,056	9,00000	2,86744	-,47344	18,47344

The results indicated that the difference between one-way and two-way output activities,  $t(4) = 3,139$ ,  $P = ,035 < ,05$ , was considered to be statistically significant. Accordingly, it can be claimed that a one-way oral pushed output activity led to more learners' HTEs than a two-way output activity. That is, students modified more output in one-way pushed output activities than in two-way output activities with teachers' assistance through implicit feedback. Thus, the second null hypothesis was rejected. This is consistent with Swain's (1995, 1998) claim on the hypothesis testing function that learners modify output (test their hypothetical output) when producing L2 output and receiving feedback from their peers or teachers. The result in this second question was also congruent with the results of similar studies pointed out in the literature review (Shehadeh, 2003), even though this study was not interested in examining the frequency of occurrence of students' hypothesis testing episodes. Likewise, the beneficial role of one-way output activities that Mackey (2012) and Shedaheh (1999) advocate was confirmed with this finding. They state that this type of activity has the learner do most of the talking as well as provides more opportunities for them to generate and use more pushed output.

### Research question three

Qualitative data from the stimulated recalls was carefully analyzed using content analysis in the audiorecording transcriptions of the stimulated recalls before doing

triangulation with the interviews data to ensure validity. This analysis was done in each of the activities so as to identify, classify, and categorize language related episodes (LREs). The resulting LREs categories are: verb tenses, L2 lexis (vocabulary), meaning expression, and events in the activities, i.e. activity content. Each one of these categories were analytically interpreted and grouped, resulting in two emerging themes: (1) content-based metalinguistic reflections and (2) form-based metalinguistic reflections.

## Learners' Metalinguistic Reflections Pertaining to Content

Data revealed that while output group participants underwent oral pushed output, students were thinking about the content embedded in the activities, i.e., about the events in the activities: *STUDENT 4*: “[I was thinking] er... about what was happening and making sense out of it”. *STUDENT 5*: “in the story itself.... yes... Like to try to tell it well because I didn’t know the story”. *STUDENT 1*: “In that part, I was thinking of what was going to be before... sorry, after the part when the girls arrived home after the school”. *STUDENT 8*: “about the logic of the things that were occurring because it is not like usual like that you see... an alien into the woods... yes”

Students also reported that in the unstructured role plays and retelling activities, they were paying attention to the meaning they wanted to express: *RESEARCHER*: “what were you paying attention to while you were doing the activity?”. *STUDENT 7*: “I don’t know, to how to keep the conversation going”. *STUDENT 6*: “to the topic of the conversation... so I didn’t get out of it”. *STUDENT 5*: “about what the was going to say in order for me to say something that made sense”. *STUDENT 1*: “with respect to what he last mentioned... so I could connect it and keep the same idea”

## Learners' Metalinguistic Reflections Pertaining to Form

After asking students what they were thinking about when they paused in certain moment during the activities performance, they said were thinking about the L2 verbs in past tense that were required to tell decently the stories in the picture-based storytellings and the retellings *STUDENT 5*: “I was thinking about how I had to put the verbs”. *STUDENT 8*: “well, about things that I didn’t know like verbs... or that I didn’t know how to tell them in past... for example, I didn’t know that of *he found* and things like that”. *STUDENT 1*: “I stopped because I didn’t remember the past of *see*”. *STUDENT 3*: “in my case, well, maybe I stopped to identify... I mean, take the verb and pass it to its past [tense]”. *STUDENT 2*: “on the connectors... when to use while and when to join the tenses”

Students would also stop to think about what past tense to use. That is, they were concerned about the target linguistic features selected in this study: *STUDENT 2*: “[I was thinking] of the conjugation... I mean, whether to put the verbs in past continuous or in past simple”. *STUDENT 6*: “I stopped because I was thinking of the difference on how to use the past continuous with the other one”. *STUDENT 4*: “Sometimes I got stuck in the telling of the story since I had to stop to think about the past”

After being asked about what they were paying attention to and thinking about when stopping during performance, students reported that their attention was drawn to specific L2 vocabulary that was necessary in the performance of the picture-based storytelling and retelling activities as well as in specific contexts of the role plays such as accident and paranormal scenarios: *Student 3* *Student 7*: “to the words.... the key words that are needed. Words that one forgets that doesn’t know how to tell them... the words that I asked you for”. *Student 1*: “to some words of vocabulary, for example that of *forest*”. *STUDENT 4*: “I didn’t remember how to say *letrero* (advertisement, in English)... and the other time was here where I didn’t know how to say about the man”. *STUDENT 8*: “I don’t know the words *robar, esconder, quemar*” (rob, hide, and burn, in English). *STUDENT 5*: “like about the words to say what was happening”. *STUDENT 3*: “I don’t know the words *chocar* and *afeitar*” (crash and shave, in English). *STUDENT 3*: “[I stopped to think about] the vocabulary, because one had to think of what to say”. *STUDENT 6*: “I didn’t know vocabulary for this case, as it said we had to play a situation about ghosts, I didn’t know how to say words related to that”. *STUDENT 5*: “that sometimes... sometimes I was kind of recalling or... I kind of like didn’t find the specific word”.

As observed above, students focused on both content (activities events and expression of meaning) and form (verb tenses and L2 lexis) while performing oral pushed output. In other words, students engaged in both semantic and syntactic processing, a dynamic that starts to shed light on how they can equalize their semantic competence with their syntactic competence.

These findings provide empirical support to Swain’s (1998, 2001, 2005) claim on the metalinguistic function of the output hypothesis that output enables learners to engage in both semantic and syntactic processing rather than in purely semantic analysis of the language (comprehension); leading thus to learner’s internalization of knowledge, deeper understanding of L2, and accuracy enhancement. In the same fashion, this finding is in line with previous experimental studies noted in the literature review (Byrne & Jones, 2014; Garcia-Mayo, 2002; Suzuki & Itagaki, 2007; Swain & Lapkin, 2002) which claimed that through pushed output tasks, learners internalized linguistic competence and engaged in syntactic processing. In Garcia-Mayo’s (2002) results, however, learners paid attention only to form, that is different from this finding which students focused on content (semantic processing needed in comprehension) and form (syntactic processing needed in production) at the same time.

## Research question four

Qualitative data from the interviews was carefully analyzed using content analysis in the respective audiorecording transcriptions and triangulated with data from the stimulated recalls. In order to find commonalities among the students' responses, data was coded and categorized. Resulting categories pertained to feelings (relieved nerves, self-confidence, and accompaniment sense) and double purpose of activities (nice and useful, pleasing and subskills pleasing and subskills noticing and exposure trigger). These categories were piled so as to analyze them and interpret them more deeply until broad themes emerged in light of how students perceived oral pushed output. The themes that emerged pertained to (1) oral pushed output as affective regulator in L2 oral production and (2) oral pushed output as a trigger of noticing and exposure to L2 vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

## Oral Pushed Output as Affective Regulator in L2 Oral Production

When asked in the interviews how they felt during the performance of the output activities, students said they did not feel comfortable, with lack of self-confidence, and nervous in certain moments, especially in the first weeks of the treatment. However, as treatment passed by, the more students gained familiarity with the researcher and were exposed to a wide repertoire of both one-way and two-way activities, the more they began to overcome such feelings and get controlled even when still being pushed to produce. Further, the fact that students were receiving immediate implicit feedback (researcher's assistance) helped them not to feel incapable of performing well in the activity: *STUDENT 4*: "Uh... I felt awkward because when we began, I wasn't very accustomed". *STUDENT 3*: "I felt comfortable, well... as we did more activities with the teacher, I felt okay". *STUDENT 5*: "I felt good, I understood the dynamic more and more... I just sometimes got stuck in the telling of the stories and in the thinking of the past (tenses)... and for the rest, all good". *STUDENT 6*: "I think this helped me a bit on having more control of... like when one doesn't know someone or something very well and being more relaxed, because at the beginning I was a little bit like that... like stressed, pressed, and scared, but I started to be more relaxed afterwards". *STUDENT 8*: "Perhaps at the beginning I felt a little weird because I didn't know if I was able to say everything well, but later on I didn't feel like that anymore... and well, plus, the teacher gave us a little help whenever we got wrong, and stuff like that".

The unstructured role plays allowed learners to work in pairs to complete the task. Such a fact also made students feel good in the performance of the activities: *STUDENT 7*: "I felt very good... and because we could do the activities accompanied with another classmate"

### Oral Pushed Output as a Trigger of Noticing and Exposure to L2 Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar

When asked what they thought about the oral pushed output activities, students reported that they helped them realize some problems of their interlanguage system as well as be exposed to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar: *STUDENT 1*: “I consider them good as this exercise was useful for me to enhance my speaking... and besides, I learned more vocabulary”. *STUDENT 3*: “Personally, I could learn things that either I didn’t know or I didn’t remember how to use them and pronounce them; and plus, I don’t know... I mean, they helped me a lot for other English classes because the topics were related”. *STUDENT 6*: “I found them nice, and it all also helped me in some things I was bad at in English; also, it helped me improve some words and understand a little better some passages in English”

Students also mentioned that they found the activities appealing and enjoyable and with a learning purpose; besides, they expressed that their content was not isolated from their interests: *STUDENT 4*: “the activities were cool, dynamic and... obviously I took them seriously since it was like a test that told you if you were good or bad at things in English”. *STUDENT 5*: “I found them good, well, like the topics were quite related to us”. *STUDENT 7*: “I found them nice, like dynamic and not that serious”. *STUDENT 8*: “the activities were very cool because... well, at the time we learned English, words, pronunciation; they were also dynamic and... yes... nice”.

Overall, students agreed that oral pushed output was appealing and helped them control their feelings of fear and nervousness in L2 production as well as be exposed to several elements of the target language. These results lend support to Swain’s (1985, 1993, 1995, 2005) general claim on the pushed output hypothesis that by pushing L2 learners to produce meaningful and contextualized output, they can stretch their interlanguage. The fact that students perceived oral pushed output as a meaningful tool in SLA is also in line with Al-Jamal’s (2014) study results which yielded positive students’ attitudes towards audio-visual input enhancement in pushed output dictogloss tasks. Al-Jamal measured students’ perceptions quantitatively through a survey and observed that all of the students felt that such an activity had improved their learning process, whereas 81% of them felt that doing another similar activity in other courses would be helpful for their language learning. Finally, the fact that students expressed that oral pushed output helped them enhance their vocabulary in L2 is consistent with Ellis and He (1999) and De la Fuente’s (2002) studies that revealed that frequently exposing students to output led to development of their L2 vocabulary. In other words, pushed output hypothesis does not only show positive effects on grammatical accuracy, but also on improvement of L2 lexis.

## Conclusions and Implications

The results in this enquiry show a positive impact of oral pushed output on students' L2 oral production as well as in SLA process. It can be concluded that students can modify more output with teachers or peers' assistance through one-way oral pushed output activities than through two-way activities. Furthermore, pushing students to produce meaningful, interesting, and contextualized output can contribute to an equality in their semantic and syntactic competence since they can engage in both processings through metalinguistic reflections. Additionally, students perceived oral pushed output as an affectivity regulator that allowed them to get accustomed when producing L2 oral output as well as a trigger of noticing and exposure to L2 vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Nonetheless, these results do not completely support Swain's pushed output hypothesis claims since oral pushed output did not promote significant noticing of output group participants' linguistic problems in L2 past narrative forms.

The present study may have implications for second language teachers and L2 materials developers. This study suggests that EFL and ESL teachers implement oral pushed output to help students gain confidence in L2 oral production and enhance L2 vocabulary and pronunciation. It is also suggested that English instructors apply this type of output to overcome the issue of short syntactic accuracy, especially in students that have long been exposed to fluency-based and input-based methodologies in which their grammatical errors are not often corrected and opportunities to produce L2 oral output are not provided respectively. Additionally, it is recommended that L2 curriculum designers and material developers make changes in the way of constructing curricula, syllabi and English textbooks based on a vast presentation of input. Oral pushed output (tasks) should be included in them so as to provide students more opportunities to produce L2 oral output in the ESL and EFL classroom.

## Limitations and Further Research

As many other research studies, this study suffers from limitations that pose the issue of results generalizability and strong conclusions drawing. One limitation is the relatively short five-week period of treatment in this study. Further studies are thus required to carry out long term treatment period. Moreover, these results could be more persuasive if the number of participants were larger to increase generalizability and external validity. The next limitation lays in the lack of rigor in the selection of participants. This study relied on the participants' teacher recommendation to start their random assignment to the groups. It is suggested that future research with similar purposes select participants based on a standard test in order to obtain more accurate results in pretest and posttest processes.



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# Examining the Effect of Gender and Educational Level on Iranian EFL Graduate Students' Perceived Reasons for Committing Plagiarism<sup>1</sup>

Examinando el Efecto del Género y el Nivel Educativo en las Razones Percibidas por los Estudiantes Graduados de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera Iraníes para Cometer Plagio

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## Abstract

The present study aimed at examining the role of gender and educational level of Iranian EFL graduate students in determining the main reasons for committing plagiarism from their point of view. To this end, a convenient sample of 159 M.A. and Ph.D. students partook in the study. To gather the necessary data, a 32-item Likert-Type questionnaire was administered and the results were subjected to a two-way MANOVA. Results of the study indicated that neither the students' gender nor their educational level had any significant effect on the perceived reasons for engaging in plagiarism. Moreover, the interaction effect of these two variables did not show any significant effect either. Descriptive statistics, however, showed that students' personal and attitudinal characteristics took on paramount importance compared to other factors. This can signal the intentionality of plagiarism among Iranian EFL graduate students, thereby suggesting the need for making more informed decisions on how to deal with this problem.

**Keywords:** *educational level; gender; Iranian EFL graduate students; plagiarism.*

## Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como propósito examinar el papel del género y nivel educativo de los estudiantes iraníes graduados de inglés como lengua extranjera para determinar las principales razones para cometer plagio desde su punto de vista. Para tal fin, se toma una muestra conveniente de 159 estudiantes de maestría y doctorado que participaron en el estudio. Para reunir los datos necesarios, un cuestionario tipo Likert con 32 preguntas fue administrado y los resultados fueron sujetos a un análisis multivariante de la varianza en dos vías. Los resultados indicaron que ni el género o el nivel educativo de los estudiantes ni el efecto de la interacción de estas dos variables tuvieron un efecto significativo sobre las razones para involucrarse en el plagio. La estadística descriptiva, sin embargo, mostró que las características personales y actitudinales de los estudiantes adquirieron una importancia primordial comparado con otros factores. Esto puede ser señal de la intencionalidad del plagio entre los estudiantes iraníes de inglés como lengua extranjera, de este modo se sugiere la necesidad de tomar decisiones más informadas sobre como abordar este problema.

**Palabras clave:** nivel educativo; género; estudiantes iraníes de inglés como lengua extranjera; plagio

## Resumo

O presente estudo tem como propósito examinar o papel do gênero e nível educativo dos estudantes iranianos formados de inglês como língua estrangeira para determinar as principais razões para cometer plágio desde seu ponto de vista. Para tal fim, toma-se uma amostra conveniente de 159 estudantes de mestrado e doutorado que participaram no estudo. Para reunir os dados necessários, um questionário tipo Likert com 32 perguntas foi administrado e os resultados foram submetidos a uma análise multivariante da variância em duas vias. Os resultados indicaram que nem o gênero ou o nível educativo dos estudantes nem o efeito da interação destas duas variáveis tiveram um efeito significativo sobre as razões para envolver-se no plágio. A estatística descritiva, porém, mostrou que as características pessoais e atitudinais dos estudantes adquiriram uma importância primordial comparado com outros fatores. Isto pode ser sinal da intencionalidade do plágio entre os estudantes iranianos de inglês como língua estrangeira, deste modo, sugere-se a necessidade de tomar decisões mais informadas sobre como tratar este problema.

**Palavras chave:** nível educativo; gênero; estudantes iranianos de inglês como língua estrangeira; plágio

## Introduction

Plagiarism, “the act of using another’s work without appropriate acknowledgement,” (Devlin & Gray, 2007, p. 182) is widely known as an unethical behavior (Deckert, 1993; Mallon, 1989). Because of the negative views held towards plagiarism, most academic institutions attempt to take special measures to deter their students from committing it (Jaszi, 1994). In Peru, as an example, the “zero-tolerance” strategy implemented against plagiarism and cheating proved effective in that students in fault no longer engaged in plagiarism (Carnero et al., 2017). However, contrary to this view, some scholars argue that plagiarism can be differentiated from cheating in that cheating is an intentional act while plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional (James, McInnis, & Delvin, 2002). Given this specific characteristic of plagiarism as opposed to cheating, it may convincingly be argued that all plagiarists may not be dishonest and deceitful people; rather, some other causes may bring about such unethical behavior and labelling all plagiarists as deceitful people and punishing them based on untested assumptions and guesses can be unfair and unjustified (Devlin & Gray, 2007).

Given that such stereotyping may be as unethical as plagiarism itself, it seems that an urgent need is felt to examine students’ ideas of why they plagiarize and identify the most important factors which contribute to this unethical behavior. If the results of such a scrutiny reveal that students have engaged in plagiarism deliberately, say, to deceive the instructors, they may deserve to be punished severely. If, on the other hand, lack of knowledge or awareness of this unethical behavior is the main reason, punishment does not serve as an appropriate procedure and some training courses or awareness-raising tasks are more reasonable. In Australia, for example, “most universities adopt penalties seen as appropriate to the level of intention.” (Stuhmcke, Booth & Wangmann, 2016, p. 3) That is, they “formally separate ‘plagiarism’ or inadvertent plagiarism from ‘misconduct’ or intentional plagiarism.” (Stuhmcke et al., p. 3)

Even though plagiarism has recently been a matter of considerable concern for Iranian scholars and researchers (e.g., Alimorad, 2018; Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Khamesan & Amiri, 2011; Rashidi, Rahimi, & Dehghan, 2016; Rezanejad & Rezaei, 2013; Tahriri & Eslam-Navaz, 2014; to name a few), there are still several unexplored territories which need to be attended to in this context. One of the important areas in need of closer examination is the main perceived reasons for committing plagiarism. Uncovering the primary causes of plagiarism may help us in determining the most suitable ways to deal with this phenomenon. Numerous researchers have attempted to find the most prominent reasons for Iranian students’ engagement in plagiarism; nevertheless, to the best of the present researcher’s knowledge, no study has endeavored to systematically examine the role of these students’ gender and educational level in perceived reasons for plagiarizing. To fill this gap, the present study attempted to



unearth the effect of these two important factors on Iranian EFL graduate students' main perceived reasons for engaging in this unethical behavior.

## Literature Review

About a decade ago, Iranian scholars and researchers were condemned for not being honest in their academic duties. Butler (2009), for instance, published a paper in *Nature Journal* and reported some Iranian authorities as plagiarists. Given that such a daunting situation may lead to the negative publicity of Iranian academic staff all over the world, a plethora of Iranian researchers attempted to examine this misconduct from diverse perspectives. While a few researchers were mainly concerned with university teachers' ideas (Ojaghi, Keyvanara, Cheshmeh Sohrabi, & Papi, 2011; Rashidi et al., 2016), the majority of them examined students' point of view. From among the studies done on students, some of them examined students' perceptions of plagiarism (Amiri & Razmjoo, 2016; Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Mahdavi Zafarghandi, Khoshroo & Barkat, 2012; Rezanejad & Rezaei, 2013) whereas students' familiarity with the concept was the main goal of some other studies (Tahriri & Eslam-Navaz, 2014).

A third group of research projects, on the other hand, delved into the most prominent reasons contributing to plagiarism on the part of university students or the ways through which this unethical behavior could be prevented. In 2010, Amirkhani, Vahdat, and Khezrian, for example, pointed out that extroversion, academic talent, and emotional stability could deter Iranian students from engaging in plagiarism. Investigating the issue from another angle, Khamesan and Amiri (2011) found that one of the determining factors which led to plagiarism could be the gender of the students with male students being more likely to plagiarize than the female ones. They, however, did not attempt to examine the role of gender more deeply.

Attempting to uncover the main reasons for plagiarism, Riasati and Rahimi (2013) concluded that lack of understanding of the concept, insufficient linguistic abilities, inadequate research and writing skills, lack of familiarity with and interest in the topics and the pressures from their family members and the society could be principal reasons for plagiarizing in the context of Iran. Moreover, in another study, Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013), as one part of their study, came to the conclusion that the most important reason for committing plagiarism was the easiness of doing it. Tahriri and Eslam-Navaz (2014) reported lack of enough instruction and familiarity with the concept as well as students' laziness as the reasons for this misconduct.

More recently, Babaii and Nejadghanbar (2016) conducted a mixed-method study to examine plagiarism from diverse perspectives. As one of the phases of their study, they strived to discover the main reasons leading to plagiarism in the context of Iran. It was found that some causes such as unfamiliarity with plagiarism, academic

writing skills deficiency, lack of enough time, laziness and deceitfulness, low language proficiency, and unfamiliarity with the subject of writing could be attributed to students themselves. In addition to these, teachers were also considered to be responsible for this unethical behavior because of their careless and lenient behavior and because of having high expectations from students. Policies of the educational system were also mentioned as another reason in this study.

Conducting a qualitative study, Amiri and Razmjoo (2016) investigated Iranian students' perceptions of plagiarism as well as the main reasons for doing it. Results of semi-structured interviews showed that teachers' ignorance, students' insufficient research and writing skills, the pressure to prepare high quality assignments, peer pressure and the easiness of engaging in plagiarism were mentioned as the main reasons. It is worthy of notice, however, that the participants of their study were undergraduate students who are unlikely to be familiar with academic research skills.

Recently, as one part of her study, Alimorad (2018) attempted to uncover Iranian graduate students' perceptions of their reasons for plagiarizing. The participating students in her study thought that the most important reason for this misconduct was their being unable to write scientifically. Hence, they believed that open discussion and negotiation could help solve this problem in the university context.

The role of students' gender and educational level has by no means been neglected in the studies on plagiarism. Several researchers worldwide pointed to the important effects these two factors can have on students' committing plagiarism. In some situations, it is reported that even training courses may not necessarily produce desired results. For example, in Brazil, Krokosz and Ferreira (2019) pointed to a gap between theoretical and practical knowledge regarding plagiarism for graduate students. They emphasized that although the technical training related to the correct use of research sources is necessary in the capacity-building process, it is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism practices. Becker and Ulstad (2007) studied the undergraduate students of three AACSB-accredited universities, two schools from the Midwest, one public and one Jesuit and one East coast Jesuit school. They found that female students consistently rated the items of the questionnaire as less acceptable than male students, which was indicative of their differing perceptions. In the context of Spain, Sureda-Negre, Comas-Forgas, and Oliver-Trobat (2015) came to the conclusion that men had significantly higher levels of perpetration than women, which highlights the impact of gender on plagiarizing by students. Considering both students' gender and their educational level, BavaHarji, Chetty, Ismail, and Letchumanan's findings (2016, p. 106) made it clear that "the act of intellectual theft was more evident among the males than female, junior than seniors."

As for the context of Iran, Ahmadi (2014) investigated, among other factors, the role of these two variables. He found that while students' gender did not have any effect

on the type and amount of plagiarism used by Iranian EFL majors, their academic level did have a significant effect on it with B.A. students more plagiarizing than their M.A. counterparts.

As can conspicuously be observed, previous research has yielded conflicting results with regard to the role of gender and educational level in academic dishonesty. Although results of some studies indicate that there exists a relationship between students' gender and their ethical behavior (Ameen, Guffey & McMillan, 1996) with most of the studies finding greater prevalence of plagiarism among male university students as compared to their female counterparts (Athanasou & Olasehinde, 2002; BavaHarji et al., 2016; Becker & Ulstad, 2007; Brunell, Staats, Barden & Hupp, 2011; Egan, 2008; Lin & Wen, 2007; Straw, 2002), in the context of Iran, Ahmadi (2014) found no noticeable role of gender in engaging in plagiarism by university students. Nevertheless, regarding the educational level, he found that B.A. students engaged in plagiarism more than M.A. students, which indicates the educational level of the students may exert an influence on their academic dishonesty. More recently, the findings of BavaHarji et al. (2016) supported the idea that educational level can be a determining factor in committing plagiarism. Also, Yang's (2014) study revealed that students of different genders and educational levels displayed different understandings of plagiarism. However, although the role of gender and educational level of the students has been vastly investigated from diverse perspectives, to the best of the present researcher's knowledge, no study has attempted to examine the effect of these two factors on the students' main perceived reasons for plagiarizing; that is, whether and to what extent students' gender and their educational level affect the perceived causes of plagiarism.

It seems that further research in this area is needed to shed more light on the most prominent reasons why Iranian EFL graduate students tend to plagiarize rather than write their academic papers themselves. Moreover, although numerous Iranian researchers and scholars have tried to study plagiarism, no study has systematically examined the role of gender and educational level, as two important contributing factors, in tempting students to resort to plagiarism. To fill this lacuna, the present study is an attempt to delve into the potential role these two factors may play in doing this unethical and unaccepted behavior as perceived by graduate students.

## Objectives of the Study and Research Questions

The objectives of this study were three-fold. Firstly, since some researchers have considered the students' gender as a determining factor in committing plagiarism (e.g., Khamesan & Amiri, 2011), as the first goal of the study, it aimed at examining male and female students' ideas to find out whether there was any difference between these two groups in terms of the importance attached to the main contributing

reasons. Secondly, previous research has yielded conflicting results with regard to the effect of students' educational level on their committing plagiarism. While some studies found no relationship between educational level and their understanding of plagiarism claiming that recognizing plagiarism continues to be a challenging task for students even up to the end of their academic lives (e.g., Mahdavi Zafarghandi et al., 2012), other studies indicated that their educational level affects the type and amount of plagiarism committed (e.g., Ahmadi, 2014; Sikes, 2009). This argument prompted the present researcher to further investigate the role of years of study in Iranian EFL students' committing plagiarism to see whether students of different educational levels have similar or divergent perceptions of the reasons for plagiarizing. Thirdly, the interaction effect of these two factors was studied to discover the way female and male students at different educational levels justified this behavior. To attain these objectives, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between male and female Iranian EFL graduate students' perceptions of the reasons for plagiarizing?
2. Is there any significant difference between M.A. and Ph.D. students' perceptions of the reasons for plagiarizing?
3. Is there any interaction effect of these two variables (gender and educational level) on these students' perceived reasons for plagiarizing?

## Significance of the Study

Nowadays, plagiarism is mostly condemned as an unethical behavior which leads to deceiving people by not acknowledging or misappropriating other people's possession of an academic piece of writing (Mallon, 1989; Sutherland-Smith, 2003). Such a negative attitude towards plagiarism will surely bring about negative views towards those who commit plagiarism as well. However, it has rightly been argued that at least in some cases, students plagiarize not to deceive others including their teachers but because they do not have enough knowledge or understanding of the concept or because of their unfamiliarity with appropriate referencing styles (Amiri & Razmjoo, 2016; Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Delvin & Gray, 2007; Riasati & Rahimi, 2013; Tahriri & Eslam-Navaz, 2014). In such circumstances, although the primary cause of plagiarism is unintentional, the students may be unfairly stigmatized as dishonest and deceitful people whose ideas cannot be relied on. Moreover, these "criminals" are likely to be punished severely even though they may not deserve to be treated so harshly. To partly alleviate such problems, we need to first identify the main reasons for plagiarizing on the part of the students and then, on the basis of this evidence, we can determine the most appropriate procedures for dealing with this behavior.

## Methodology

### Context of the Study

This study was conducted in the context of Iranian universities where undergraduate students are never or seldom taught what plagiarism is. Instruction on such unethical behavior commonly starts from graduate or post graduate levels. Moreover, university teachers are mainly responsible for deciding on how to deal with those students who commit plagiarism and the punishment varies from lowering their scores to failing them or sending them to responsible authorities. To deal with this problem, the authorities refer to a behavioral guiding manual which forbids the misappropriation of others' ideas and warns against such unethical deeds severely (Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016). Plagiarists' punishment method will be determined based on this manual and "will depend on the type and severity of the unethical behavior and range from payment of fines, to suspension from studies, and in the most serious cases, criminal court charges." (Iranian Students' Behavioral Guiding Manual, n.d. as cited in Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016, p. 3) However, it seems that the majority of Iranian university students are aware of neither the existence of such a manual nor the punishments recommended for such misconduct and they are punished for what they have unintentionally and unknowingly done while they belatedly understand the seriousness of the situation when severe punishments are meted out to them. Therefore, it seems that before castigating these students, we need to listen to their voices to know what their reasons are and then, on the basis of their real intents, it can more fairly be decided how to deal with them.

### Participants

Overall, the participants of this study (N=159) were recruited from five universities; three public (N=71) and two private (N=88) universities through the convenience sampling procedure. Depending on the city in which the universities were located, the researcher either attended their classes in person and administered the questionnaire (i.e., one public university) or sent them the questionnaire through email (i.e., two public and two private universities). It is worth mentioning that given that the researcher was an instructor in the former university, the participating students knew her; however, in the latter four universities, the participants did not know her. Accordingly, necessary instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were given to the participants either orally (i.e., in the university where she could attend in person) or in written form (i.e., in the four universities where students were contacted through email). From this sample, 77 students were male while 82 were female. Their age ranged from 23 to 37 averaging 27.64. They were chosen from two educational levels, M.A. (N=128) and Ph.D. (N=31). The rationale behind choosing these two educational levels was because in the Iranian context, as in all over the world, M.A. graduates are expected

to publish papers in order to be accepted to doctoral programs. For Ph.D. students, on the other hand, publishing papers may be more vital because almost all academic job opportunities or promotions necessitate having quality published papers. All of them were studying TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at the time of this study. Moreover, all were from the same cultural and native language background (Persian). It is worthy of notice that the participants were free to choose to either fill in the questionnaire or withdraw from the study whenever they desired.

## Instrument

This quantitative study employed a questionnaire to gather the needed data. Two major parts constituted this questionnaire. In the first part, the participants were asked to provide their demographic information including their gender, age, and university level (M.A. or Ph.D.). The second part of the questionnaire was composed of 32 five-point Likert items on students' reasons for plagiarizing which were adopted from previous studies on plagiarism (Amiri & Razmjoo, 2016; Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010; Delvin & Gray, 2007; Rezanejad & Rezaei, 2013; Riasati & Rahimi, 2013; Tahriri & Eslam-Navaz, 2014). The responses to these items ranged from 5 representing strongly agree to 1 indicating strongly disagree.

Although the items of the questionnaire were arranged randomly in the administered version, with a view to getting a clearer picture, the researcher classified them into four major contributing reasons based on available literature as well as her own understanding of the subject. That is, reasons for engaging in plagiarism were categorized into students' personal and attitudinal characteristics (items 2, 3, 4, 10, 18, 19, 21, and 27), students' lack of enough skills and abilities (items 1, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, and 29), teachers' characteristics (items 14, 15, 17, 20, and 32), and characteristics of the context (items 5, 9, 13, 16, 22, 23, 28, 30, and 31). Content and face validity of the questionnaire were confirmed by two expert judges and its reliability was estimated using KR-21 formula whose index turned out to be 0.74 which seemed acceptable for the purposes of the current study.

## Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

As mentioned above, to collect the necessary data, the researcher administered the questionnaire to EFL graduate students of one public university. Since in each university, there is a limited number of graduate students, an attempt was made to access more students by using an online version of the questionnaire which was sent to students of four other universities (i.e., two public and two private). Given the number of items of the questionnaire (32), to be on the safe side, as recommended by Pallant (2011), the number of the sample size was decided to be at least 150 graduate students.

After the data collection phase, students' responses to the items of the questionnaire were subjected to a Two-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) using SPSS version 23 to examine the effects of students' gender and educational level, as two independent variables, on their perceived reasons for plagiarizing. Each composite reason, namely, students' personal and attitudinal characteristics, their lack of enough skills and abilities, teachers' characteristics, and the characteristics of the context was considered as one dependent variable in this phase. Prior to performing MANOVA, the data were tested to see whether they conformed to MANOVA assumptions. After ensuring that the assumptions were not violated, the researcher proceeded with the main MANOVA analysis. All these results are reported in the following sections.

## Results and Discussion

Before running MANOVA, descriptive statistics across students' gender and educational level was calculated. Results of these analyses are reported in tables 1 and 2 below.

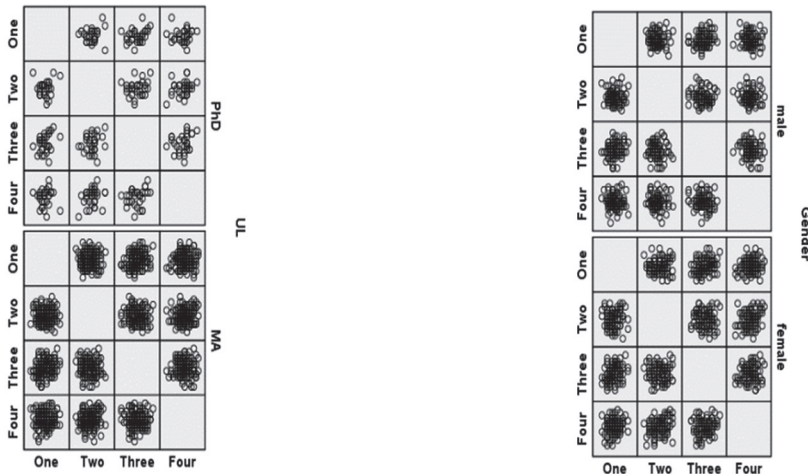
*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Gender*

	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Students' personal and attitudinal characteristics	26.80	2.53	27.51	2.21
Students' lack of skills and abilities	21.97	2.52	22	2.66
Teachers' characteristics	13.57	2.48	14.32	2.58
Characteristics of the context	21.74	2.67	21.79	2.95

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Educational Level*

	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Students' personal and attitudinal characteristics	27.37	2.36	26.32	2.35
Students' lack of skills and abilities	21.96	2.66	22.09	2.30
Teachers' characteristics	13.96	2.52	13.93	2.74
Characteristics of the context	21.85	2.83	21.38	2.76

As noted above, prior to running MANOVA, a preliminary testing of its assumptions was performed. To this aim, first, univariate/multivariate normality was checked using Mahalanobis distances whose maximum value was 12.68 which, given the number of dependent variables in this study (i.e., 4), was less than the critical value (18.47). Therefore, it could safely be assumed that there were no substantial multivariate outliers and we could proceed to check other assumptions. Then, the assumption of linearity was checked by generating a matrix of scatterplots between each pair of the variables, separately for different groups (i.e., male/female, M.A./Ph.D.). As is evident in figures 1 and 2, given that the plots did not show any obvious evidence of non-linearity, the assumption of linearity was met.



*Figs. 1 and 2.* Scatterplots for Students' Gender and Educational Level

Next, the assumption of the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was checked. As Table 3 shows, the significance value was .43 which was larger than .001 indicating that this assumption was not violated.

*Table 3.* Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matricesa

Box's M	33.314
F	1.020
df1	30
df2	8178.192
Sig.	.436



a. Design: Intercept + Gender + UL + Gender \* UL

Finally, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was checked. As observed in Table 4, none of the variables recorded significant values; therefore, we could assume equal variances, which indicates that this assumption was also satisfied.

Table 4. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Students' personal and attitudinal characteristics	1.380	3	155	.251
Students' lack of skills and abilities	.844	3	155	.472
Teachers' characteristics	.303	3	155	.823
Characteristics of the context	.779	3	155	.507

a. Design: Intercept + Gender + UL + Gender \* UL

Then, to find out whether there were statistically significant differences across the participants' gender and their educational levels, multivariate tests were checked. Table 5 displays the results of these tests. A close inspection of the test of Wilks' Lambda shows that none of the values are statistically significant. Hence, in terms of their gender, there was no statistically significant difference between males and females,  $F(4, 152) = 2.24$ ;  $p = .06$ ; Wilks' Lambda value = .94; partial eta squared = .05. This effect size (5 percent) is a medium one (Cohen as cited in Pallant, 2011) indicating that 5% of the variance in the students' overall perception scores was explained by their gender.

Regarding their educational level too, as revealed in the table, no statistically significant difference was found between M.A. and Ph.D. students' ideas,  $F(4, 152) = 1.41$ ;  $p = .23$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .96; partial eta squared = .03. The effect size (3%), which is a medium one (Cohen as cited in Pallant, 2011), shows that these students' educational level explained 3% of the variance in their perception scores. Furthermore, the interaction effect of these two variables showed no significant difference,  $F(4, 152) = 1.03$ ;  $p = .39$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .97; partial eta squared = .02. Considering the small effect size (2%, Cohen as cited in Pallant, 2011), one can conclude that only 2% of the variance in the students' perception scores was explained by the interaction between their gender and educational level.

Table 5. Multivariate Tests<sup>a</sup>

		Hypothesis				Partial Eta	
Effect		Value	F	df	Error df	Sig.	Squared
Gender	Wilks' Lambda	.944	2.242 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	152.000	.067	.056
University level	Wilks' Lambda	.964	1.411 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	152.000	.233	.036
Gender * University level	Wilks' Lambda	.974	1.032 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	152.000	.392	.026

a. Design: Intercept + Gender + UL + Gender \* UL

b. Exact statistic

Considering the above-mentioned results, the answer to the first research question is that male and female Iranian EFL graduate students' perceived reasons for committing plagiarism did not differ significantly. Hence, in terms of all four major categories of the perceived reasons, namely, personal and attitudinal characteristics of the students, students' lack of skills and abilities, teachers' characteristics, and characteristics of the context, both male and female groups attached almost equal importance to all these factors.

Nevertheless, considering the means and standard deviations (Table 1), it can be argued that among these four major factors, in both male and female groups, students' personal and attitudinal characteristics received the highest mean (Male:  $M=26.80$ ,  $SD=2.53$ ; Female:  $M=27.51$ ,  $SD=2.21$ ). A closer inspection of the items which constituted this factor may imply that Iranian graduate students intentionally and knowingly engaged in plagiarism because they hold negative attitudes towards teachers and/or assessment tasks (Item 4) and wanted to deliberately show their objection to such assessment tasks (Item 3) to deceive their teachers (Item 19). A disappointing and warning point is that from these students' point of view, it is OK to plagiarize (Item 2) and plagiarism was neither a kind of cheating (Item 10) nor an unethical behavior (Item 27).

Students' lack of skills and abilities occupied the second rank (Table 1) indicating that for both genders, this factor assumed less importance compared to the first one (Male:  $M=21.97$ ,  $SD=2.52$ ; Female:  $M=22$ ,  $SD=2.66$ ). This finding points out that although reasons such as a genuine lack of understanding of scholarship and referencing requirements (Item 1), students' limited skill base in academic and learning skills (items 7 & 8), their poor research skills (Item 11), their poor knowledge of subject matter (Item 12), their lack of motivation and lack of interest in the topics assigned (items 24 & 25), their being lazy and disorganized (Item 26), and their misunderstanding and ignorance about why and how they should avoid plagiarism (Item 29), which can be attributed to their lack of knowledge and understanding and hence, be considered

unintentional, were also important from these students' perspective, the intentional reasons were ranked higher by these participants.

Characteristics of the context stood as the third most important factor from both male ( $M=21.74$ ,  $SD=2.67$ ) and female ( $M=21.79$ ,  $SD=2.95$ ) graduate students' point of view. This means that they do not think there would be a low chance of being caught/effectively penalized (Item 5). Furthermore, plagiarism is not the result of academic workload pressure or lack of enough time (Item 9) or even the ease of access offered by the Internet to find, process, and edit information (Item 13). Imitating peers (items 16 & 31) or not being offered training and instructional courses in academic assignments (items 22 & 23), access to the digital world (Item 28), and lack of balance between the tasks being assigned and the credit received for them (Item 30) were not the main causes of committing plagiarism as perceived by these students. However, what seems to be promising in this situation is the importance attached to the role of teachers by these students. As revealed by the results, male ( $M=13.57$ ,  $SD=2.48$ ) and female ( $M=14.32$ ,  $SD=2.58$ ) students unanimously believed that it is not difficult for teachers to detect plagiarism instances (Item 14), teachers are computer literate (Item 15), they read the assignments carefully and evaluate them fairly (items 17 & 32), and they do not assign very complicated and difficult assignments (Item 20).

These results highlight the order of importance of the underlying motives leading to committing plagiarism. Although no previous study investigated the role of gender in determining the major perceived causes of plagiarism, this finding reveals that there was no difference between male and female graduate students in terms of the main reasons for plagiarizing, which is contrary to what Khamesan and Amiri (2011) found in their study. The same finding contrasts with the results of studies conducted by Riasati and Rahimi (2013), Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) and Tahriri and Eslam-Navaz (2014) who reported lack of understanding of the concept and enough instruction, and inadequate research and writing skills the most prominent factors leading to plagiarism. Riasati and Rahimi (2013) also pointed to the role of micro (family members) as well as macro (society) contexts as the principal reason for plagiarizing in the context of Iran, which is not supported by the findings of this study because context was ranked as the third most important factor in this study rather than the first factor.

Furthermore, despite finding students' laziness and deceitfulness as one of the major causes, Babaii and Nejadghanbar (2016) referred to other less intentional factors as the main contributing reasons, which is opposed to what was found in the present study. Contrary to our findings, the student sample in their study considered teachers' careless and lenient behavior as well as their high expectations from students as determining factors leading to plagiarism. Moreover, policies of the educational system, as one aspect of the context, was also referred to as one of the main factors, which was not supported by the findings of the current study in that the participants in

this study placed it in the third order of importance. The same finding, however, lends support to what Ahmadi (2014) found in the context of Iran. His findings indicated that gender played no role in the type and amount of plagiarism used by Iranian students.

In response to the second research question, given that there was no statistically significant difference between M.A. and Ph.D. students' perceptions, it can be argued as the students' progress in their educational credentials, their reasons for engaging in plagiarism do not noticeably fluctuate. That is, higher level students may commit plagiarism because of the same underlying causes as those of their lower level counterparts. This shows that the educational level of the students plays no major role in determining the main reasons for plagiarizing.

This finding may be contrary to expectations in that graduate students are envisaged to abandon plagiarizing as they develop their academic, research and writing skills and become more independent and autonomous researchers. Although this finding cannot be indicative of the amount of plagiarism committed by students, it points to the almost permanent nature of the underlying reasons for plagiarizing among graduate students. Surprisingly, the four composite factors were arranged in the same order as the one observed in the previous section. That is, students' personal and attitudinal characteristics (Male:  $M=27.37$ ,  $SD=2.36$ ; Female:  $M=26.32$ ,  $SD=2.35$ ), their lack of skills and abilities (Male:  $M=21.96$ ,  $SD=2.66$ ; Female:  $M=22.09$ ,  $SD=2.30$ ), characteristics of the context (Male:  $M=21.85$ ,  $SD=2.83$ ; Female:  $M=21.38$ ,  $SD=2.76$ ) and teachers' characteristics (Male:  $M=13.96$ ,  $SD=2.52$ ; Female:  $M=13.93$ ,  $SD=2.74$ ) were respectively considered the most to the least important factors by both M.A. and Ph.D. students. This situation can raise the alarm for university teachers and responsible authorities because it can draw their attention to the fact that ethics and ethical principles may be gradually disappearing from our academic discourse community.

As suggested by this finding, no difference was observed between the perceptions held by M.A. and Ph.D. students regarding the main reasons for engaging in plagiarism. This finding may partially contradict results of previous research which pointed out that factors such as insufficient linguistic abilities, inadequate research and writing skills, lack of enough instruction and unfamiliarity with the concept are the main contributing reasons leading to plagiarism (Alimorad, 2018; Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Rezanejad & Rezaei, 2013; Riasati & Rahimi, 2013; Tahriri & Eslam-Navaz, 2014). It may also be indirectly in contrast to BavaHarji et al.'s (2016) conclusion that referred to the prevalence of plagiarism among juniors (Year 1) as compared to seniors (Years 2 & 3). Viewing the same issue from another perspective by comparing undergraduate and graduate students, Ahmadi (2014) found that the students' educational level affected plagiarism with B.A. students more plagiarizing than their M.A. counterparts, which is not in line with the findings of the present study.

Given that no statistically significant difference was observed for the interaction effect of gender and educational level, the answer to the third research question can also be given. The combined effect of these graduate students' gender and their educational level had no significant effect on their perceived reasons for plagiarism. As this finding showed, neither gender or the educational level nor the interaction effect of these two factors affected the reasons for committing plagiarism. This means that M.A. and Ph.D. male students hold similar perceptions to those of their female counterparts. Given that this area of inquiry has almost been overlooked, it is highly recommended that more in-depth investigations be conducted to explore the reasons why graduate male and female students intentionally attempt to deceive their instructors by committing plagiarism.

## Conclusions

This study sought to uncover any potential differences between the perceived reasons for plagiarizing held by male and female M.A. and Ph.D. students. Results of the study suggested that male and female students held similar perceptions in that for both groups, students' personal and attitudinal characteristics occupied the first rank while their lack of skills and abilities, characteristics of the context, and teachers' characteristics were the second, third, and fourth contributing factors, respectively. In a similar vein, the same order of importance was observed for these four factors as perceived by M.A. and Ph.D. students. Given that these students reported their intentional deceitfulness as the most important factor, it may not be unjustified to take special measures to explore the reasons for this academic dishonesty which seems to be surging among Iranian graduate students. Therefore, based on the definition put forward by Stuhmcke et al. (2016), this kind of plagiarism can be referred to as misconduct or intentional plagiarism which deserves to be punished severely. The positive point is that as perceived by these students, teachers' characteristics received the least importance indicating that despite engaging in plagiarism, these students do not underestimate their teachers' ability and skills in detecting it. They also think that their teachers devote enough time and energy to evaluating and examining their assignments while paying careful attention to whether they have been copied or not, which can be encouraging because it can indicate that graduate students have not lost trust in their teachers yet.

## Implications

Results of this study can have some implications for university authorities, curriculum and syllabus designers, teachers, graduate students and researchers. As the main responsible agents, university authorities need to examine and identify the main reasons for plagiarism and take special measures to deter graduate students from committing it. If students intend to deceive their instructors, more severe punishment methods may by themselves not be sufficient and a broader investigation may be needed to get to the root of such unethical behavior. In a similar vein, curriculum and syllabus designers' important role cannot be overlooked. By designing suitable training courses and relevant workshops for both teachers and students and incorporating them into the curriculum, they can play a substantial role in improving the situation. University teachers, too, can play an effective role in this regard by trying to raise the students' awareness of the adverse consequences of plagiarism in the broader discourse community and by negotiating with them and soliciting their ideas and perceptions. Graduate students should also be warned that academic dishonesty is condemned throughout the world and they may lose many important job opportunities in the future if their dishonesty is detected and proved. However, researchers are the most important group who need to shoulder the responsibility to examine this issue more thoroughly to identify and extract not only the micro factors but also the macro ones which exert a powerful influence on the graduate students' behavior leading them to such misconduct.

## Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Like most other studies, this study is not void of limitations, which makes us approach its findings more cautiously. Although an acceptable number of graduate students (i.e., 159) participated in this study, they were chosen based on a convenience sampling procedure, which may introduce a systematic bias into the study and make its results less generalizable. Another problem is the use of a single instrument which may not give us a true picture of Iranian EFL graduate students' perceptions. It is highly recommended that more robust data collection tools be employed simultaneously because data and instrument triangulation can allow us to view the students' perceptions from diverse perspectives. Finally, in addition to quantitative studies, qualitative and mixed-method research can also be conducted to portray a clearer picture of how the reasons for plagiarizing are perceived by graduate students.

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## Appendix

### In the name of God

I would like to thank you for taking time to complete the following survey on plagiarism. The data collected from the survey will be used in the writing of a research paper. I would like to emphasize the fact that the data collected will be kept CONFIDENTIAL and ANONYMOUS. Thank you for your cooperation.

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

University level: ☐ M.A. ☐ Ph. D.

University type ☐ Public ☐ Private

I think graduate university students plagiarize because	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1. of a genuine lack of understanding of scholarship and referencing requirements that leads to unintentional plagiarism.					
2. of their personal values that may be influenced by social pressure – it's OK to plagiarize.					
3. they want to deliberately show their objection to assessment tasks.					
4. they hold negative attitudes toward teachers and/or assessment tasks.					
5. they think that there is low chance of being caught/effectively punished.					
6. they do not understand the concept and do not know what it exactly means in practice.					
7. of their limited skill base in academic skills such as academic writing, critical analysis, constructing an argument and paraphrasing.					
8. of their limited skill base in learning skills such as time, group, workload and stress management.					

<b>I think graduate university students plagiarize because</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
9. of pressure due to academic workload requirements and to running out of time.					
10. they do not consider plagiarism as a kind of cheating.					
11. of poor research skills.					
12. of poor knowledge of subject matter.					
13. of the ease of access offered by the Internet and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to find, process and edit information.					
14. they believe that the teacher will find it hard to find out the work has been copied.					
15. they think or know that the teacher is not very skilled at using the Internet.					
16. they want to imitate their friends because the other students copy.					
17. they think or know that the teacher does not read the assignments carefully.					
18. they believe that copying and downloading things from the Internet is right.					
19. they want to deceive their teachers and make a fool of them.					
20. teachers assign very complicated and difficult assignments which they cannot handle.					
21. they believe that they will get a better grade by copying than by doing it themselves (lack of confidence in their own abilities).					
22. of lack of training in academic assignments.					
23. of lack of clear instructions as to how to carry out the assignments.					
24. of lack of motivation.					

<b>I think graduate university students plagiarize because</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
25. of lack of interest in the topics assigned.					
26. they are lazy and disorganized.					
27. they think plagiarism is not unethical.					
28. they are tempted to take the opportunity and use the digitization of information.					
29. of their misunderstanding and ignorance about why and how they should avoid plagiarism.					
30. they think there is no balance between the work set and the value conceded by teachers in the overall course grade.					
31. of peer pressure; they have learned it from other senior students.					
32. teachers do not pay attention to whether the students have copied something or have written it themselves. They will not evaluate the assignments carefully and fairly.					

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# Bringing Interactional Identities into the Study of Classroom Interaction in ELT Education<sup>1</sup>

Trayendo Identidades Interactivas al  
Estudio de la Interacción en el Aula en la  
Educación de ELT

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## Abstract

This paper of a literature review presents the construct of interactional identities as part of the study of classroom interaction in English language teaching education. The paper defines interactional identities in the field of English language teaching. By listing studies on the matter, the relationship of this construct with classroom interaction is presented from global and local perspectives. Three reasons for studying interactional identities in the ELT field are discussed in the final part of the paper whose conclusions invite to incorporate this construct into the study of what teachers are and do for language learning and use in classroom interaction in English language teaching education.

**Key words:** interactional identities; classroom interaction; English language teaching; language teaching education; language research.

## Resumen

Este artículo de revisión teórica presenta el concepto de las identidades interaccionales como parte del estudio sobre la interacción del salón de clase en la educación de la enseñanza del inglés. El escrito define las identidades interaccionales en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés. Con una lista de estudios en la materia, la relación de este concepto con la interacción del salón de clase se presenta desde las perspectivas global y local. Tres razones para estudiar las identidades interaccionales en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés se discuten al final del escrito, cuyas conclusiones invitan a incorporar este concepto en el estudio de lo que los profesores son y hacen para el aprendizaje y uso del inglés en la interacción del salón de clase.

**Palabras clave:** identidades interaccionales; interacción del salón de clase; enseñanza del inglés; educación de la enseñanza del lenguaje; investigación del lenguaje.

## Resumo

Este artigo de revisão teórica apresenta o conceito das identidades interacionais como parte do estudo sobre a interação da sala de aula na educação do ensino de inglês. O escrito define as identidades interacionais na área do ensino de inglês. Com uma lista de estudos na matéria, a relação deste conceito com a interação da sala de aula se apresenta desde as perspectivas global e local. Três razões para estudar as identidades interacionais na área do ensino de inglês se discutem no final do escrito, cujas conclusões convidam a incorporar este conceito no estudo do que os professores são e fazem para a aprendizagem e uso do inglês na interação da sala de aula.

**Palavras chave:** identidades interacionais; interação da sala de aula; ensino do inglês; educação do ensino da linguagem; pesquisa da linguagem.



## Introduction

This paper introduces the construct of interactional identities as part of the study of classroom interaction in the context of English language teaching (ELT) education<sup>3</sup>. In broader terms, interactional identities in ELT refer to those multiple interactional roles that teachers and students may take on and enact in distinctive manners in close relation to the way interaction occurs in classroom. Studying this issue becomes relevant in the inquiries about how classroom interaction happens in ELT education, the scenario where its participants are expected to apply and learn how to be interactants<sup>4</sup> in this language, both for the classroom (teaching, learning, or assessing it) and for everyday talk (using it communicatively and socially).

This theoretical review is composed of three parts. The first presents the construct of interactional identities in close relationship with ELT education. The second part addresses a literature review on the study of interactional identities within classroom interaction in ELT education: a global and local review is presented. The third part explains the reasons to incorporate interactional identities into the study of classroom interaction in this context.

In line with Heritage (2005), Seedhouse (2004), and Walsh (2011, 2013), the study of classroom interaction should have origin in the particularities of the context of interaction, of which the conversational situation, its participants, content, setting, and organization are part. This article then presents its participants' interactional identities in ELT education from the interactional organization of talk in this context. Based on this, the purpose of this article is not to present a review of the construction of teachers' identities in interaction (for the elaboration of other levels of teacher identities see for example Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Clarke, 2008; Tracy & Robles, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005; Barkhuizen, 2017) but to present a review of the way teachers' multiple interactional roles have been studied in the context of ELT education. Although the construction of other levels of teacher identity (as gender, ethnic, professional, national, or self) can also take place in classroom interaction, the focus of this paper is predominantly on presenting a review of interactional identities as part of the study of classroom interaction in ELT education.

<sup>3</sup> In Colombia, ELT education refer to the undergraduate and professional development programs that prepare people to be teachers of English as a foreign language (González-Moncada, 2007; 2010).

<sup>4</sup> This concept of interactant refers to an individual who interacts in conversational exchanges (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998, p. 2; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587; Cashman, 2005, p. 303; Hua, Seedhouse, Wei, & Cook, 2007, p. 11; Tracy & Robles, 2013, p. 42). Being an interactant implies being competent to interact with the others in a determined context.

By presenting this theoretical review of interactional identities in the mentioned field, the intention is not either to show a categorization of these type of interactional roles (as possibly shown by Brown, 2007; Johnson, 1995; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Ur, 1996; Watkins, 2005; Wright, 1991), but to bring the construct of interactional identities to understand what teachers are and do as interactants into the study of classroom interaction in the ELT field.

## **The Construct of Interactional Identities in Classroom Interaction**

In social approaches of interaction, interactional identities refer to those specific interactional roles that people assume in a communicative context in regard to other specific people and the manner in which the interaction occurs (Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Sharplin, 2011; Tracy & Robles, 2013; Zimmerman, 1998). This type of identities are seen either from the individual's sense of self as an interactant (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010; Johnstone, 1996; Morgan, 2004; Tracy & Robles, 2013) or from the roles that individuals are supposed to take in different types of interactions such as telephone conversations, doctor's appointments, family conversations, and trial courts (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Zimmerman, 1998).

In the ELT field, interactional identities are related to the interactional roles that teachers and students assume in classroom interaction according to pedagogical or instructional purposes, or mediated through socio-cultural traditions and dominant discourses about what language teachers and students should do within classroom interaction (see further elaboration on this below). This discourse of interactional roles with pedagogical purposes and from socio-cultural traditions has helped configure ELT education to a great extent. According to Benwell and Stokoe (2002), Clarke (2008), Rymes (2009), and Walsh (2011), English language teachers may have subconsciously adopted those established (interactional) roles in the social context of classroom interaction.

Classroom interaction is the set of communicative events that teachers and students co-construct to promote the learning and use of languages and contents, conversation engagement, and knowledge (Ellis, 1994; Johnson, 1995; Kurhila, 2006; Lucero & Rouse, 2017; Rymes 2009; Walsh, 2011). In the exchanges for this promotion, classroom interaction is composed of varied interaction patterns, types of turns, social events, and membership categorizations (Cazden, 2001; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1988; 2007; Searle, Kiefer, & Bierwisch, 1980; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Pursuant to Walsh (2011, p. 2), everything that occurs in the classroom requires the use of language.

It is through the use of language in interaction that people gain access to all related knowledge and alternatively construct processes of identification of themselves and the others (Long 1996; Walsh, 2011).

## **The relationship between interactional identities and ELT education**

English language classrooms are social contexts; all its participants jointly bring and construct discourse, communication, culture, social and academic relationships, and individual characteristics as members of this setting (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Breen, 2001; Clarke, 2008; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002; Rymes, 2009; Walsh, 2011). In ELT education, English is the means of instruction and practicum; the occurring interaction in this context opens spaces for learning and practicing how to teach and assess English (Lucero & Rouse, 2017). Preservice teachers are to observe and learn not only how to teach and assess English but also how to interact with other learners or speakers in this language, all of this from the activities developed in each course. It is in those practices and activities, as Chappell (2014) and Walsh (2013) indicate, that English language teachers and students (the future teachers) then learn to assume their roles as interactants in the language classroom.

Consequently, language teachers are direct participants in co-constructing this context in frequent interaction with students. While doing so, teachers constantly take on or are assigned roles in accordance with the manner in which the interaction of the classroom flows. Those roles in interaction are the constituents of their interactional identities, enacted and oriented to the accomplishments of classroom interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Tracy & Robles, 2013; Zimmerman, 1998).

In agreement with Kumpulainen and Wray (2002), since the beginning, English language teachers should manage teaching, learning, and classroom interaction by following established principles, procedures, and roles. These all usually come from language teaching methods, approaches, and curricula (Chappell, 2014; Graves, 2009; Richards, 2001; Ur, 1996). Therefore, ELT curriculum principles, components, and procedures largely mediate teachers' interactional practices and roles in the classroom. The realization of all these interactional practices and roles, in unison, help construct the interactional organization of the ELT classroom (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2013). In this organization, teachers may assume, be assigned, and enact varied multi-faceted interactional roles (Clarke, 2008; Heritage, 2005; Rymes, 2009). Hence, the merging of ELT curricula, teaching practices, and the organization of classroom interaction help construct teachers' interactional identities, too. Rymes (2009) sees English teaching classroom composed of three dimensions. 1) The social context contains all the social factors, and their origins, outside the current interaction and their effects in what its

participants say. 2) The interactional context is organized by the patterns of talk and the appropriacy of language-use choices. 3) The individual agency refers to the influence of patterns and language use in the construction of teachers and students' identities.

Apart from pedagogical and instructional purposes, teaching practices have foundation on teachers' teaching experiences (Clarke & Pittaway, 2014; Goodyear, 1991; Richards, 2011). These experiences encompass different types of knowledge such as teaching knowledge, disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge, classroom knowledge, and others as experiential, context, empirical and critical knowledge (see Castañeda-Londoño, 2019, for a complete elaboration of these knowledges in the Colombian ELT field). Each type of knowledge operates through explicit representations in teaching practices, such as communicating the subject matter, facilitating learning, and doing teaching in context. These representations require the use of language in interaction. Thus, it is within the use of language in interaction that teachers share these knowledges, and by doing so, they also enact different interactional roles.

All these forms of the realizations of teachers' interactional identities occur in the happenstance of context-situated ELT classroom interaction. Gee (1996), Bucholtz and Hall (2005), Raymond and Heritage (2006), and Barkhuizen (2017), suggest that (language) teacher identities should be seen constituted and negotiated through language and discourse in (social) contexts. Consequently, being the classroom a social context in nature (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Clarke, 2008; Rymes, 2009), English language teachers' interactional identities need to be studied in the occurring interaction of context-situated ELT classrooms (Hall et al., 2010; Morgan, 2004). The study of the continuous realizations of teachers' interactional roles in the ongoing co-construction of situated classroom interaction can contribute to the understanding of the manner in which ELT education actually happens in context.

## **The Study of Interactional Identities within Classroom Interaction in ELT Education**

In classroom interaction, its participants jointly bring and construct discourse, communication, social and academic relationships, knowledges, culture, and individual characteristics in different manners (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Breen, 2001; Clarke, 2008; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002; Rymes, 2009; Walsh, 2011). While doing so, they take on, enact, and challenge a great variety of oscillated roles in accordance with the manners in which the interaction flows. Those roles in interaction are the constituents of interactional identities (Tracy & Robles, 2013; Zimmerman, 1998). Those roles are unlikely to be static or single, they are consequently multiple, movable, over-lapping, multifaceted, context-sensitive, and never completed (see Zimmerman,

1998; Wenger, 1998; Thornborrow, 1999; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Appiah, 2007, Tracy & Robles, 2013).

Global perspectives. Studies on interactional identities in the English language classroom around the world examine how interactional identities happen in the sequential organization of talk; this means, what roles teachers and students assume during classroom interactions (see for example Duff, 2002; Martinez, Durán, & Hikida, 2017; Rampton & Charalambous, 2016; Rymes & Anderson, 2004; Thomas, 2013; Vetter & Schieble, 2015). These authors generally present teacher roles in interaction as learning assistants, classroom participants, counselors, fellow-conversationalist, and classroom speakers.

Teacher roles in interaction are also specified in English language teaching methods, approaches, or curricula (see for example Brown, 2007; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002; Oxford et al., 1998; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). English language teachers can for instance have the interactional roles of facilitators (interaction encouragement), orchestrators (organization of interaction), evaluators (of conversation and use of language), conversationalist models, topic givers, and participation promoters, among others (for more roles, see Benson, 2013; Brown, 2007; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2008; Oxford et al., 1998; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Ur, 1996; Watkins, 2005; Wright, 1991).

Apart from English language teaching methods, approaches, or curricula, interactional identities in the ELT field are also mediated through socio-cultural traditions and dominant discourses about what language teachers and students should do within classroom interaction (see an elaboration of these traditions and discourses in Barkhuizen, 2017; and Varghese et al., 2005). For instance, other teachers' roles in classroom interaction under these perspectives may be as presenters, knowledge sharers, and models in developing, enriching, or even coaching students' target language use, thinking, cultural sensitiveness, professional learning, and systems of ideas and beliefs (for more of these roles, see Du, Yu, & Li, 2014; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Izadinia, 2012; O'Dwyer & Atli, 2015; Sharplin, 2011).

Cohen (1985) and Olshtain and Kupfergerg (1998) explain that English language teachers are the main actors in the classroom. They have to find pedagogical and interactional manners of accounting for students' language and communication needs. Carbone (2012), Johnson and Johnson (2008), Pritchard (2009), Smiley and Antón (2012), and Yoon and Kyeung-Kim (2012) state that language teachers should align interaction according to the roles that teaching approaches indicate for them.

Interactional identities in ELT education are finally presented by following interaction models and patterns. For instance, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Searle, Kiefer and Bierwish (1980), Cazden (2001), Sacks (1992), and Schegloff (1988; 2006; 2007) give evidence that interaction in language classrooms is organized in particular

patterns, types of turns, social events, and membership categorizations. In the construction of interaction in the language classroom, each participant puts together their utterances turn-by-turn, exchanges turns at speaking, signals the beginning and end of exchanges, and goes through different periods of time in their exchanges. Hence, language teachers' actions as interactants are identified into the sequence and patterns of classroom interaction.

As outlined thus far, teachers' interactional roles are generally established from ideal manners of how they should interact for the purpose of language teaching and learning. This situation has possibly exerted pressure on English language teachers to interact usually in the manner in which each role indicates. In my point of view, this perspective seems to normalize the (interactional) roles that teachers should adopt in classroom interaction. Therefore, the idea that there are pre-established manners to interact in the language classroom may entail that interactional identities are likely more operative than context-situated and that language teaching and learning interactional actions are more procedural than environmental. Little has been explored about how those interactional roles actually happen, operate, or are enacted in varied contexts, throughout time, and from teachers' own understanding and practices of their interactions with students in the classroom.

Local perspectives. Research on interactional identities in ELT education from a classroom-interaction perspective has had slight interest in Colombia. Local studies with an interactional approach mainly concentrate on teachers' interactional actions at different educational levels. At school level, for example, research indicates that English language teachers do and control most of classroom talk in which they explain information, give directions, and ask questions by following patterned combinations (Balcárcel-Zambrano, 2003; Bohórquez-Suárez, Gómez-Sará, & Medina-Mosquera, 2011; Fajardo, 2008; González-Humanez & Arias, 2009; Herazo-Rivera, 2010; Herazo-Rivera & Sagre-Barboza, 2016; Muñoz & Mora, 2006; Rosado-Mendinueta, 2012). At the university level, the study of the interactional practices normally point to the way students increase oral language participation and involvement in language-building activities, all by means of more language elaborations and variations in interaction (Montenegro, 2012; Serna-Dimas & Ruíz-Castellanos, 2014). In this context, English language teachers then seem to practice a more managerial approach in classroom interaction although patterned interactional sequences also dominate language teaching practices (Lucero, 2011, 2012, 2015; Viáfara, 2011).

Few studies have observed English language teachers' interaction in Colombian ELT undergraduate programs specifically. These studies show that teachers tend to develop classroom interaction by following instructional sequences (Álvarez, 2008), drills to develop language skills (Castrillón-Ramírez, 2010), a variety of communication strategies (Castro-Garcés & López-Olivera, 2013), and interactional arrangements

(Lucero & Rouse, 2017). Lucero and Scalante (2018) also found that the interactions produced in this context are probably the result of teachers' interactional styles.

Findings in the cited studies reveal that Colombian ELT education seems to be composed of interactional sequences that teachers mainly organize while students little by little learn how to deal with them. It is under these conditions that teachers constantly enact their interactional identities as they develop classroom interaction to promote English language learning and use. In my point of view, this perspective cultivates the belief that classroom interaction may be susceptible of being scripted or pre-planned. If this is the case, scripting how to interact in the classroom may restrict and regulate the emergence of interactional dynamics or roles in it.

Certainly, the findings in the cited studies have contributed to start understanding teachers' interactional roles in Colombian ELT classroom interaction. However, more contextual factors and knowledge should be accounted for when using them as research foundations if Colombian classroom interaction analysts want to develop novel understandings about the happenstance of local ELT classroom interaction and its interactants. Without saying that these should not be considered, more critical stances are necessary since Colombian ELT academic community may end up perpetuating discourses that becloud own contextual situations, creations, knowledge, and discoveries.<sup>5</sup>

## **Reasons for studying Interactional Identities in the ELT Field**

The study of English language teachers' interactional identities in classroom interaction becomes of relevance in ELT education because of three reasons. Firstly, it is in this context where teachers teach, share, and experience English language knowledge and use, and where preservice teachers learn how to interact for the language classroom and the outside world (Johnson, 1995; Cazden, 2001; Rymes, 2009; Walsh, 2011, Lucero, 2015). To know more about how all this happens in context, studies should also focus on both teachers and students' realization of multiple selves as interactants in the wide variety of interactional practices and experiences in the classroom.

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<sup>5</sup> See for example the discussion that González-Moncada (2007, 2010), Usma-Wilches (2009), or Castañeda-Londoño (2018, 2019) raise on varied aspects of Colombian policy and research about ELT education. In unison, they explain how mainstream discourses in these areas may have dimmed our own knowledge and academic needs on ELT.

As interactional identities are not only roles with pre-established characteristics and responsibilities that teachers need to carry out, as a second reason, studies should also concentrate on teachers' interactional identities in which analyses involve what they are, do, and become as English language interactants in ELT education. Listening to their own understandings and reasons of seeing themselves being, doing, and becoming interactants in classroom interaction can help extend knowledge about their own perspectives of what it is to be a language teacher in context.

These insights may then contribute, as a third reason, to reveal that the conceptualization of interactional roles is rather a matter of identity work (starting as being interactants) than a matter of doing pre-established actions indicated in language curricula. Studying this may help understand English language teachers' interactional identities from the contextualized interactional happenings of classrooms. In turn, it may help create awareness in English language teachers of the manners in which and the reasons why they interact in specific ways in their classes, meaning, the organization they (co-) construct of classroom interaction regarding the type of teacher-interactants they assume to be.

## Conclusions

The construct of interactional identities becomes a novel alternative for the study of what teachers are and do for language learning and use in classroom interaction in ELT education. As these type of identities are related to the roles that teachers assume in classroom interaction, these should be studied in their realization within this context. Keeping observing teachers' interactional identities (or roles) under a perspective of pre-established actions and a configured organization of classroom interaction may nullify, disapprove, or annihilate situated and divergent classroom interactional practices and identities. This is also a claim to contest the manner in which ELT methods, approaches, curricula, and socio-cultural traditions have been constructing English language teachers' interactional actions; undoubtedly, a practice that perpetuates hegemonic language teaching and learning discourses.

Ample context-situated research on this matter is necessary. It can help elucidate how English language teachers -and students- are, do, and become interactants in classroom interaction. As everything that these participants do in the classroom happens through language in interaction, and interaction is a socio-cultural practice, studies on the matter may also help determine how ELT education happens in context, and how teachers teach the target language and students progressively learn it in the classroom. According to literature on this matter, it is through the fluidity of classroom interaction that ELT occurs and its participants construct and enact multiple interactional identities. Equally, it is through the construction or enactment



of multiple interactional identities that numerous realizations of ELT education and classroom interaction can happen too.

This paper of a literature review may open the door to an understanding of English language teachers, and students from the angle of classroom interaction. Teachers and students are regularly constructed also from all the meaningful experiences that they live inside the English language classroom. Despite the insights presented in the listed studies, doing research on their interactional roles should not only concentrate on the analysis of how teaching methodologies are put into practice or how teaching and learning outcomes are reached. In order to understand more largely what English language teachers and students are in Colombia, studies should also perceive other different dimensions of classroom interaction, such as interactional roles and practices.

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# The impact of educational technologies in higher education<sup>1</sup>

El Impacto de las Tecnologías Educativas  
en la Educación Superior

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## Abstract

The formation of human capital is key to countries' social, cultural, and economic development. The current literature review pays considerable attention to the ever-increasing proliferation of technology in the careers of college and school graduates. While the presence of educational technology in higher education offers multiple benefits, its implementation also presents challenges. In that sense, the literature has considered multiple tools for improving learning processes. However, the results of such tools vary and are difficult to measure in terms of quality. In this literature review, we analyze the issues surrounding educational technology in higher education.

**Keywords:** Educational technology; higher education; information technology; role of the teacher.

## Resumen

La formación de capital humano es clave para el desarrollo social, cultural y económico de los países. Esta revisión de literatura presta una atención considerable a la introducción cada vez mayor de la tecnología en las carreras universitarias y en las escuelas de posgrados. Si bien la presencia de tecnología educativa en la educación superior ofrece múltiples beneficios, su implementación también presenta desafíos. En ese sentido, la literatura ha considerado múltiples herramientas para mejorar los procesos de aprendizaje. Ahora bien, los resultados de estas herramientas varían y son difíciles de medir en términos de calidad. En esta revisión de la literatura, analizamos los problemas que rodean la tecnología educativa en la educación superior.

**Palabras clave:** Tecnología educativa; educación universitaria; tecnologías de la información; rol del profesor.

## Resumo

A formação de capital humano é fundamental para o desenvolvimento social, cultural e econômico dos países. Esta revisão de literatura presta uma atenção considerável à introdução cada vez maior da tecnologia nas carreiras universitárias e nas escolas de pós-graduações. Embora a presença de tecnologia educativa na educação superior ofereça múltiplos benefícios, sua implementação também apresenta desafios. Nesse sentido, a literatura tem considerado múltiplas ferramentas para melhorar os processos de aprendizagem. Agora bem, os resultados destas ferramentas variam e são difíceis de medir em termos de qualidade. Nesta revisão da literatura, analisamos os problemas que rodeiam a tecnologia educativa na educação superior.

**Palavras chave:** tecnologia educativa, educação superior, tecnologia da informação, papel do professor, estudantes universitários.

## Introduction

Currently, most countries are paying particular attention to knowledge and information as the essential keys to promoting their productivity, ability to compete, and wealth (Escueta, Quan, Nickow & Oreoupoulos, 2017). To develop human capital, it is necessary to observe schools and universities to see if they are advancing on a par with the rapidly changing world (Hamidi, Meshkat, Rezaee & Jafari, 2011). The current literature pays considerable attention to the ever-increasing proliferation of technology in higher education (Ignatyeva, 2015). The consensus seems to be that the global digital agenda highlights the need for a change in educational institutions' pedagogical model to meet the demands of the new 'knowledge society.' Such a change would aim to achieve greater flexibility and to adopt learning technologies to modernize and improve teaching processes and learning in formal contexts (Chais, Ganzer & Munhoz, 2017).

Information and Communication Technologies (henceforth ICTs) have had a significant impact on the pedagogy of learning in schools and vocational training (Azma, 2011). ICTs include gathering, organizing, and using the information in various forms, including sound, images, and text, through the use of computers or other derivatives of telecommunications (Hamidi et al., 2011). The decrease in the cost of access to technologies and the ease of connecting to the Internet have overcome some of the barriers to the adoption of ICTs by all the actors in education and have opened up new possibilities and areas of interest (Avello & Duarte, 2016). With these facilities, digital technology makes information content easier to find, access, and manage. Each of these steps is central to teaching and learning. Together, they constitute a dynamic digital learning process (Alekseevich & Borisovna, 2014).

At present, significant transformations have already taken place in the field of higher education. For example, the reorientation of educational patterns, the acquisition of new technologies, and the development of competency-based learning models are helping to strengthen teaching-learning processes and to train key personnel to meet the diverse challenges of the globalized world (López de la Madrid, 2007). In particular, universities have begun to implement ICTs for three main reasons: 1) ICTs represents innovation in learning methods, their presence in the network and the natural adaptation of students; 2) it promotes new goals for the inclusion of technology in education since universities wish to be leaders in the application of new training methods ; and 3) innovation in the ICTs framework encourages the development of new learning paths, such as distance education, more-fluid two-way communication systems, and self-learning (Hamiti, Reka & Baloghová, 2014). The extensive use of multimedia technology in higher education has changed traditional teaching methods, improving teaching outcomes, and making teaching procedure more active and less passive (Chen & Xia, 2012).

However, one key challenge that universities face is the design of educational policies that respond effectively to the requirements and needs of a changing environment. They must review and continuously improve the way they manage ICTs since these technologies are more and more becoming the means for achieving strategic objectives (Aliaga & Bartolomé, 2005). Within these policies, for example, teachers are required to be flexible and skilled and to respond to diversity and constant social change to ensure high-quality teaching. Higher education must focus on the preparation of people to learn, to become autonomous in their process of accessing and selecting relevant information, and to adapt to changing needs throughout their professional lives (Cobo & Moravec, 2011). Therefore, despite the motivating power of technologies, the lack of clarity in ICTs strategies and projects in higher education is an urgent challenge that must be addressed (Freitas & Paredes, 2018).

## **What is educational technology, and what are its tools?**

The term “educational technology” applied to the university should be understood as a project encompassing the educational process, involving not only the teacher or the structural divisions of the university but also the students and how they apply technology to improve their learning process (Pachler, Cook & Bachmair, 2010). Educational technologies include information technologies, research technologies for scientific and educational information; technologies for the computer processing of educational information; technologies for organizing the professional training of students; and technologies for the execution and defense of the graduation project or academic works (Ignatyeva, 2015).

The most used tools in this new educational era are multimedia technology, online learning or e-learning, mobile learning or m-learning, blogs, and social networks (Fojtik, 2014). On the one hand, multimedia technology allows the integration of text, numbers, graphics, still or moving images, presentations, a high level of interactivity and, besides, the possibilities of navigating through different documents, which gives students the convenience of understanding words and teaching objects (Chen et al., 2012). It has been shown that multimedia technology has four advantages: 1) it improves information reception and the quality of teaching; 2) it deepens students’ memory and their understanding of knowledge through vivid images, videos and refined language; 3) the application of multimedia technology can unite the process of recognition and the affective process; and 4) it can stimulate and motivate study among groups of students and improve the efficiency and the quality of teaching (Ausin, Abella, Delgado & Hortiguera, 2016). On the issue of improving the quality of teaching, although there is a universal notion that educational technology promotes improvements in learning, these improvements are challenging to measure at present. Thus, an unexplored field is precisely how and to what extent ICTs affect higher education and how these technologies may lead to different careers.

Also, the intensive use of the Internet and the rise of smart mobile devices have allowed the development of new forms of education, such as online education (e-learning or m-learning), which sometimes complements other modalities, such as classroom sessions, and gives rise to a mixed modality (Avello et al., 2016). E-learning is the teaching-learning process carried out through the Internet, characterized by a physical separation between teachers and students and through which a continuous didactic interaction takes place. In addition, the students become the center of training, having to self-manage their learning with the help of tutors and peers (Avello et al., 2016). Online learning or e-learning is increasingly better evaluated and more widely used in the field of education (Shi, 2016). Although many people show resistance to change and relate it to poor-quality education, studies have shown that it is a mistake to assume that e-learning is of lower quality than face-to-face education (Marín, F., Inciarte, Hernández, & Pitre, 2017). In many developing countries, e-learning is considered a solution to the growing demand for higher education (Ngampornchai & Adams, 2016); it has already greatly affected the method of learning, and many schools are using it as a pedagogy.

Much of the research emphasizes the possibilities of mobile or online learning because of its portability, flexibility, and context, which favor study and promote collaboration and lifelong learning (Naismith, Lonsdale, Vavoula & Sharples, 2004). A newer and more portable version of online learning is mobile or m-learning level, named for the portable devices that are sometimes small enough to fit in a pocket or the palm of one's hand. Mobile learning is an emerging field of educational practice in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as in the labor market (Fojtik, 2014). The increasing use of these devices allows us to use multimedia materials, interact, draw diagrams, take notes, complete tasks, watch video conferences, among others (Pachler et al., 2010). This learning technology allows the creation of a developmental continuum that is very effective in the learning process (Osorio & Duarte, 2011).

A blog, according to Doctorow, Dornfest, Johnson, Powers, Trott & Trott (2002), is a simple web page consisting of brief paragraphs of opinion, information, personal diary entries, or links, called publications, arranged chronologically with the most recent first, in the style of an online diary. Nowadays, blogs are a useful tool to make participating students more active in the learning process. Chawinga (2017) concluded that, within the structure of a blog, students could demonstrate their capacity for critical thinking, take creative risks, and make sophisticated use of language and design elements. Therefore, by doing so continuously, students acquire creative, critical, communicative, and collaborative skills that can be useful for them in academic and professional contexts. Chais et al. (2017) used blogs to teach English as a foreign language in a Brazilian university. He investigated students' perception of blogs as learning tools and found that blogs helped them to improve their writing skills in English by accessing tutorials in the form of podcasts and videos shared by their blogs.

On the other hand, social networks are structures that promote communication with other people or with institutions through the Internet. Although social networking technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, among others, can be a distraction, they can also be an outlet for instructors and students to participate more actively and dynamically and to participate more dynamically and actively in educational activities (Fojtik, 2014). Social networks facilitate fluid communication between students and teachers, allow research, and find resources needed to complete daily tasks more efficiently and to learn almost without realizing it (Pachler et al., 2010). Besides, social networks such as Facebook allow the creation of private groups for each class or each subject, which facilitate the students' ability to solve problems and discover answers through the networks (Osorio et al., 2011).

### **Skills required by the student to make use of technological education**

There is a broad consensus that students can facilitate their learning process with the help of technology without limitations of time and place because, in such a setting, they can easily collect and analyze data, test hypotheses, design experiments, and conclude (Mahini, Forushan & Haghani, 2012). However, although many universities recognize the need to innovate along these lines, there is no decisive leadership for students to follow in order to address the required changes themselves (Casas & Stojanovic, 2013). In higher education, it is essential to emphasize that there are pure or exact science careers that have already been adapted to today's technology. However, some careers have not fully incorporated ICTs and taken advantage of all its benefits (López de la Madrid, 2007). Undoubtedly, students in contact with ICTs obtain the benefits of access to information, more-fluent communication, and the advances in training. However, this requires educational actions related to the use, selection, and organization of information, so that the student is trained to become a mature citizen of the information society (Salinas, 2004).

Pedagogical and digital literacy in ICTs is related to practices of didactically processing and organizing these resources, as well as giving them sense and cultural meaning, a subject that, in a school context, is related to the curriculum as a cultural project for new generations (Sandoval, Rodríguez & Maldonado, 2017). As such, it is necessary to train teachers digitally and to promote autonomous work by students for the use of diverse educational technology applications (Shi, 2016). Students have some natural abilities for digital reading, navigating, and evaluating what they read to discriminate pages and query strategies (Akçay, 2010). Promoting autonomous work by students has a significant impact on university students' learning through technology (Lai, Wang & Lei, 2012). Undoubtedly, training in digital skills should be part of the curriculum; however, this is a complex issue because many educational



institutions have not yet made it a priority to promote skills such as a proactive attitude or self-motivation in their students for the use of online learning resources (Salinas, 2004).

## Benefits of Technological Education

Education is one of the best means through which one can obtain a sense of unity between students and professors in the classroom, as well as build confidence and independence within the students (Salinas, 2004). Educational technology has also proven to play an essential role in achieving these traits and has become the source of fundamental changes in the classroom. The use of technology in education has allowed students to access information outside of classrooms, and this has caused an increase in self-motivation for learning. For example, Azma (2011) found that educational technology helps students significantly improve their scores by expanding the information they can access and, as a result, to broaden their learning environment (Personal Learning Environment). Also, the use of technology has also made education more dynamic and exciting. In particular, studies have shown that tweets are considered a more interactive form of learning compared to traditional knowledge-transfer tools such as lectures (Menkhoff, Chay, Bengtsson, Woodard & Gan, 2015). Technology has also allowed the development of collaborative learning and greater participation by students. Collaborative learning implies a greater involvement of the classroom community in the learning on a specific topic (Shi, 2016). For example, Wheeler (2010) showed that social networks help students to create a positive contextual training space concerning pedagogical objectives and to get involved in collaborative learning. Such networks motivate students to interact through posting comments or questions on blogs or by “tweeting” on relevant topics.

Online education offers new possibilities for open and flexible learning (Salinas, 2004), which can promote new hybrid models of teaching practices, with teaching methods that require new types of learning experiences. According to Floridi (2014), among the tools that provide greater communication—as well as combine education with ICTs in a specialized manner—are learning analysis or artificial intelligence, adaptive learning, calibrated peer review and scoring automated tests (Balfour, 2013). These are advanced processes that, if they are functional interfaces, can allow teachers to concentrate on human attributes such as caring, creativity, and participation in problem-solving. Finally, the use of technology in education has also helped reduce administrative expenses (Ilgaz, 2015). In particular, the possibilities that the Internet offers are extensive. Thanks to the ease of sharing content, it is possible to use the network to provide students with eBooks and interactive tools to carry out their activities and exercises. Without the need for paper books, the cost of books and other learning materials, as well as administrative costs, can be reduced (Nieto & Diaz, 2005). Through educational technology, the students’ cognitive comprehension has

been improved, and a significant increase in their performance has been observed; indeed, the speed and quality of learning in schools have improved, as well (Chen et al., 2012).

## **Role of the teacher in this technological age**

Teaching methods have changed in recent years. In most of the world, the most effective leap forward has been the application of ICTs in higher education since 1990 (Hamidi et al., 2011). Given that technology-based training is a learner-centered method (instead of relying on the teacher), there have been fundamental changes in the learning process, as well as in the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, because the use of tools and technologies reduces some of the limitations of the classroom (Mahini et al., 2012). There is an essential emphasis on teachers today, as they must prepare to provide learning opportunities in addition to technology for students. In fact, preparation to apply technology and technological awareness to improve the quality of student learning must be one of the necessary skills of a teacher (Hamidi et al., 2011).

The teacher is the actor whose central role is to help students access and develop their technological capabilities. The teacher should have the necessary expertise, knowledge, and ability to manage learning activities. With these skills, he or she must try to change the classroom from a static to a dynamic learning environment so that students can communicate with others, both in their classes and in virtual classes around the world (Salinas, 2004). The literature has observed that the main activities of teacher training in e-learning can be divided into two main tasks: 1) planning and delivering content to students, and 2) promoting excellent communication between teachers and students. In this type of training, learning skills strengthen motivation, and students' participation in the learning process is more prominent (Mahini et al., 2012). In the e-learning environment, students can already perform several of the teacher's duties until they are shared, and the quality of education is increased through process efficiency. These changes also mean that the teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge (Mahini et al., 2012). Therefore, teachers in higher education can have a positive impact by learning to apply ICTs optimally and to teach their students to do the same.

## **Challenges of this technological era**

The implementation of technology in each vocational school and university must be designed and regulated according to the purposes and goals of each institution since one of the most significant challenges is the lack of clarity in planning and

implementing it. Such planning should be focused on generating motivation for the use of technologies through strategies that allow virtual classrooms to be an alternative learning space (Freitas et al., 2018). The challenges currently facing education imply the incorporation of new pedagogical technologies in a more open and flexible formal education, as several authors have recently pointed out (Castañeda & Adell, 2013).

On the other hand, vocational schools today do not require instructors to be trained in technology. Because of this, teachers that are not trained in technological applications have a competitive disadvantage in the labor market versus teachers who do have experience with the use of technology. A teacher without such training is an intermediate staff member not qualified for the labor market (Dahil, Karabulut & Mutlu, 2015). That is, most teachers do not have the level of knowledge or the teaching experience necessary for an adequate education process (Mendoza, Baldiris & Fabregat, 2015). The instructors, who will be implementers of the technological integration, are severely hampered in using the technology because these instruments are sophisticated, and instructors do not have enough academic equipment. (Dahil et al., 2015). In other words, future teachers must learn in an applied way about the use of technology and extend it with pedagogical practices throughout their training for their professional development.

Similarly, universities face obstacles related to infrastructure, thus limiting students' access to computers (Ngampornchai et al., 2016). Among the challenges, for example, investments are insufficient since investment in technology requires a long-term and high-cost infrastructure. Institutions initially require a stable supply of energy and infrastructure, which is an essential ingredient for implementing stable ICTs systems. The lack of supply is a major obstacle to facilitating operations and Internet access (Hamidi et al., 2011). Many technical institutes and universities teach theoretical education instead of practical training since they do not have enough equipment or technological infrastructure (Dahil et al., 2015).

Another challenge is students' and teachers' view of ICTs as instruments of the configuration of learning and work environments (Nieto et al., 2005). The low acceptance of e-learning is due to the low level of knowledge, a deficient level of computer literacy, an unreliable platform in Internet services, and the high cost of implementation (Folorunso, Ogunseye, & Sharma, 2006). For example, García-Pérez, Santos-Delgado & Buzón-García (2016) found that only ten percent of the teachers in his sample reached a high level of technological adaptation, and, for this reason, we believe that the appropriate training should be included in teachers' study plans. Critical success factors of e-learning experts (professors, ICTS experts, and researchers) were explored in developing countries. The four main factors that emerged from the data were classified by ICTs experts: computer training, perceived utility; attitude towards e-learning; and computer self-efficacy. Among students, these four factors are vital for the optimal use of ICTs (Bhuasiri, Xaymoungkhoun, Zo, Rho & Ciganek, 2012).

## Conclusions

Educational technology through ICTs has been successfully incorporated in primary and secondary schools (Martínez Sánchez, 2007). However, at the university level, there are continuing challenges regarding the guidelines that should be followed to implement the application of ICTs in all careers (Salinas, 2004). We have observed all the benefits and adversities that universities face when promoting the increase of technological resources in the classroom.

However, it is essential to point out that, although it is generally agreed that the application of educational technology improves educational quality, this cannot be easily proven. If the faculty does not have the proper preparation or creativity to use ICTs, the quality of teaching could be substandard and could affect the learning process. This would be the main challenge since students generally have experience with ICTs and do not need to be trained (Avello et al., 2016). In addition, there are no mechanisms for evaluating quality improvements that come from the application of technology in the classroom. Finally, the application of educational technology varies from career to career because there are many careers, such as the pure sciences or engineering, that require a continuous process of improvement at the technological level. However, several careers that are labeled “theoretical” do not use ICTs as much, although potential positive effects could be found in the use of ICTs, such as participation in MOOCs or blogs, which allow for more global learning and a broader perspective on their careers (Pachler et al., 2010).

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# Digital games (Gamification) in Learning and Training: An Approach to Adaptation and Integration in the Classroom<sup>1</sup>

Juegos Digitales (Gamificación) en  
el Aprendizaje y la Formación: Un  
Acercamiento a la Adaptación e  
Integración en el Aula

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## Abstract

This article is the result of the SGI 2174 project. Its objective is to identify how elements, techniques and mechanics game (gamification) have been implemented, as an ICT-mediated learning strategy for learning and training in the education. A systemic literary review of works on the subject is carried out to contextualize and identify methods, techniques, tools and platforms of gamification. The results make an analysis of the articles reviewed, and describe and describe the technologies and methodologies of gamification and the most relevant results with which gamification has been implemented in educational and business environments. This project is developed in the research groups TelemaTICs and TICA, and funded by DIN-UPTC.

**Keywords:** learning and technology; education and ICT; e-learning, gamification; adaptation; integration; classroom, business environments

## Resumen

Este artículo es el resultado del proyecto SGI 2174. Su objetivo es identificar cómo se han implementado los elementos, las técnicas y el juego de mecánica (gamificación), como una estrategia de aprendizaje mediada por las TIC para el aprendizaje en la educación y la formación. Se realizó una revisión literaria sistémica de trabajos sobre el tema para contextualizar e identificar métodos, técnicas, herramientas y plataformas de gamificación. Los resultados hacen un análisis de los artículos revisados y describen las tecnologías y metodologías de gamificación y los resultados de mayor relevancia con la que se ha implementado la gamificación en entornos educativos y empresariales. Este proyecto se desarrolla en los grupos de investigación TelemaTICs y TICA, y está financiado por DIN-UPTC.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje y tecnología, educación y TIC; aprendizaje virtual; gamificación; adaptación; integración; aula; ambientes de negocios

## Resumo

Este trabalho surge do seguinte problema: como implementar elementos, técnicas e mecânicas de jogo (gamificação) a maneira de estratégias de aprendizagem mediadas pelas TIC para a aprendizagem e a formação na educação do século XXI? Neste artigo, ao mesmo tempo, descreve-se o crescimento desta tecnologia, usada em entornos educativos e empresariais. Também se faz uma revisão sistemática dos trabalhos sobre o tema para contextualizar e identificar métodos, técnicas, ferramentas e plataformas de gamificação. O projeto atualmente é desenvolvido nos grupos de pesquisa TelemaTICs e TICA, e está financiado pelo Código de Projeto DIN SGI 2174.

**Palavras chave:** aprendizagem e tecnologia; educação e TIC; aprendizagem virtual; gamificação; adaptação, integração; sala de aula; ambientes de negócios.

## Introduction

During the last decade, games have become a fundamental task within the learning process by students (Hamari & Keronen, 2017), the use and implementation of technological tools day by day converge more to an education mediated by information technologies and communication (ICT), the educational methodologies usually used each time require a high degree of innovation (Galbis-Córdova, Martí-Parreño, & Curras-Perez, 2017) in order to implement improvements in educational originality and not replace them completely and thus generate an environment of innovation within of the academic scenario (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014).

The technological advances of the hand of the learning give rise to the calls “digital challenges” (Roosta, Taghiyareh, & Mosharraf, 2016), as well as a hybrid between learning-games based on learning-gamification. The games every day become a different way of attracting the attention of the students. In the research of Hanus and Fox (2015) they are defined as the largest information system of leisure in the last decade, resulting in enjoyment and utility that the user gives to the game, considering determining factors for its success.

However, when implementing game elements especially in e-learning platforms, it is required as recommended for Bonillaware (2012) to have experts in technology, pedagogy and design, in order to optimize the development processes of the analysis and design phases of the elements of the game. In Colombia, it was not possible to identify duly documented experiences of the use of gamification in educational settings.

## Resources and Methods

Within the literature review to carry out this exploratory research, initially we proceeded to investigate the databases repository that had similarity to the study area that was intended to be evaluated, in this case gamification. Resulting in the following list of repositories and databases: Scopus, ACM, IEEE, Google Scholar, Science Direct and Digitalia, as a second instance, a search by keyword (Gamification, Gamification in education) was carried out, resulting in a number of searches of approximately 23,712 articles. As the volume of works identified was high, a time range was defined that consisted of searching for articles published between 2010 and 2018, reaching 8,400 papers. The result of this exploration is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Related articles according to search criteria.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Database</i>	<i>Key word</i>	<i>Result global</i>	<i>Result applying time range</i>
1	Scopus	Gamification in education	846	191
2	ACM	Gamification	487	489
3	IEEE	Gamification	518	36
4	Google Scholar	Gamification in education	21.000	7.400
5	Science Direct	Gamification	831	262
6	Digitalia	Gamification	30	22

To get a more explicit analysis of the papers found, we proceeded to filter by explicit areas of gamification implementation. Taking as a variable the study population, and the study area; and thus make a review through RAE cards that characterize each study in a more relevant way. 38 articles were reached, which were identified in the different application areas in which gamification is implemented, see Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of areas in which gamification was implemented in the selected studies.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Área</i>	<i>Total articles reviewed</i>
1	Gamification applied to education	17
2	Gamification applied to the internet of things	3
3	Gamification applied to the tourism sector	3
4	Gamification applied in cultural programs	2
5	Gamification applied as a research area	7
6	Gamification applied to social networks	4
7	Gamification applying in augmented reality	1
8	Gamification applied to the business sector	1

## Literature Analysis and Results

The was systematic documentary review process. Seano (2016) recommends “knowing the main documentary sources, as well as mastering the mechanisms of access, search, collection, and organization of such documentation”.

For this work, a characterization of the literature was made, which consisted of organizing and categorizing the articles that were found, for which a search equation was created. Which allowed to structure the searches and segregate the articles by focus and within the time window. A large amount of data was collected; which made it necessary to identify each work with a RAE (Analytical Summary of Writing) tab.

Through this RAE, through this, the description of each work was carried out, identifying relevant factors such as tools and development platforms. Below are the results obtained in this literary review.

The results obtained in the study of Benito (2014) express that it is fundamental to emphasize the learning style of each user, since not all individuals possess the same personality traits when receiving new knowledge; the research proposes a model for the realization of the learning style, starting as the first instance of the identification of perception, then the commitment that the individual acquires with respect to the new knowledge, and finally determining the performance of the new learning, it is concluded that the users that they have active learning styles (It is a method that engages students in the material they are learning through problem solving activities, writing assignments, group discussion, reflection, games, and other activities that promote critical thinking) have a result of implementation of positive gamification, while people with extrovert personality traits adapt more easily to traditional learning methods (is a method that focuses on the teacher and his ability to share education, leaving the student as a passive actor, making the student to listen as a primary action but they are interaction between him, his classmates or the resources).

For the research developed by Roosta, Taghiyareh, and Mosharraf (2016), it is important to categorize the elements of gamification according to the type of motivation derived from each user, as a result of the study that was implemented in an English course of the University of Tehran in Iran, concluded that the participation measures demonstrate the effectiveness of the personalization approach in the motivation of the students. Based on the findings, it is suggested to make an integrated categorization of the gamification elements without forgetting the motivation through personalization.

At University Midwest Hanus and Fox (2015) developed a course with a gamified resume for one group, in this they created a leaderboard and insignia, and another the group received the same curriculum but no gamification elements. As a result, the students enrolled in the gamified course showed more motivation, satisfaction and training than the students in the group that did not integrate games in class.

Students in the CM show less motivation and lower scores on the final exam than those in the non-gamified class (Hanus & Fox, 2015). This suggests that special care must be taken when applying certain gamification mechanisms for educational environments, concluding that there is a knowledge gap in the understanding of

the advantages and disadvantages of gamification, between the complexity of the implementation of a game feature and the impact that it has.

For the development of educational projects which require the integration of gamification models, as a learning strategy, it is advisable to include game dynamics in an educational environment. Bonillaware (2012) indicates that the use of game dynamics, mechanics and components allow for better interaction between students and teachers, gamification incorporates the use of design elements for games, but applied to contexts totally different from games.

In the integration of gamification to education (Seaone, 2016) indicates that it is essential to identify which is the appropriate platform for the implementation of this type of project. And you must define the activities and processes that will be taken into account within the dynamics of the game to develop for it to be successful.

The variety of digital applications found on the network allows the use of already developed components to adapt the mechanics and resources of gamification to any educational setting. Each project must be clear about the objective of using gamification, the platform to use and the activities so that gamification is integrated into education, marketing or research. The most used platforms and the recommended tools to start gamification projects, see Table 3.



Table 3. Description of platforms used in the studies consulted

Plataform	Characteristics
Badgeville	This solution allows you to create games that have clear objectives and are based on custom rewards. Badgeville is made up of: a widget generator, API, a mobile SDK, connectors with Omniture, Yammer, among many more solutions.
Bunchball	This web portal brings users a lot of gamification resources that can be used in different business and corporate contexts.
BigDoor	Platform with 2 versions (a free one and a paid one) in which you can export services to your website. It is integrated to social networks such as Facebook or Twitter.
Gigya	It allows creating resources that can be integrated into corporate applications through social networks. The platform has a large number of integrated functions (e.g., REST APIs, as well as the use of servers with .NET, Java, PHP, SDKs for iOS, Android, and Flash).
Stopped.at	The platform is linked to corporate websites and offers gamification services to attract users of these websites. In addition, content can be shared on social networks.
Kiip	It is a mobile advertising platform that uses gamification to create, in video games, a system of rewards and apply it to the real world.
Gamify	This platform allows you to create games that have personalized rewards. It has a kit consisting of: a widget generator, an API, a mobile SDK, connectors with Omniture, Yammer and many more applications.

Note. Adapted from “7 plataformas de gamificación [7 gamification platforms],” by Bonillaware, 2012 (<http://www.bonillaware.com/7-plataformas-de-gamificacion>).

From the tools identified in the research referred to in this article, it was evidenced that among those most used for education, those described in table 4 stand out.

*Table 4.* Description of Tools and Characteristics Used in the Studies Consulted

Tools	Characteristics
Arcademics	Web application to create interactive multiplayer games for learning purposes. With multiplayer features.
Openbadges	Web application to create game-based activities, with a reward system and achievement-oriented.
Classdojo	It is a platform based on a reward system, and the evaluation of attitudes, behaviors through roles defined by the creator of the activity designed in the form of a game.
Playbuzz	A publishing platform to create questionnaires, games, surveys, lists, etc. This content can be shared online.
EducaPlay	In this platform you can create and share learning activities online.
Zondle	This website allows you to create educational video games.
Kubbu	Provides a variety of interactive and didactic exercises.
ProProfs	System to create online learning activities, using surveys, evaluations and contests in the form of games.
Quimitris	Web application that creates a game based on classic Tetris to learn the chemical elements and their properties on the periodic table.

Nowadays, there is a diversity of countries around the world that use gamification as an alternative for solving problems at the business level, among which you can have: training of personnel at work or educational level, development of evaluations and workshops, needs studies, launch of new products or services, and customer loyalty (Benito, 2014). The gamification can help companies and educational institutions to experiment and seek solutions to training, teaching-learning problems, among others (Contreras, 2016, p. 27).

## Gamification Cases in Educational Environments

Among the most representative characteristics are: the flexibility of the rules of the game; ludic learning with levels of difficulty; the game based on challenges as a factor that motivates the player; the flows and levels of the game; the customization of the game, the scenarios, and characters of the game; the function of co-creation of the game to generate personalized modifications on the part of the player; the scenarios of management of errors and failures, and the instructional design applied to the gamification, among others.

On the other hand, García (2016) affirms that there is a series of pedagogical principles valid for face-to-face and distance education, which must be taken into account when working with digital content: “individualization, socialization, activity, autonomy, intuition, creativity, and game” (2016, p. 9).

The research carried out by Galbis-Córdova, Martí-Parreño, and Curras-Pérez (2017) determined to explore what were the key factors in terms of the emotional attitude of students when faced with new knowledge in a gamified form, 128 students participated in this research and the ARCS instructional motivation model (Instructional design approach that focuses on motivational aspects of the learning environment. Model was created by John Keller in 1980). It is model that was implemented by Fazamin, Haji Ali, Saman, Yusoff, and Yacob (2015) to evaluate the influence of gamification on student motivation. The most significant contributions of these researchs were to analyze and demonstrate how gamification motivates learning in people, this being a valuable reason to integrate play as a learning strategy in education today.

These researchs provide positive evidences that demonstrated: that the use of gamification contributes to improve the behavior of students when they work with electronic learning platforms, which generates confidence in the use of educational games. Based on the previous model the realization of an analysis of adequate techniques for education and e-learning is the key point of the implementation of gamification. In this study unlike (Galbis-Córdova, Martí-Parreño, & Curras-Pérez, 2017; Fazamin et al., 2015), it is implemented the GED design model (Design strategy management methodological framework), whose name comes from the combination of gamification and e-learning, demonstrating that through this model you can contribute to the participation and motivation of the students, improving the learning process.

Given that some of the online courses offered today are developed under the e-learning platform, if the student does not show the intention to do it, they can generate a state of loneliness and boredom in the virtual classroom. To control this state by which the student can pass, the investigations of Olsson, Mozelius, and Collin (2015); Auvinen, Hakulinen, and Malmi (2015) propose within their research to use achievement badges as a reward for the development of certain activity, in addition to this implemented progress bars or heat maps, in which it is possible to visualize the level of participation of the student, and thus motivate him to improve his participation in the activity, in the desire to be highly competitive and always want to be the winner. The research concluded that by means of this gamification technique, the motivating effect produced by watching the frequent positive behaviour of the students can be appreciated.

The works of Rodríguez (2015), Moreira and González (2015) and Rughiniş (2013) have contributed to the improvement of learning processes, especially in the dynamization and interaction with learning of some functions of the human body and helping to better understand the complexity of the vocabulary handled in the area of health according to the authors (Rojas, Cowan, Kapralos, & Dubrowski, 2014). In contrast to the above, the research of Moreira and González (2015) demonstrated the importance of human-machine interaction in the learning process, and the need for productivity of books and educational materials in digital formats to be accessible to all types of people as proposed (Mageswaran, Zaleha and Hasnah, 2016).

Within the academic scenario, it is worth highlighting the case of the secondary school of the South Malaysian state of Johor in Malaysia, where gamification was applied as a metric for the teaching of sciences; the study was applied to 29 secondary students, through a mixed research design, and making use of the Zondle gamification platform, this platform was used given its dynamic characteristics to be used in children under 13 years of age.

On the other hand, at the University of John Moores, in Liverpool, they implemented gamification not just as an educational learning strategy, but as an application so that people who want to know the institution can do it through virtual reality interacting with each other with the application and the real world, that is, as if the player were immersed in the game, in this way, the main objective of this study is for the population to know the facilities available to the university, and simulate a day within it, this has generated great acceptance in the players, to the point that they make the decision to study at this campus (Curtis, Stephen, & David, 2015).

The State University of Londrina in Brazil, developed a project called SIGMA, this study emerged seeing the need to implement a strategy that contributes to the learning of secondary school students in complex subjects such as mathematics, arithmetic, and logic algorithms.

Within the research carried out by Toda, Do Carmo, and Silva (2014), the authors concluded that the main objective of the research was achieved, which aimed to unify the system, teacher-student-gamification, and although this project is still in the preparation phase, it is expected that students improve their ability in understanding and mastering the topics.

As suggested by García (2016), a group of researchers in Barcelona, Spain, developed a digital game, with the aim of orienting the educational competencies to elementary school students, implementing in their development the process of co-creation, calling it a game Ferran Alsina, focusing mainly on basic skills and specific methodologies, advising that the game is especially designed for children between 4 and 10 years old (Contreras-Espinosa, Eguia-Gómez, & Albajes, 2016).

The work of Evaristo, Vega, Navarro, and Nakano (2016), in Lima, Peru, which involved 561 students, divided into three groups, whose main objective was the identification of the influence of video games in real time, for the development of this project three groups were formed in which the first group worked on the theme only using video games, the second group only theoretical classes, and the third group a hybrid strategy between groups one and two, the results were quite strong, demonstrating that the students of group one, who worked only with video games, had a greater effect on the grades than the other groups. Demonstrating that video games can be used as a pedagogical tool in teaching.

At the National University of Colombia, Cadavid and Gómez (2015), establish the majority of educational institutions in Colombia present a low level of knowledge especially for the area of Mathematics, proposed to design a gamification didactic strategy in order that by through this technique, the students reached the comprehension and mastery of the subject in a more friendly way, this research was done to 2,263 students of the institution in a precalculus course, giving result to an increase in the academic performance with a percentage of acceptable approval and evidencing a lower level of desertion.

Likewise, Butler and Ahmed (2016) also exposes the level of student desertion, especially in the area of computer science, describing that this problem occurs due to lack of motivation or interest in this field. For this research, a game was implemented in which the computer systems were conceptualized in a didactic and fun way: volunteers responded to a survey and compared his acceptance of learning by playing with traditional learning in the classroom. The results showed that gamification is key in changing the learning experience for students in the area of computer sciences and helped them achieve their learning objectives.

## **Gamification Cases in Business Environments**

Business sectors such as tourism have adopted gamification practices and methods in order to show themselves as an innovative concept in tourism marketing (Xu, Buhalis, & Weber, 2017) in Hong Kong, a cultural exchange website similar to Airbnb was developed, a gamification strategy so that users can obtain a special card called SuperHost, considered a host card, in which through the gamified platform they can have knowledge of the comments registered by the SuperHost, resulting in a trend of most relevant comments and evaluations. (Liang, Schuckertb, Lawb, & Chen, 2017).

Within the studies of Malegiannaki and Daradoumis (2017); Petrucco and Agostini (2016), the integration of gamification techniques in the educational trend applied to the formation of cultural heritage, relying on technologies such as augmented reality giving way to a method that provides great potential. This research allowed the study

of 34 cities, especially developed for the Walled City of Veneto to population between children of 7 and 15 years the cultural and historical importance of the city, integrating gamification with augmented reality for mobile devices, in this way, using visually attractive tools, it is possible to improve pedagogical skills, allowing interaction with the system.

In Colombia there are companies that implement gamification as an alternative to call customers and/or train their employees, among them Playvoz, Alliance between the Colombian Association of Contact Centers and BPO, is a platform that works as a social network but internal to each company, in which through gamification, seeks to be more efficient in the processes of selection, induction and training of personnel in the area of Human Talent in this company, the Arcaris Company, was founded by Oscar Giraldo to identify the achievements that each worker has both at a group and individual level and rewards depending on what has been achieved (Corporación Colombia Digital [CCD], 2013).

Therefore the research developed by Gómez, Calvo-Manzano, Gasca-Hurtado, and San Feliu (2014) proposes a teaching instrument in which it uses the basic principles of gamification, in order to get software developers to work in a different environment, and in turn obtain more successful projects and processes. Molina (2013), in a way that also advises in his research Ferrández (2013), considers that gamification and marketing strategies contribute to the decision-making process in the company, this being one of the main characteristics to take into account.

The research developed by Sousa-Vieira, López-Ardao, Fernández-Veiga, Rodríguez-Pérez, & Herrería-Alonso (2016) affirms that these digital natives possess learning skills developed within an online social context, given that online social networks (OSN) are considered an important factor to enter a new dimension of social systems learning management, there are still traditional learning practices avoiding the user experience in a socially active environment. The work of De-Marcos, García-López, and García-Cabot (2016) exalt the value that social networks and gamification has had in contributing to education by applying it throughout the educational semester, implementing methods of correlation, component analysis, and multiple regression.

The use of social networks has not only been adopted for roles as students. The study of De-Marcos et al. (2016) describes that this tendency is increasingly coined by teachers and educational institutions giving way to a new trend called social Gamification, in which the main objective is to take advantage of the educational game and social networks as a methodology for the purpose to improve the relationship institution-teacher-student.

In general terms, it is possible to affirm that social networks have contributed to education by demonstrating the effectiveness of e-learning, the research developed

by De-Marcos, Domínguez, Saenz-de-Navarrete, and Pagés (2014) presents results product test obtained between social networks and gamification for a specific course, in order to compare academic performance, participation, and attitude of students towards this new technology. Resulting in the optimization of both approaches in terms of improving a traditional teaching process, encouraged by electronic learning, affirming that this is a way in which students called digital natives, resemble technologies developed in new approaches, giving positive result to any practice.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The documentary review made it possible to identify the level of research in which the object of study of this work is found; in this case, the concept of gamification was deepened and, at the same time, the potential implementation scenarios were analyzed and discussed.

The gamification is considered a fundamental part of the learning process, it allows you to adapt platforms and use tools in any area of knowledge. Thus managing to incorporate elements of the game in a learning context, and making it improve the motivation to learn as well as the results of the training process.

The implementation of gamification strategies allows generating an innovative educational environment, which contributes to the development of active learning and promotes greater interaction among the participants. The integration of gaming platforms in education or training streamlines training processes and motivates learning.

Once the current state of gamification theory has been explored and analyzed, and after the scientific synthesis supported in this article, it is proposed to evaluate the most technically adequate platforms and tools for the development of a gamified module oriented to secondary education. As a representative sample the module will be applied to students of Grade 11 in the subject of chemistry. It is then proposed as a next step to the investigation to determine the appropriate model to be applied in real scenarios.

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# Exploring the Grounds for the Study of the Identity of Indigenous English Language Teachers in Colombia<sup>1</sup>

Explorando las Bases para el Estudio de  
la Identidad de los Profesores Indígenas  
de Inglés en Colombia

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## Abstract

This article addresses the invisibilization of the existence of indigenous teachers in the Colombian ELT (English language teaching) field. Their existence, which is admittedly a phenomenon that lacks quantitative saliency, offers opportunities to reflect on the epistemological asymmetries that traditionally have linked the Colombian ELT field to an instrumental mainstream bilingualism, often ignoring the conditions of linguistic and cultural diversity in the country. Besides, there is an exploration of how the study of indigenous teachers' identities might contribute to the re-signification of pedagogy; this paper elaborates on the idea that scholars in the Colombian ELT have already built some horizons of understanding between the ELT and the diversities and epistemic privileges of Colombian indigeneity. The article is part of an ongoing research on the identities of indigenous teachers in the Colombian ELT being carried out within the Interinstitutional Ph.D. in Education at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá.

**Keywords:** Indigenous English language teachers, teacher identities, decolonial thought, cultural diversity, linguistic diversity

## Resumen

Este artículo aborda la invisibilización de la existencia de los profesores indígenas en el campo de la enseñanza de inglés. Su existencia, el cual es un fenómeno que carece de prominencia cuantitativa, ofrece oportunidades de reflexionar sobre las asimetrías epistemológicas que tradicionalmente han conectado el campo de la enseñanza de inglés con un bilingüismo instrumental dominante, en el que usualmente se ignoran las condiciones de diversidad lingüística y cultural en el país. Además, hay una exploración de cómo el estudio de las identidades de los profesores indígenas pueden contribuir a la resignificación de la pedagogía. Este documento elabora la idea de que los académicos en la enseñanza de inglés en Colombia han construido algunos horizontes de comprensión entre la enseñanza de inglés y las diversidades y los privilegios epistemológicos de la idogeneidad colombiana. El artículo es parte de la investigación continua de las idogeneidades de los profesores indígenas que se desarrolla en el Doctorado Interinstitucional en la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas en Bogotá.

**Palabras clave:** profesores indígenas de inglés, identidades de profesores, pensamiento decolonial, diversidad cultural, diversidad lingüística

## Resumo

Este artigo trata sobre a invisibilização da existência dos professores indígenas na área do ensino de inglês. Sua existência, o qual é um fenômeno que carece de prominência quantitativa, oferece oportunidades de refletir sobre as assimetrias epistemológicas que tradicionalmente têm conectado a área do ensino de inglês com um bilinguismo instrumental dominante, no que usualmente se ignoram as condições de diversidade linguística e cultural no país. Além disso, há uma exploração de como o estudo das identidades dos professores indígenas podem contribuir com a ressignificação da pedagogia. Este documento elabora a ideia de que os acadêmicos no ensino de inglês na Colômbia têm construído alguns horizontes de compreensão são entre o ensino de inglês e as diversidades e os privilégios epistemológicos da indigeneidade colombiana. O artigo é parte da pesquisa contínua das indigeneidades dos professores indígenas que se desenvolve no Doutorado Interinstitucional na Universidade Distrital Francisco José de Caldas em Bogotá.

**Palavras chave:** professores indígenas de inglês, identidades de professores, pensamento descolonial, diversidade cultural, diversidade linguística

## Introduction

The study of teachers' identities in the ELT (English language teaching) field has subtly shifted from a major focus on the multiple dimensions that constitute identity to an understanding of the performative elements that such constitutive elements have as causes and consequences of the acts of educating. This means that the conflux of factors such as teachers' culture (Clarke, 2008), their language(s) (Joseph, 2004), their spiritual beliefs (Joseph, 2004), their ethnicity (Alexander, 2003), their profession (Swain, 2005), and their gender (Escudero, 2008) has become relevant not only because they constitute subjectivities for teachers, but also because increasingly these factors become sources for pedagogy and social agency (Morgan, 2017). This means that the multiple and diverse dimensions of identity do not constitute just the dimension of the being of teachers, but also have an effect in their doing, acknowledging that teachers' intentionality and positioning becomes pivotal in the praxis at the classroom (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

This shift into the inquiry of teachers' identity, in turn, has brought into play the use of alternative methodological approaches such as auto-ethnographies, narratives, autobiographies, and story-telling. These alternative approaches do not just work for research purposes but also become the vehicle by which teachers understand, author, and re-author their experiences and envision them towards the future (Barkhuizen, 2016). Thus, a recognition of agency in teachers' construction of their identity, also results in a certain agency in the forms in which scholars are resorting to more emic perspectives towards research.

The Colombian ELT has also opened spaces for the academic dialogue around the study of teacher identity, and its agentic dimension. This emerging object of inquiry has disputed spaces of recognition against the more traditional research topics such as the disciplinary studies and the canonical pedagogy that were almost exclusively entrenched into the local scholar production in the field. The inclusion of diverse research interests allows the problematization of aspects that, by being constitutive of the Colombian ELT teacher identities, are also connected to extended societal aspects such as equality, gender and power issues.

Examples of how the inquiry into teachers' identities has started to gain terrain in the Colombian ELT field, defying scholar traditions, include the disclosure of queer identities by means of narrative explorations (Lander, 2018), or the documentation of bottom-up instances of teachers' agency in more vulnerable conditions. This latter is the case of rural Colombian ELT teachers' enactment of wisdom practices and personal theories (Cruz, 2018), or the Colombian EFL primary teachers' construction of their identities as oscillating within the colonial shadow and their autonomy as decision makers regarding top-down policies (Quintero, & Guerrero, 2013). Colombian ELT teachers' agency as social and cultural beings (Quintero & Guerrero, 2013) implies



the use of politics of location to rearticulate identities in front of existing discursive practices, and bring up fights that are social in nature, and that formerly seemed to be rather absent from the scholar dialogue in the field.

The visibilization of such topics makes it apparent that the Colombian ELT has participated of an epistemic reflection which attempts to promote the intercultural reconstruction of the human dimension in the field, and, by means of a sociology of absences (De Sousa, 2010), end with the discrepancy between the theory and the social practices. The scholars in the field seem to be addressing a transgressing and insurgent positioning in research to demonstrate that what does not exist in the academic dialogue has been actually constructed as non-existent, as a spendable alternative, invisible to a hegemonic world reality. In this reconstruction of Colombian ELT teachers' identities, the divergence is an asset that has gained terrain over the being/not- being binary distinctions (Mignolo, 2000). Heterogeneity and phenomena like gender, power, inequality, and identity are being chosen as objects of study in the Colombian ELT not just because there is an epistemic interest, but also because their existence has to do with the ontology, and ultimately the ethics of human beings.

It is in this politics of location that it makes sense to draw the attention of the field to a phenomenon that, due to the colonality of knowing and epistemic violence (Castro-Gómez, 2005), has often been overlooked, and has been invisibilized: the existence of indigenous teachers in the Colombian ELT field. There are English language teachers or English language teachers in formation who identify themselves as having an ethnic origin rooted in a particular indigenous group. Links between the indigenous identities and the ELT field do not seem to be easily located in the educational field. This can be explained mainly because it involves multiple situations of co-existence of languages and cultures that are not 'the norm' (but rather the exception), either because of their lack of quantitative saliency or because of practices of invisibilization towards minority groups (De Sousa, 2010).

The emerging criteria to locate an ontology of indigenous English language teachers in Colombia, besides the fact of participating of formation processes typical in the field (such studying language teaching majors), show three dimensions of indigenous identification.

First, there is an ingroup identification which could be determined by their lineages (as in the case of Wayuu peoples), this is an approach to heritage and territoriality that links them metaphysically and relationally with their motherland and their ancestry (Suárez-Krabbe, 2011), and, sometimes, an agentive role in the processes of re-indignization of their in-group identity (Jackson & Warren, 2005).

The second dimension is an identity configuration against essentialisms. The fact that they have chosen or have been driven to become English language teachers might seem a challenge to the essentialist identification of their indigeneity given by the

Corte Constitucional (1998), which basically established a continuum for autonomy and territoriality which labels grades them as traditional, semi-traditional, or uprooted –based on their mestizaje and contact with the ‘white’ society. The existence of indigenous English language teachers in Colombia embodies encounters and disencounters between the nation’s grand narratives of modernity/ coloniality (which includes the instrumentality of mainstream bilingualism for the purpose of insertion into the global village), and the overlooked existing ethnic and cultural diversity of the country.

Finally, there is an oscillation between determinism and agency: The conflux of indigeneity in the Colombian ELT field is the living manifestation of a series of epistemic obediences and disobediences (Mignolo, 2013) in response to the coloniality and its white supremacy project of marginalization and invisibilization of the border beings (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012). The challenge is to understand to what extent their becoming English language teachers becomes an act of obedience of the tenets of coloniality and modernity, and to what extent it is an act of rebelliousness.

These emerging criteria of identification become referents against the conditions of their invisibilization, which threatens to seclude the Colombian indigenous English language teachers to the zone of non- being (Ndlovu, 2014), and can be explained by colonial mechanisms such as: i) epistemological asymmetries in the Colombian ELT field that make the conflux and embodiment of the ethnic bilingualism and he mainstream bilingualism in indigenous English language teachers [Mignolo’s (2013) *anthropos* and *humanitas*] as virtually non-existent; ii) the oblivion of the valuable contributions that studying the interfaces between Colombian ELT and the Colombian indigeneity could bring to pedagogy, and society at large, and iii) the vacuum of documentation of existing action-oriented counter hegemonic strategies (Escobar, 2003) that acknowledge the multiple versalities and horizons of understanding between the Colombian ELT field and the indigeneity.

### **Colombian indigenous English language teachers: from epistemic asymmetries in the ELT field to epistemic disobediences and epistemic rights**

Framed within a modern/colonial world system (Quijano, 2000; Castro-Gómez & Grossfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2017), in which power, agency, and inequality are often overlooked by educational researchers, the Colombian ELT field is subjected to what Clausen & Osborne (2013) and Bourdieu (2000) call institutionalized cultural arbitraries, which implies the entrenching, standardization, and subtle imposition of elements of the cultural capital backed up by the hegemonic social sciences emerging from geopolitical territories that differ from ours (De Sousa, 2006). The national education policies, and bilingualism programs construct discourses and practices of

disdain toward Colombian EFL teacher agency (Guerrero, 2010), at the same time, premises of citizenship and competitiveness (Dussel, 2005) have become the driving forces in shaping social groups' knowledge and identities. These practices, participate in a preemptive testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007) by which the voices and practices of Colombian EFL teachers are not only lessened in terms of their credibility, but are often even silenced.

Progressively scholars like Bonilla (2017) have explored the ethnic dimension in connection with educational practices in Colombia, and how whitening and othering discourses continue to generate asymmetries and epistemic violence. Yet, among the researchable inquiries in the Colombian ELT field, almost nothing has been said about Colombian indigenous EFL teachers and their identities. Regardless of the adoption of the post-structural, the critical, and the cultural turns, Colombian indigenous EFL teachers are being epistemologically and ontologically secluded to the zone of non-being (Ndlovu, 2014); they are constructed outside the ELT field. The multiple ethnic heritages, the enactment of race, the cultural positionality and the performance of identity, share the fate of not being genuinely welcome within the institutionalizing confines of the classroom (Warren, 2001), let alone within the institutionalizing discourses of the Colombian ELT. Racism and whiteness have been constructed subtly, often eluding scrutiny and detection, and, unless there is an understanding of the principles of the colonial/modern world system, the realities that are written in the margins of the 'grand narratives' (Baxter, 2003) of the ELT might remain invisibilized.

The Colombian ELT field, particularly after the economic openness to the global village in the 1990s (Cárdenas, 2018), has developed an intrinsic indissoluble relation with the concept of mainstream bilingualism. Colombian ELT scholars have questioned the assumption of English language learning as a guarantee of competitiveness in globalization (Bermúdez, & Fandiño, 2012). However, as de Mejía (2006) claims, equating Colombian bilingualism to the learning of English (and later French) as a foreign language, is a reductionist perspective of what the historical ethos of bilingualism in the country really has been like.

Colombian condition as a plurilingual nation, with 68 living languages (64 of which are indigenous peoples'), implies that such rich linguistic diversity cannot be taken out of the equation of what constitutes the discourse of bilingualism of the nation. However, such autochthonous linguistic diversity has been almost surgically detached from the nationhood project by means of an 'abyssal thinking' construction (De Sousa, 2010) of the concept of bilingualism. The binary distinction between 'mainstream bilingualism' (Spanish- English) and 'ethnic bilingualism' (Uribe-Jongbloed, & Anderson, 2014) has resulted in an almost total mutual blindness between the ELT field and the socio- historic ethos of Colombian multilingualism (ethnic bilingualism, was thought as the teaching of Spanish to speakers of indigenous languages, but often indigenous peoples were already bilingual in a second indigenous language).

The invisibilization of the indigenous identity in the ELT field does not only have to do with its lack of quantitative saliency but also, framed within the idea of mainstream bilingualism and ethnic bilingualism as mutually exclusive, emerges out of a logic, a culture, and a structure of the modern world-system which constructs hegemonic traits (Maldonado-Torres, 2017), and re-enacts a coloniality of power, a coloniality of knowledge, and a coloniality of being (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). The logics of knowledge production and transmission framed within the coloniality invisibilize the divergence (De Sousa, 2010). Epistemologically speaking, there is a distinction between the knowledge that is important for the teleological advance of a country in its paths towards modernity -the knowledge of the ‘humanitas’ (Mignolo, 2013), which is equated to a desired ‘mainstream bilingualism’, for which the Colombian ELT field plays a pivotal role, and the knowledge that is expendable since it is rather useful to safeguard alterities and diverse cultures - the knowledges of the ‘anthropos’ (Mignolo, 2013), which in this case is embodied by the ethnic bilingualism.

The institutional approach towards bilingualism also embodies an epistemic injustice by constructing an abyssal thinking (De Sousa, 2007) between the bilingualism of the *humanitas* and the one of the *anthropos*. On the one hand, there is a strong institutional support for mainstream bilingualism Spanish- English (the *humanitas*’ English additive pursuing the modernity of the country); on the other hand, ethnic bilingualism has institutionally been constructed through a discourse that promotes that the speakers of any indigenous language as their mother tongue add up Spanish to their linguistic capital (the *anthropos* is being expended for the sake of the *humanitas*). Despite the fact that indigenous peoples have historically had an ethos of bilingualism, their experiences are expended in favor of foreign epistemologies of what being bilingual in Colombia should be like from the colonial mindset.

This epistemic injustice (González-Arnal, 2015) permits dialogues between ‘the two bilingualisms’ if grounded on a distorted image based on prejudices that dehumanize individuals, objectify ‘the other’, and question the other’s capability as giver of knowledge. Coloniality explains the construction of the “other” or *anthropos*, who does not exist ontologically, but it is rather a discursive invention in opposition to ‘the *humanitas*’. The *humanitas* has been given the agentive role to construct the *anthropos* as ontologically inferior (Mignolo, 2013). This implies the risk of an epistemic extractivism (Grosfoguel, 2016) by which the agents of the intended mainstream bilingualism resort to the indigenous peoples and their historic *de facto* bilingualism to colonize and subject their knowledge of bilingualism and subject their ideas and practices in favor of the parameters and interests of a western hegemonic epistemology and culture.

Yet, the existence of Colombian English language teachers who identify themselves as indigenous poses a challenge to the existing abyssal thinking (De Sousa, 2007), and might as well be the result of epistemic (dis)obediences (Mignolo, 2013). An

ELT field in which there is space for the border-beings causes dissonance to the cultural horizon that produces market- regulated identities, values, and practices (Giroux, 2005). The border-beings (Dussel, 2013) rebel to their having been classified as underdeveloped economically and mentally. This 'colonial wound' (Mignolo, 2009), resulting from the epistemic injustices associated to languages is better understood in the following quote:

What could a person that was not born speaking one of the privileged languages and that was not educated in privileged institutions do? Either he or she accepts his or her inferiority or makes an effort to demonstrate that he or she was a human being equal to those who placed him or her as second class. That is, two of the choices are to accept the humiliation of being inferior to those who decided that you are inferior or to assimilate. And to assimilate means that you accepted your inferiority and resigned to playing the game that is not yours, but that has been imposed upon you – or the third option is border thinking and border epistemology (Mignolo, 2013, p. 134).

Given that the colonality in the Colombian ELT field has constructed an essentialist grand narrative of Colombian EFL teachers' identity that condemns Colombian indigenous EFL teachers to 'the zone of non-being' (Ndlovu, 2014), there is the need to go deeper than multicultural education in acknowledging that Colombian indigenous EFL teachers are not only likely to contribute to the epistemology from the periphery, but also by being part of the peripheric social formations, they are the ones that give nest to the authentic philosophy of liberation (Restrepo, & Rojas, 2010).

The recognition of their epistemic rights (Mignolo, 2009) and their epistemic privileges as border beings (Dussel, 2013) is fruitful in making evident the alternatives to the grand narratives (Grossfoguel, 2011) of what the Colombian ELT has traditionally been like, and can add potency to the critical decolonial responses that nest multiversalities in the Colombian ELT field. Ultimately, there is a need to admit that peoples, languages, and cultures "have the right to be different precisely because 'we' are all equals" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 311).

Approaching the ontology and epistemology of the Colombian ELT field by acknowledging the epistemic and ontological rights and privileges of indigenous EFL teachers is, as Mignolo (2009) would say of the decolonizing knowledges, one of the "...necessary steps for imagining and building democratic, just, and non-imperial/ colonial societies" (p.2). In the pursuit of such a society, it is important to establish an 'ecology of knowledges' (De Sousa, 2007) and thus, as Loomba (2000) warns us by criticizing the anti- colonial edge in the understanding of identity, avoid transforming resistance into new forms of oppression. If there is not a genuine attempt towards horizontal dialogue, the risk is that "in the process of exposing the ideological and historical functioning of such binaries, we are in danger of reproducing them" (Loomba, 2000, p. 104).

The implies that in the ELT field, teachers can, as Iedema (2003) puts it, resemiotize their current identities, and recognize themselves as descendants of decolonial practices, establish dialogues between their own indigenous historicities and those of their students and acknowledge how there is still a colonial context in which descendants of indigenous peoples might at times play complicity with the rules and explanations of the dominant culture (Gallegos, 2005), sometimes moving from the “public transcript”, (which they play because of fear of the reactions that their defiance might cause in the surveillance sphere enacted by society at large) to the engagement with transgressive performances, and “hidden transcripts” that diverge from the performance disclosed by and to the ones in power (Scott, 1990). There are interfaces resulting from ‘crossing the borders’ (Giroux, 2005) of what has been established as the norm in education, and finding junctures between mainstream bilingual education and indigenous peoples, ELT field and diverse identities, English (and other mainstream languages; namely, Spanish) and indigenous languages

### **The recognition of indigeneity in the ELT strengthens a pedagogical vindication of the right to be different**

Understanding that the ELT field (and particularly its naturalized binary core-periphery discourses) has been constructed by means of regulatory discourses of what is considered knowledge, science, and research implies that it becomes an academic space of struggle where the local social realities might be likely studied from the point of view of theoretical and analytic structures that have been built by hegemonic social sciences in geopolitical territories that differ from ours (De Sousa, 2006). Despite this, in the ELT there has been an emerging and growing trend toward relativism not only in regards to teaching and learning methodologies, but also in establishing emerging practices, emerging knowledges, and favoring the dissemination of the scientific knowledge of the field. This has made teachers play a more agentive role in the continuum (that looks rather as a path) often as the passive technicians, more recently as the reflective practitioners, and every time closer to becoming transformative intellectuals (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

The attempt to fit in the positivistic paradigms of imported scientificity, still cause a yearning for objectivity, often resulting in the absence of the voice and the lack of self- representation in the production of knowledge- and of social realities. This is another colonized space that needs to be decolonized, and a progressive path towards the recognition of the self is recently emerging in the ELT field. A space for the acknowledgement that we constitute language and language constitutes us, as an emblem of belonging (Craith, 2012), that there is an identity that poses the being on equal terms with the knowing and the doing. Such space in the ELT field is gaining ground thanks to the conciliation with identity and with difference, and the principles

of the critical, the intercultural and the decolonial approaches to pedagogy (Granados-Beltrán, 2016).

The post- structuralism and the emergence of the critical theories in education have triggered the shift of the focus of attention from the methodology to the questioning of the knowledge and the very epistemologies behind the knowledge choice- be them cultural arbitraries (Bourdieu, 1986), epistemological injustice (González, 2015), and/or epistemic violence (De Sousa, 2010). Individuals in education (both teachers and learners) wrestle within the logic of conventions of the societal deterministic forces to reproduce ourselves abiding by such arbitraries. In doing so, we re-signify the future, but we also re-signify the past –also, as Iedema (2003) puts it, we resemiotize our current identities, based on the retroactivity of performativity (Zizek, 2002).

Language minority students' cultural, cognitive, and linguistic diversity should not be considered just as strengths that are instrumental to the foundation of their learning of English and through English (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002), but rather such instrumentality, which is present in the scholar discourse, might need to be countered with a more activist role within the decolonial thought. After all, "It is ... an enormous human impoverishment when a language, with all its collective wisdom, beauty, and richness, falls ussilent" (McCarty, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Magga, 2008, p. 298).

The study of the identity of teachers (particularly the study of indigenous teachers' identities) needs an understanding of pedagogy as a social act par excellence, and as such pedagogy cannot be detached from an epistemological positioning in favor of the ecology of knowledges, of teachings, and of languages. The necessary approach towards pedagogy, then, is a highly political one. Pedagogy actors need to bear in mind that in heterogeneous communities the study of language education becomes a study of political struggle (Phillipson 1992). When we deal with languages, there is more than a construct of grammatical structures; there are linguistic hierarchies that need to be mitigated (Phillipson & Skutnabb- Kangas, 1996). There is, also, a mother tongue, whose use as a medium for education is a human right in itself- a 'linguistic human right' (LHR), and it has a paramount role in the generation of a distinct identity and in the right to reproduce that identity (Skutnabb- Kangas, 2001).

Some of the Colombian institutionalized attempts to create bridges between languages and rights by means of education, at times end up giving room to a paradox. While a militant intellectual like Skutnabb- Kangas (2001) coined the LHR (Linguistic human rights) term to propel the protection of minority languages and linguistic diversity worldwide, the Colombian schooling system came up with the concept of 'Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje de Inglés' (English language basic learning rights) (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016), which, although does not intend to coincide with the nature LHR, does equate the learning of English into the category of rights, instead of acknowledging the fact that English bilingualism is rather an imposed cultural arbitrary that has permeated the schooling system generating distinctive



asymmetries regarding the idea of being bilingual because of using minority languages or because of mainstream languages. A depth scrutiny shows that those 'basic learning rights' are barely more than a set of descriptors of standards for learners' linguistic competence.

The case mentioned above, which could easily be considered a quintessential example of cognitive extractivism (Grossfoguel, 2016), urges the understanding that the possibility of a linguistic human right approach needs to be embraced as a discourse, but also as a sociocultural practice which should genuinely be given room in the mainstream education institutions in the pursuit of protecting cultural diversity, instead of secluding it under labels that, although politically correct, classify and discriminate. To that respect, the fact of making binary distinctions (like the case of ethnic bilingualism and mainstream bilingualism) through grand narratives can be counterproductive, and fails to recognize a latent reality in which populations that were once considered in opposite sides of the equation are currently *de facto* coinciding in relational spaces of contact.

Therefore, labeling the realities of ethnically and culturally divergent populations as suitable under an umbrella term like 'minority education' would be a mistake, since, as Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) asserts, minority education can become complicit of linguistic genocide by promoting the adoption of the dominant language and forcibly transferring children of the minority group to another group. This subtractive approach to the individuals' mother tongue, causes mental harm to members of the minority group. The standardization of languages and their constructed prestige can be understood as the result of traditional institutionalized education (schooling), which also is creating expected convention on how people should think and what people should think about, mainly based on economic premises aligned with the 'civilized' globalization (De Sousa, 2010). Consequently, the binary ingroup-outgroup ideologies, that also apply to academic contexts, create 'barbarian thinking' or 'border thinking' which is the thinking that is distant from models that were once unselfconsciously and uncritically considered to be universal (Mignolo, 2000).

Education should nurture subjects that 'theorize from the border', who despite being from a different epistemological and geographical location are willing to create bridges with 'civilized theorizing' (Menezes, 2005). Education understood in that way embraces a Bakhtinian (1981) perspective of giving voice to those who "have been precisely subalternized and placed in the margins by the very concept and expansion of European civilization" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 309) and provides spaces for their agency (Bourdieu, 1986). The individuals' constant conflictive role between the deterministic reiteration of the habitus (the social, cultural, and political structures that determine them) can be wielded, formed, or transformed by their agency (Huddy, 2001).

Out of the agonistic trends of power, the agentive drive is a trait that comes already in the essence of the individual, and that it is also through life experiences that one can



fluctuate between the public and the hidden transcripts. However, during the process, the subject can face up experiences of “othering” which might make individuals feel like “impostors” (Bourdieu, 1991). For example, an English language teacher from the periphery (let alone a teacher coming from an indigenous group) might think of himself or herself as an illegitimate speaker of English because of the center- periphery discourses.

However, the contradictions that the subject has to face, are welcome in a critical approach towards the construction of identity. Block (2005), for example documented how personal and professional identity can become a space for convergence and resistance. This hybridity (Papastergiadis, 2000) is thought as the result of constructing identity through negotiation of difference, with space for fissures, gaps and contradictions. Identity is not accumulation of traits but an energy field of different forces. Hybridity is not confined to a cataloguing of difference. “Hybridity is both the assemblage that occurs whenever two or more elements meet, and the initiation of a process of change.” (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 170). This hybridity also challenges the single-naming in the choice of a microcosm, which should not result in the homogenization of multiple ancient peoples within a reductionist category ‘indigenous peoples’ (Niezen, 2003).

Niezen (2003) claims that globalization has resulted in contestation against the forces of cultural uniformity and against the appropriation of indigenous peoples’ sovereignty by states. States are a threat to indigenous/ancient peoples’ ownership of their lands, and by educating their children in state schools end up suppressing their rights to their languages, and usurping their own systems of justice and conflict resolution. States, even if it is through covert de facto enactment of policies, are imposing a gray uniformity on indigenous’ humanities, cultures, and natural environments.

The indigenous locus of enunciation is at times indissoluble of their knowledge of the land (McCarthy & Zepeda, 1999), and their role as ‘custodians of the land’. “For Indigenous peoples, territories and lands are the basis not only of economic livelihood but also are the source of spiritual, cultural and social identity” (Gilbert, 2010, p. 31). Historically and all throughout the world indigenous cultures are facing land dispossession due to globally economic imperatives (which threatens their politics of location where the land is the space for a sense of socio- economic, cultural and spiritual anchorage). This situation urges for the emergence of both Narrative and Indigenous Approaches to living and learning (Cardinal, & Fenichel, 2017) that intend to co-create curriculum in ways that would make justice to a dialogical pedagogy built upon deep relationality and decolonization.

Indigenous approaches to education differ to westernized epistemologies in that their relationality transcends the human sphere, and views the whole creation as interwoven and interdependent; thus curriculum should also consider the inclusion of animals, plants, the air, the mountains, the directions, etc. The indigenous pedagogies

claim for the appropriation of a locus of enunciation. There is a link to territoriality, a link to the collective spiritual self, a recognition of the collective history and stories. “We carve out and nurture space for students to come into awareness of how their history, living, and relationships informs them as teachers, and we work to weave these ways-of-being with the subject matter of the course in as organic a way as we can (Cardinal & Fenichel, 2017, p. 245).

The historical positioning concede a pivotal role to the intergenerational manifestations of the indigenous cultures, since, as Dixon & Senior (2011) claim, indigenous and narrative foundations embody self-reflective pedagogy that “privileges the co-construction of knowledge and meaning in collaborative environments of mutual respect, attentiveness, reciprocity, and humility. It is also awake to intergenerational connections as well as connections with -and responsibilities to- the broader living world” (p. 247). This intergenerational understanding of the indigenous heritage is vital to fight the vernacularization and self-consciousness resulting of the colonial discourses of the nationhood progress. Insofar as the meaning ascribed to indigeneity is concerned, Menezes (2005) claims that traditionally indigenous peoples have been considered ahistoric, primitive, and in need of protection. From the “border thinking,” or “border theorizing”, however, the search for totalities is to be rejected. Acknowledging the hybridity, the agency, the difference is a step forward towards the de-articulation of the colonial binaries. A step that is necessary towards the understanding of indigenous EFL teachers’ identities as being the materialization of multifaceted concepts of languages, cultures, and learning.

The case of Brazil multilingualism, which is a space for the clashing between local knowledge and expert knowledge (Rajagopalan, 2005), has also witnessed how the indigenous identities can contribute to new epistemologies (Menezes, 2005). The Yube-anaconda myth, claims Menezes (2005), embodies the ethic of “openness to the other” of the Kashinawá peoples of Brazil. The Kashinawá peoples consider the contact with the one who is different as both dangerous and desirable, since it is always transformational. When being in contact with someone totally different the Kashinawá allows himself to transform into that ‘other’, reducing the alterity. Then the Kashinawá returns home and becomes himself again, only that not the same self that departed, since there is with him new power, strength, and knowledge and becomes again himself, just like what happens when an anaconda changes her skin.

The agency of the indigenous English language teacher is also what will dictate hybridity and the dialogue between both ethnic bilingualism and institutionalized mainstream bilingualism, how these bilingualisms converge into multilingualism, and how owning such diversity dialogues with the voice of the unfair historical impositions of ‘one state- one language’, and ‘mainstream bilingualism as a resource’, and the very ‘linguistic human rights’. This agentive role of the subject constitution is what is allowing transformation of social realities. As Giroux (1994) claims: “Dominant

cultural traditions once self-confidently secure in their modernist discourse of progress, universalism and objectivism are now interrogated as ideological beachheads used to police and contain subordinate groups, oppositional discourses, and dissenting social movements” (p. 29).

## Horizons of understanding between the contemporary Colombian ELT and Indigeneity

The identity of Colombian indigenous teachers in the ELT is still utterly unexplored, however, there are horizons of understanding that have started to emerge in the academia in regards to the dialogue between the Colombian ELT field and the Colombian indigeneity. The researchers authoring these studies, even if not always consciously committed to a decolonial thought, have built counter hegemonic discourses by which there is a visibilization and a dialogue between the *humanitas* and the *antropos* (Mignolo, 2013), an understanding that the situate conditions of the knowledges produced by the historically constructed as subaltern gives them an epistemic privilege that counters the colonial hegemonies (Piazzini, 2014). The caution needs to be made to avoid the exoticism or the epistemic extractivism (Grossfoguel, 2016), that could just end up in the construction of politically –correct ways for the epistemic universality. Ultimately, the communal efforts put in these studies claim more for multiversalities in the Colombian ELT, the Colombian academia, and the Colombian society at large.

The visibilization of indigeneity in the Colombian ELT is nested in a certain political positioning, and reclaims the attention to divergence even when cases in which the conflux of an indigenous background and the ELT formation are by far rather the exception than the norm. Despite efforts of scholars to find bridges between the tangible linguistic diversity of a country with 68 living languages and the expected and imagined Spanish- English bilingualism, the field has been permeated by a logic of discriminatory and segregation attitudes (Robayo & Cárdenas, 2017).

Examples of efforts to find a horizon in which linguistic diversity is protected simultaneously to the pursuit of mainstream bilingualism often gather together with the introduction of the term ‘inclusive education’, where the conditions of indigeneity are paired with other particularizing conditions such as deafness (Robayo & Cárdenas, 2017). This term has been used to refer to an existing need in the field of foreign languages in Colombia to implement foreign language policies that do not exclude but intend to allow the inclusion of the languages and cultures constituting the Colombian pluri-linguistic and pluri-cultural reality (de Mejía, 2006). These efforts confront the binary bilingualism since, as de Mejía claims, “Restricting the notion of bilingualism to Spanish/English bilingualism leads to a distorted view of the complex interrelationships between languages, cultures, and identities in the Colombian context” (2006, p. 165).

The fact is that the indigenous identities have been reduced to a supra-ethnic community (involving different ethnically diverse ancestral communities) constituted in opposition with the European- derived identity constructed during colonization and perpetuated by the modern/colonial world system (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Both identities have been merged within the equally supra-ethnic imagined and homogenizing nation- state community, resulting from the republican government (Anderson & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2015).

This was supposed to be countered by the new Constitution of 1991 that “effectively reversed previous homogenist policies by recognizing both the nation’s inherent multiculturalism and the state’s responsibility to protect this” (Anderson & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2015, p.133). Nonetheless, indigenous languages are severely endangered by the factual language policies of the state- nationhood, and even by their very internal community policies. For example, the loss of indigenous in group identity due to migration, like the Embera family that moving away from their ancestors’ territories, will not be considered to be “indigenous” any longer by their own relatives (Piñeros, Rosselli, & Calderon, 1998); or the Wiva that will no longer be considered as such once they have lost their Damana language (Anderson & Uribe- Jongbloed, 2015).

Anderson & Uribe-Jongbloed (2015) claim that in Colombia the fate of endangered languages is determined by the value ascribed to them. Their understanding that “the whole of humanity is enriched (or impoverished) by the survival (or loss) of its languages and culture” (Anderson & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2014, p. 137) takes them to advocate for a closer collaboration between all the actors. It is worth highlighting their call for a collaborative responsibility from mainstream communities towards strengthening endangered languages through policies and practices that make minority individuals more visible in education. Also Robayo & Cárdenas (2017) look forward to generating more interest in scholars towards examining language policies and working further to eradicate inequalities in education.

A study that showed the potential of negotiating meaning between two approaches to language policies and bilingualism, which is what Colombian scholars seem to be requesting for, was the one conducted by Escobar & Gómez (2010). This study showed how identity is constructed through a common history, their sociocultural traits and their language (Nasayuwe). This latter is prioritized sometimes even over ethnicity (there are descendants of European and Nasa people who, because of their language are Nasa, despite their ethnic diversity).

The Nasa participants also voiced their perception of how power structures hierarchized languages; Spanish being the one with the written code and the prestige, Nasayuwe being the one marginalized from institutional practices, such as schooling. Escobar & Gómez’s (2010) study also sheds light on how principles of the Nasayuwe – Spanish bilingualism of their community has been linked to a historical, religious, or emotional background and a sense of supra ethnic nationhood belonging. These

elements, which seem to be constitutive of a natural ethos, appear to be rather absent in the implementation of an institutionalized mainstream (Spanish- English) bilingualism, as it is pursued by the educational policies.

## Teaching English in indigenous communities

Cuasialpud Canchala (2010), who holds a B. Ed. degree as EFL teacher and comes from an indigenous community in Nariño, conducted a study about indigenous students' attitudes towards the learning of English by means of a virtual program. She identified three main problematic social conditions for English language indigenous students. First, the Colombian education system does not offer coverage for the whole indigenous peoples. Second, indigenous peoples' school background is precarious. They have gone through a primary and secondary education of low quality, with few human and material resources. Third, indigenous students have to face multilingualism rather than bilingualism, which is rather disregarded as a crucial learning factor by educational institutions.

Jaraba & Carrascal (2012) conducted an ethnographic study at an indigenous school in which the identity of indigenous students was at the core. The ethnographic study showed the importance of arrow cane weaving as the cohesive element of the indigenous community, and central to the teaching and learning traditions of the in group members of the community. With such initial findings, they carried out a pedagogical implementation- ethnoenglish- which acknowledges and strengthens the students' linguistic, cognitive and cultural identitarian traits.

Their study managed to integrate the learning of English (and even some standard Spanish) by resorting to the cultural knowledges of the Zenus. Consequently, there were some meaningful pedagogical and communicative processes that were built upon the discourse and interaction patterns related to the weaving craftsmanship process and on the belief that by weaving their handgrafts (like *vueltiao* hat) they are actually weaving their ingroup social bonds and weaving the survival of the Zenu peoples.

More recently, Usma, Ortiz, & Gutierrez (2018) have documented how indigenous students of different majors at Universidad de Antioquia face the challenges of a language policy of the university that requires them to take and approve a number of courses in English as a graduation requirement. The study, which includes very complete demographic descriptions, participants' narratives on their challenges, their appreciation of the policy, and their suggestions and feedback towards improving the practices of the policy, also shows some staggering circumstances. Among them, there is a significant trend towards indigenous language loss (only 10.7 % of the 241 indigenous students had an indigenous language as their mother tongue, and 67.9% had Spanish as their mother tongue); besides, there is a positive view towards the learning

of English, despite their insistence that other languages (including both ancestral and foreign) should be considered as valid alternatives to certify their graduation language requirement.

## Pluricultural approaches from the academia

Arismendi (2016), a Colombian scholar with a background in EFL and teacher education, has advocated for a vision of interculturality that acknowledges first the own cultural diversity. In gathering a theoretical ground for his approach, he has identified the need for the development of competences within a 'meta-competence' (borrowing Montagne- Macaire's term) that aims at the understanding of plurilingualism, and pluriculturalism. Such approach considers attitudes, knowledges, and aptitudes towards linguistic diversity as pivotal for the preservation of cultural diversity.

Arismendi (2016) is aware that his theoretical borrowings result from what has been documented in regards to the diversity of mainstream Europeizing languages, but he finds it valuable to advocate for an intercultural metacompetence that raises student teachers' awareness on the Colombian intrinsic plurilingualism. His research has resulted in the creation of a course called 'Introduction to plurilingualism' in the undergraduate foreign language teacher program at Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. His course has resulted in a shift of student teachers' discourse from bilingualism to plurilingualism, an attitude of awareness of Colombian plurilingualism (positive acceptance) and knowledges about the importance of autochthonous languages as a human heritage that needs to be protected and treasured.

Still, from time to time in the context of an Education programs linguistic diversity is treated as having different levels of proficiency, as it is the case with Vanegas, Fernández, González, Jaramillo, Muñoz, & Ríos (2015) who have identified how the idea of idealized speaker/ language user generates inclusion and exclusion in the learning practices of prospective EFL teachers, invisibilizing the speakers whose language production distance from the idealized one.

## A concluding remark

The study of identity in education builds its epistemological foundations on critical theories, but also there needs to be a space for considering giving voice to studies on the identities of indigenous English language teachers by resorting to a sociology of absences and an ecology of knowledges. Such perspectives will bridge the 'border theorizing' with the existing 'civilizing theories', thus creating spaces for dialogic construction of knowledge. The generation of a voice coming from indigenous teachers in the Colombian ELT regarding their identity will not just be novel in

terms of knowledge production, but might eventually reveal an agentive role in these teachers that is so far invisibilized. The dialogue is not just representation, but is also constitution; which is why new realities might emerge out of agency.

The production of local knowledge about aspects that are tangentially related can be synthesized together by generating efforts of dialogue between the scholars whose expertise has taken them to specializations and soloist paths. It is through reading local scholars' work that new networks need to be created, so that there are spaces for encountering the other, and constructing shared knowledge.

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# Research-based Instruction, an Essential Tenet of the Foreign Languages' Pre- service-teacher Education at Universidad de Pamplona<sup>1</sup>

Instrucción Basada en la Investigación,  
un Principio Esencial de la Formación  
de los Futuros Docentes en Lenguas  
Extranjeras de la Universidad de  
Pamplona.

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## Abstract

This paper reports a personal reflection that describes how the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages at the Universidad de Pamplona provides preservice teachers with a research-based instruction. In an attempt to contribute to today's scholar discussions on foreign language pre-service teachers' education, this reflective piece illustrates a unique way of teaching research to FL undergraduates. The author first provides an overview on the area of teaching research to undergraduates in Colombia; second, a description of how pre-service teachers learn the theoretical foundations, paradigms, designs and approaches mostly used in educational inquiry; and the two-year process student researchers go through. Finally, the author *discusses the lessons learned and what the future of this process might be like*.

**Keywords.** Foreign languages, pre service teachers, student researchers, CLIL, research-based instruction.

## Resumen.

Este artículo presenta una reflexión personal que describe cómo la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad de Pamplona brinda a los docentes en formación una instrucción basada en la investigación. En un intento por contribuir a la discusión académica actual sobre la educación de los futuros docentes de lenguas extranjeras, esta reflexión ilustra una forma única de enseñar la investigación a los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras. Inicialmente, el autor proporciona una visión general sobre enseñanza de investigación a estudiantes de pregrado en Colombia; en segundo lugar, una descripción de cómo los docentes en formación aprenden los fundamentos teóricos, paradigmas, diseños y enfoques utilizados principalmente en la investigación educativa; y el proceso de dos años que llevan los estudiantes investigadores. Finalmente, el autor analiza las lecciones aprendidas y cómo será el futuro de este proceso.

Palabras Clave: Lenguas extranjeras, docentes en formación, estudiantes investigadores, AICLE, instrucción basada en la investigación

## Resumo

Este artigo apresenta uma reflexão pessoal que descreve como a Licenciatura em Línguas Estrangeiras da Universidade de Pamplona oferece aos docentes em formação uma instrução baseada na pesquisa. Em uma tentativa por contribuir com a discussão acadêmica atual sobre a educação dos futuros docentes de línguas estrangeiras, esta reflexão ilustra uma forma única de ensinar a pesquisa aos estudantes de línguas estrangeiras. Inicialmente, o autor proporciona uma visão geral sobre ensino de pesquisa a estudantes de graduação na Colômbia; em segundo lugar, uma descrição de como os docentes em formação aprendem os fundamentos teóricos, paradigmas, desenhos e enfoques utilizados principalmente na pesquisa educativa; e o processo de dois anos que levam os estudantes pesquisadores. Finalmente, o autor analisa as lições aprendidas e como será o futuro deste processo.

Palavras Chave: Línguas estrangeiras, docentes em formação, estudantes pesquisadores, AICLE, instrução baseada na pesquisa.



## Introduction

This personal reflection describes how the Bachelor of Arts in Languages at the Universidad de Pamplona provides pre-service teachers with research-based instruction. The final aim of incorporating research, as part of the teacher preparation is to provide students with a twofold purpose: first, providing in-service teachers with the theoretical foundations, paradigms, designs and approaches mostly used in educational inquiry; and second, enabling them to conduct small-scale projects to integrate theory into practice that exposes them to a *learning-by-doing research training*. After having taken part in a national symposium aimed at discussing the future of foreign language learning and teaching in Colombia, I found particularly inspiring that several high school teachers, experts and researchers highlighted the importance of teaching research to undergraduate students, as a way to make a far-reaching change on in-service teachers' education; along with a deep-seated transformation on learning foreign languages (FL) in Colombia. Paraphrasing one of the concluding remarks from mainstream FL teachers' hardly-heard voices, I have come to understand that research is the key that opens a world of greater understandings and learning opportunities for pre-service teachers in Colombia.

This statement seamlessly aligns with Bower's claim that "...incorporating research into the undergraduate curriculum can result in improved learning outcomes" (2010, p. 50). Other authors have identified additional benefits for incorporating research into the undergraduate curriculum. For instance, undergraduate students can enhance their "...ability to develop intellectual curiosity, acquire information independently, understand scientific findings, analyze literature critically, speak effectively, act as a leader, and possess clear career goals." (Bauer and Bennet, 2003, p.221). Similarly, undergraduate students can improve their confidence in doing research in their academic area (Seymour, Hunter, Laursen, & DeAntoni, 2004). The remaining pages describe my personal points of view on how this unique research training engages FL undergraduate students at the Bachelor of Arts in Languages, English-French at the Universidad de Pamplona in a reflective and critical learning process that initiates them into the subtle intricacies of doing research in foreign languages. Ideally, equipping future language teachers with research competences will help them critically reflect on the role they should play when teaching foreign languages.

## Teaching Research to FL Pre-Service Teachers

In Colombia, minimal research has been centered on how foreign language pre-service teachers are formally trained to become successful student researchers. Cárdenas and Faustino (2008) conducted research that reports FL undergraduate

students' learning experience throughout different research courses as part of their curriculum. At the Bachelor of Arts in Languages at the Universidad de Pamplona, two studies somewhat revealed how research training is provided to FL students. Latorre and Delgado (2015) found that research training goes hand in hand with a training in reflection. The findings also showed that for pre-service teachers, research is complex and challenging; and it is a source of knowledge. Martínez-Cáceres' (2016) case study aimed at describing the student researchers' research projects conducted in French, revealed that case study is the most frequently used methodology; and the oral production is the most common topic under study. The author also found that student researchers' difficulties include the topic selection and the writing of the report.

In a literature review, Cote Parra (2012, p. 26) highlighted that in Colombia, "most previous research studies on FL pre-service teachers have focused on aspects such as the strengths and weaknesses that practicum-supervisors have identified in their trainees (Quintero, Zuluaga & López, 2003); teaching preparation programs and curricular innovations (Cárdenas & Faustino, 2008; McNulty & Usma, 2005; and McNulty-Ferri, 2010); student-teachers' perceptions, research skills and experiences during their practicum (Gallego et al., 2001). Other studies have focused on students' language learning and use (Farias & Obilinovic, 2008), especially on EFL writing (Viáfara, 2008; and Quintero, 2008) and reading (López and Giraldo, 2011)" (p.26). Other papers report on the development of linguistic competences (Arismendi, Colorado, and Grajales, 2011); the use of ICTs (Espitia & Clavijo, 2011); and strategy instruction (Lopera Medina, 2012).

Generally speaking, the landscape of research on how foreign language pre-service teachers are formally trained to become successful student researchers has not changed much; in the latest issues, among the top five journals in Colombia, only one, *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, devoted an article to discuss research experiences of undergraduates in Colombia. Quintero Polo (2019), in an attempt to answer the research question on how EFL student-teachers' formative pedagogical and research experiences are portrayed in a transformative and critical outlook for initial teacher education, described the student teachers' research projects "...that focused on going beyond the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of EFL instructional strategies." (p. 36). However, the author did not explain how they were trained to produce such report.

## Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

In 2010, five colleagues and I started the Teachers' Research Group in Foreign Languages-GRILEX<sup>3</sup>, at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras, Inglés-Francés at the Universidad de Pamplona, under the research line, Learning and Teaching Foreign Languages; and its dual research journey: do and teach research. On the one hand, it attempted to improve the teaching practices by engaging teachers in reflection; on the other hand, it redirected the way research would be taught to pre-service teachers, which is the main purpose of this reflection. In 2011, five colleagues and I started the Student Research Group in Foreign Languages-SILEX<sup>4</sup>, as a way to provide undergraduates with a meaningful learning experience that would articulate research content and learning French and English as foreign languages (FLE & EFL). Honestly speaking, I must confess that I started teaching research content through English and French as foreign languages, not knowing that it referred to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Fortunately, once I became acquainted with CLIL, it was formally adopted, as "...an approach or method which integrates the teaching of content from a curriculum subject with the teaching of a non-native language." (Lesca, 2012, p. 3). Despite the simplicity of this definition, we have come to understand that it encompasses a complex process that "...requires teachers to engage in alternative ways of planning their teaching for effective learning" (Coyle, 2005 p.2.).

Meaningful learning is precisely what learners experience while learning how to do research through FLE & EFL. I can unequivocally echo McDougald's (2009) claim "...[s]chools and universities are not concerned with just learning English anymore, but are more concerned as to what students can do with the new language" (p.44). Throughout four courses, the curriculum at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras, Inglés-Francés, at the Universidad de Pamplona, conveniently engages undergraduate foreign language learners in a two-year research training (see Figure 1), through which they not only become familiar with the theoretical foundations of the complexities of research in foreign languages, but also go through a first-hand experience of critical thinking and problem solving while conducting small-scale research. Prior to the two-year research training in foreign languages, students take "Epistemología" and "Investigación Educativa I" with other B.A. programs at the School of Education (e.g. Pedagogy, Social Studies, and Physical Education). That is why these two courses are taught in Spanish. They provide students with a broad framework on Educational research.

The practical nature of having designed a set of four research courses, taught in French and English as foreign languages, fully explained below, around a learning-

<sup>1</sup> Spanish acronym for Grupo de Investigación en Lenguas Extranjeras.

<sup>2</sup> Spanish acronym for Semillero de Investigación en Lenguas Extranjeras.

by-doing experience, has allowed the teachers in charge of these courses to give partakers an opportunity to discover the potential directions for their own research while writing a proposal, adopting and adapting research instruments, collecting and analyzing data; and sharing findings with the academic community.

The first research course, an 80-hour process taught in English, is intended to provide an overview of the types of educational and foreign language research. This introductory course facilitates student researchers become familiar with qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method theoretical foundations.

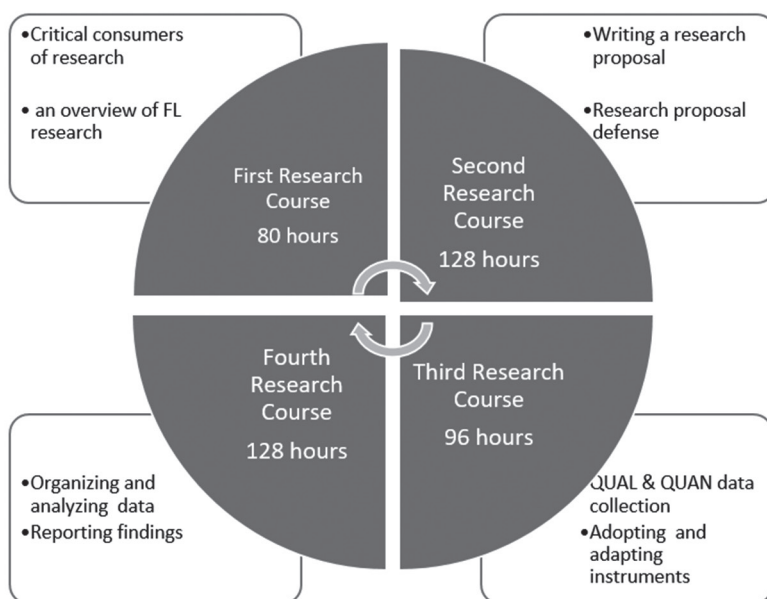


Figure 1. Two-year research training at the Universidad de Pamplona.

Along with research content, students are required to critically read, discuss, summarize and critique research papers that exemplify several quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method research designs. To accomplish this goal, students are engaged in an end-of-semester project that consists of a poster session in which they exhibit the process of writing a critique. Students may also publish a critique. For example, Ferreira and Casadiegos (2013) published a critique in the *Opening Writing Doors Journal*. The authors followed Ryan, Coughlan and Croning's (2007) guidelines to critically assess the believability and robustness of Cañas' (2012) research study.

Ultimately, this initial training will equip them with germane knowledge and research skills to eventually discover their own research topics, which are the base line to write a research proposal in the second research course.

The second research course comprises 128 hours devoted to providing student researchers with the theoretical foundations and the specialized guidance on writing a research proposal either in English or French. The total number of students who register are split into two courses, each course is led by two teachers, one guides the processes in English and the other one in French. Students are allowed to choose one of the two languages to complete their research projects.

For undergraduate students, writing a proposal is a challenging but enriching experience that serves a two-fold purpose, first, becoming familiar with the topic under study while writing a literature review, which includes a minimum of 20 summarized research papers to document and frame their own study; second, structuring the proposal allows them to carefully think of the phenomenon they attempt to understand, its purpose, and how data will be collected. At the end of the course, students defend their proposals in front of the research committee, which is comprised of two to five teachers in charge of teaching the research courses. This course enables students to collect data during the third research course.

In the third research course, students become familiar with the process of qualitative and quantitative data collection that includes several data gathering techniques, forms and protocols, data recording techniques, and how to deal with ethical issues while collecting data. In addition, students learn how to adopt and adapt research instruments aided by direct communication with original authors. For example, several students have contacted seasoned researchers and experts, such as Horwitz (see appendix 1); Richards and Lockhart; Abbasova; Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (RIP), among others, to obtain their approval to use and adapt instruments they have designed. As a learning-by-doing experience, asking for approvals allows them to be aware of the ethical procedures and copyrights while doing research.

Two distinguishing features have characterized this research training: robust fieldwork and timely and personalized feedback. I have come to understand that fieldwork experience is critical to put theory into practice. According to Wolcott (1994), “first-hand experience with at least one and preferably both of the basic field work strategies -participant observation and interviewing- has become the core activity in which everyone must engage.” (p.382). I strongly believe that the only way for pre-service teachers to understand the essence of FL research is to provide them with sustained fieldwork. For example, student researchers spend extensive time observing FL classrooms, and interviewing participants. Along with extensive fieldwork, student researchers are provided with timely and personalized feedback.

The fourth research course completes the two-year research training. In 128 hours, students make sense of the data gathered during the previous course, and write a research report. Therefore, they learn how to organize, code, and analyze data using MAXQDA software and several analysis techniques. Taking into account that we teach research content through English, a distinguishing feature of CLIL, students are also instructed on how to write and defend their final research report.

During the last five years, around 200 students have been trained on the intricacies of doing research while doing research, resulting in around 170 projects. It seems that the number of small-scale projects have decreased over the years. However, it is not like that. Due to a reduced number of mentors, they decided to make groups of two or three students to collaboratively work on a single project.

*Table 1.* Students' small-scale research projects

Student Researchers' Short-Scale Studies							
Studies/ Year	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Integrated Skills	Others	Total
2014	2	1	3	19	2	14	41
2015	4	0	7	8	12	20	51
2016	2	0	7	0	0	14	23
2017	5	0	10	3	1	10	29
2018	3	2	5	5	6	5	26

## The Essential Tenets of Pre-Service Teachers' Research Training.

The two-year research training provides pre-service teachers with strong theoretical foundations, main research trends in the educational field; and 21st century skills future professional need. According to Buckley (2008),

...education students who work on research projects indicated more strongly than any other faculty that their undergraduate research experience helped them to develop their intellectual skills, their career and collaborative abilities, their research skills, their understanding of how knowledge is created, their ability to write more clearly and effectively, and their capacity to work more effectively with others. (As cited in Bower, 2010, p. 51).

In addition, I have realized that sustained fieldwork and effective feedback have paved the road to accomplish some of the major achievements of this process, which are students' outcomes, represented in articles published in specialized journals

and oral reports at local, regional and national congresses. Although Cárdenas and Nieto Cruz (2019) acknowledged the "... the difficulties non-experienced teacher-researchers have to get published in scholarly journals..." (p. 7), the pre-service teachers who complete the research training are able to write a report worthy to be submitted for publication. Indeed, 27 articles have been published in *Opening Writing Doors Journal*<sup>5</sup>, edited by the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras, Inglés-Francés at the Universidad de Pamplona. Two articles have been published in *PROFILE: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, which "...started including research in its Issues from Teacher Researchers section articles by teachers who had recently completed their BEd programmes and who had conducted classroom research as part of the requirements to opt for their degrees." (Cárdenas & Nieto Cruz, 2019, p. 7). The first article, *Understanding the Role of Teaching Materials in a Beginners' Level English as a Foreign Language Course: A Case Study*, published by Cruz Rondón, and Velasco Vera (2016), aimed at "...at understanding the role of teaching materials among beginners' level students learning English as a foreign language" (P. 125)<sup>6</sup>.

The second article, *Identifying Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching EFL and Their Potential Changes*, published by Suárez Flórez and Basto Basto (2017), aimed at "...identifying pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching English as a foreign language and tracking their potential changes throughout the teaching practicum" (p. 167).<sup>7</sup>

With regards to oral reports, students who have completed the research training have presented more than 150 research reports at the Congress of Foreign Language Undergraduate Researchers at the Universidad de Pamplona. In addition, more than 50 research reports have been presented at national congresses, including ASOCOPI Annual Congress, ACOLPROF Congress; local, regional and national RedColsi Congresses; Encuentro de Universidades Formadoras de Licenciados, and other regional congresses in foreign languages.

## Moving Forward

Based on the enriching and successful experiences I have gone through; three main scholarly endeavors will largely determine how SILEX will face future initiatives: Varying the types of research designs used, and expanding the phenomena to be studied; taking part in international events; and inviting student researchers from other schools of education and universities in Colombia.

Regarding research designs and research phenomena, I have realized that although most of the small-scale research done by students are qualitative, some students have started to carry out quantitative inquiries, or at least, adopting quantitative instruments to complement data gathered through qualitative observations and interviews. For example, a student researcher incorporated the use of The EmotivInsight, a neuro-

signals capture system to measure anxiety levels. This might change the way students could study the impact of anxiety or stress levels while doing oral reports. Therefore, we would recommend future mentees to conduct more quantitative studies, and to start carrying out mixed-methods studies.

On the other hand, the student researchers are willing to share their research experiences internationally. For example, in January 2020, two student researchers presented two oral reports at the TQR 11th Annual Conference “Contemporary Qualitative Research”, organized by the NOVA University. I am certain it was an inspiring and thought-provoking experience to have had feedback from an international audience. Hopefully, it will be the first out of many successful international presentations.

Finally, I strongly believe that the training students have gone through, and the experience I have gained teaching research to FL undergraduates will help find national and international alliances. Hopefully, this reflection opens potential research venues, which would include student researchers and teachers from several Bachelor of Arts in Languages in Colombia.

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<sup>5</sup> Link to access the Opening Writing Doors Journal: <http://owdj.unipamplona.edu.co/>

<sup>6</sup> Link to access the full text of the article: <https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/52813>

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## Appendix

**From:** Horwitz, Elaine K <[horwitz@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:horwitz@austin.utexas.edu)>

**Sent:** Saturday, September 12, 2015 8:47 AM

**To:** SERGIO ANDRES SUÁREZ FLÓREZ

**Subject:** Re: TBALLI Permission

It's nice to meet you all, and I appreciate your interest in my work.

Subject to the usual requirements for acknowledgment, I am pleased to grant you permission to use the Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory in your research. Specifically, you must acknowledge my authorship of the TBALLI in any oral or written reports of your research. I also request that you inform me of your findings. You would score the TBALLI in the same way you score the BALLI, and I am attaching the revised version of the BALLI (BALLI 2.0) which appeared in my book *Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2nd edition, Pearson, 2013. You will notice that the BALLI 2.0 has some additional items that neither the original BALLI or the TBALLI have. The BALLI and all its variations are simply lists of items. I think it is fine for you to add or subtract items for the specific beliefs you want to examine in your study. But if you do this (add and/or subtract items), please note in your oral and written reports that you modified the TBALLI and how you modified it.

I hope this is helpful.

Best wishes,

Elaine Horwitz

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# Adjective-Noun Order: An Error Analysis of Colombian Learners of English<sup>1</sup>

Orden Adjetivo-Sustantivo: Un Análisis de  
Error de Los Estudiantes Colombianos de  
Inglés

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## Abstract

Adjective- noun order errors are a common occurrence throughout all levels of English language students. Based on professional experiences, existing literature and revisiting what some may consider archaic methodologies, this reflective article aims to analyse adjective-noun order errors among Colombian learners of English, understand why it presents such a challenge in the Colombian context and provide one possible teaching method to help reduce the number of adjective-noun order errors produced. To achieve such aims this article compares the rules for adjective-noun order in English and Spanish, describes the implications of the differences in adjective-noun order between the two languages for the Colombian learner and proposes translation as a teaching method to help Colombian learners of English reduce the frequency of these errors. Further investigation is needed to provide teachers with more insight into this problem; perhaps, focussing specifically on one of the two skills in which the error is produced, either writing or speaking.

**Key Words:** Adjective-noun order; Colombian learners of English; Translation method; Error analysis

## Resumen

Este artículo explora el desafío del orden adjetivo-sustantivo entre los estudiantes de inglés colombianos. Los errores en el orden de los sustantivos y los adjetivos son un hecho común que se puede apreciar en todos los niveles entre los estudiantes de inglés en Colombia. Basado en las experiencias profesionales, la literatura existente y revisando lo que algunos pueden llamar metodologías arcaicas, este artículo reflexivo tiene como objetivo analizar los errores de orden de los adjetivos y sustantivos entre los colombianos que estudian inglés, comprender por qué genera un desafío en el contexto colombiano y así mismo, brindar un método de enseñanza posible para ayudar a reducir el número de errores de orden de adjetivo-sustantivo producidos. Para lograr tales objetivos, este artículo compara las reglas del orden adjetivo-sustantivo en inglés y español, describe las implicaciones de las diferencias en el orden adjetivo-sustantivo entre los dos idiomas y propone la traducción como un método de enseñanza para reducir la frecuencia de estos errores y así ayudar a los aprendices de inglés colombianos. Se necesita más investigación para proporcionar a los maestros más información sobre este problema; tal vez, centrándose específicamente en una de las dos habilidades en las que se produce el error, ya sea escribiendo o hablando.

**Palabras claves:** Orden adjetivo-sustantivo; estudiantes colombianos de inglés; método de traducción; análisis de errores.



## Resumo

Os erros de ordem adjetivos-substantivos são uma ocorrência comum nos estudantes de todos os níveis de aprendizagem de inglês. Baseado em experiência profissional, a existente literatura e revisão do que alguns podem considerar metodologias arcaicas, este artigo reflexivo tem como objetivo analisar os erros de ordem adjetivos-substantivos entre estudantes colombianos de inglês, compreender por que se apresenta tal desafio no contexto colombiano e proporcionar um possível método para ajudar a reduzir o número de erros produzidos. Para alcançar tais objetivos, este artigo compara as regras para estabelecer a ordem adjetivo-substantivo em inglês e espanhol, descreve as implicações das diferenças na ordem adjetivo-substantivo entre os dois idiomas para o aprendiz colombiano e propõe a tradução como um método para ajudar os estudantes de inglês a reduzir a frequência destes erros.

**Palavras chave:** ordem adjetivo-substantivos; estudantes colombianos de inglês; método de tradução; erro de análise

## Introduction

Imagine a scenario where a basic rule was explained to you which you must follow; however, no matter how well you understood that rule you still failed to obey it. For example, you are completely aware that in order to start a parked car you must take off the hand brake before you attempt to move it but more often than not when you attempt to perform such a manoeuvre you try to move the car with the hand brake on and the car cuts out, leaving you frustrated. I witness a similar level of frustration when one of my language students realises that they have produced a basic error. An error which is well below their current level and one which they are quite aware of the rules required to avoid. One such error is adjective-noun order. To an English language teacher, the knowledge needed to understand how adjectives and nouns are ordered would appear to be minimal, nonetheless, the prevalence of adjective-noun order errors produced in both spoken and written output in the Colombian classroom is surprising.

The apparent simplicity of adjective-noun order in English is what makes this error an intriguing one to investigate. As interesting as the error itself, is the lack of studies relating to this error in a Colombian context. According to Sanchez-Ruiz and Lopez (2014) adjective-noun order errors are some of the most common among Spanish speaking learners of English so it would appear necessary to look further into this problem to discover possible reasons why Colombian learners of English struggle with this grammar point and to provide some methods for teachers to use to attempt to reduce these errors. That is what this article aims to achieve. The paper begins with a description of the specific challenges facing Colombian learners in relation to adjective-noun order, then an analysis of adjective-noun order in English, followed by a similar analysis of adjective-noun order in Spanish. Finally, the paper provides a discussion and one possible method to help Colombian learners and their teachers with these challenges.

## Challenges Faced by Colombian Learners with Adjective-Noun Order

### The Process of Error Analysis

Corder (1975) states that when undertaking an error analysis, it is important to be able to distinguish between mistakes and errors. Corder's (1975) observation appears a valid one since if we are undertaking an error analysis then mistakes must not be included. For that reason, a clear line needs to be drawn between the two (Corder 1967, cited in Ellis. 1994). However, such a clear line does not exist as the differences between errors and mistakes can be blurry and subjective (Ellis, 1994; Hinkel, 2018).

Corder (1967, cited in Ellis, 1994) was the first to attempt to define the differences between an error and a mistake. Using Chomsky's distinction (cited in Ellis, 1994) Corder (1967) associated errors with failures in competence and mistakes with failures in performance.

Later, Corder (1971) developed what he coined the auto-correction method. Corder (1971) claims that auto-correction is the key to deciding whether a mistake or error has occurred. He states that a mistake occurs if a learner is made aware of a faulty sentence or utterance and is then able to correct it by themselves since it is related to performance rather than competence. If, however, the learner is unable to correct the faulty sentence or utterance, it is then defined as an error. While this method of differentiation may seem straightforward, James (1998) identifies one possible issue with Corder's (1971) auto-correction method. James (1998) uses the example of a student submitting an essay in an exam. Before submitting the essay, the student would have re-read the essay numerous times to check and correct errors. Then, when the student is convinced that the essay is error free; the essay is submitted. However, after the teacher revises the essay and finds some ungrammatical forms and then informs the student of the location of the ungrammatical forms, a problem arises with defining the ungrammatical forms as errors or mistakes. The problem with the auto-correction method lies in the fact that the student can correct his or her work but only after being made aware of the need to make corrections. In other words, is it still just a mistake if a learner does not identify the problem by themselves but can auto correct after they are made aware of the deviant form by a second party?

Another possible hurdle in using the auto-correction method is the need for the student to be present while the correction process takes place. Ellis (1985, cited in Tim, 2000) claims that in cases where the student is not available, if a deviant form keeps on recurring then it is probably an error. The frequency of the same deviant can help identify that an error has occurred since if an identical deviant is reoccurring it demonstrates a gap in competence rather than a performance slip. James (1998) also suggests that frequency is a valid index of the gravity of error with a higher frequency equating to a higher gravity of error.

In the case of adjective-noun order, the distinction is difficult, as learners may be aware of the rule; however, fail to consistently produce correctly ordered utterances. The frequency with which the inaccuracies of adjective-noun order occur (Sanchez-Ruiz & Lopez, 2014) provides a strong case for the failure to be classified as an error and not a mistake. With that in mind, adjective-noun order inaccuracies are defined as errors in this article.

To summarise, a mistake is something that occurs in performance and it can be self-corrected by the learner. An error is something that occurs due to a lack of knowledge or competence and is usually not able to be self-corrected by a learner without further learning. In the absence of a learner to self-correct, the frequency of an incorrect form

can confirm if a genuine error has occurred. The analysis in the following sections shows that in Spanish, adjective order has greater flexibility than in English. Hence, when a Colombian learner is faced with the decision of ordering multiple adjectives or deciding to put the adjective before or after the noun, it presents a serious challenge. For example, a learner says, “big car red”, instead of, “big red car”.

When a language learner uses their L1 to produce the target language it can either help the learner produce something correct, this is known as positive transfer or facilitation, or it can hinder the learner and cause them to produce something incorrect, this is known as negative transfer or interference (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Since this article is focussed on errors, it mainly considers negative transfer; although, positive transfer is briefly mentioned in the discussion section of this article.

Negative transfer happens when learners transfer items and structures which are not the same in L1 and L2 (Hussein & Mohammad, 2010). It could be said that negative transfer is the cause of adjective-noun order errors among Colombian learners of English. Proof of such claim can be seen when the incorrect utterance is translated back into Spanish. For example, “big car red” translated directly, with the same word order into Spanish gives “gran carro rojo”, which is grammatically correct in Spanish.

We have defined adjective-noun order inaccuracies as errors; however, it may seem to some as a less serious error. This may be true since some errors are more severe than others. To scale the severity of an error, Burt (1975) classified errors as either being local or global. Local errors refer to errors which make the sentence sound strange but do not affect intelligibility in a major way while global errors are errors which affect intelligibility, leading to the message either being misinterpreted or not understood at all. Errors relating to adjective-noun order could be categorised as more local errors, as the meaning of “big car red” may be understood through context, especially for those familiar with Spanish. However, global errors could also occur if the learner was speaking with someone unfamiliar with the Spanish language. Teachers with some understanding of the learner’s L1 may become desensitised to these errors and have a system of comprehension already in place to make understanding of such errors easier (Hanzeli, cited in Hendrickson, 1978). Camps, Villalobos and Shea (2012) also found that teachers who live and teach in a non-English speaking become accustomed to the errors which are made most frequently. So, in some cases it can affect intelligibility and in cases where it does not seriously impact intelligibility, the error can cause difficulty to the listener or embarrassment to the speaker (Camps et al., 2012). In either case it is not satisfactory to let the error persist.

Gass and Selinker (2008) define two error types different from Bert’s (1975) global and local errors. Gass and Selinker (2008) explain that an error can be classified as either interlingual if the error can be attributed to the learner’s L1 or intralingual if the error can be attributed to the target language and is independent of the learner’s L1. These error types differ from Bert’s (1975) since they deal with error source rather

than the severity of the error. So, adjective noun order can also be classified as an interlingual error since it would appear to come from inference from the learner's L1.

However, according to (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) L1 interference is not the only source of difficulty in L2 acquisition. Apart from the differences in rules between Spanish and English, the learning environment of Colombian learners of English also provides challenges to the learner regarding adjective-noun order. The paper now discusses these challenges.

## Other Factors

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environment, within Colombia, limits both the amount of exposure to the English language and the number of opportunities for a student to practice English. Along with the fact that learners live in a non-English speaking environment, Colombian language institutes are also following the global trend of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to second language learning. While this approach has seen great success in English as a second language (ESL) environments, it has had mixed results in EFL environments (Li, 1998). There are many issues with CLT in the EFL environment (Cardenas, 2006), but the one which directly affects adjective-noun order is the focus on fluency over accuracy. CLT allows for greater tolerance of errors in return for creating an atmosphere which promotes spontaneous use of the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 1990). As mentioned earlier, English teachers in a non-English speaking country frequently become desensitised to commonly repeated errors (Camps et al., 2012). As a result of this desensitisation, teachers only focus on problems which are subjectively believed to be more serious. This can lead to students carrying basic grammar problems from level to level without being corrected. One such problem, in the author's opinion, is adjective-noun order errors. Reaching communicative competence involves a balance between fluency and accuracy (Phetongkam, 2013) and it is important that teachers in EFL environments begin to pay more attention to this fact.

A second factor is the learners' experiences of learning a foreign language. Learner experience is very important in the Colombian university context because some of the students at university have had very different primary and secondary school experiences with English. There is a widening gap between private and public education in Colombia and this difference has a huge influence on the proficiency levels that students achieve and bring to the tertiary level of education (Velez-Rendon, 2003). In Colombia, many private schools are bilingual, and the teachers there consider themselves to have an adequate level of English, in contrast, public-school English teachers admit to having a very low proficiency and in some cases none (Velez-Rendon 2003). The factor of low-level English teachers affects many aspects of a learner's experience and not just adjective-noun order. However, it is an important factor to consider in the Colombian context since it is a reality for many university level students. So, in the cases where students had English teachers who were incapable of speaking English let alone

teaching it, the understanding of why some basic aspects of English are erroneously produced becomes easier to comprehend. After detailing the challenges faced by Colombian learners, the paper now provides an analysis of adjective order in English.

## Adjective Order in English

Adjectives can have three positions in the English language: prenominal position, predicative position, and postpositive position. The paper now discusses these three positions in greater detail and describes those factors which affect adjective-noun order.

### Prenominal Adjectives

The following section comprises an insight into both single and multiple prenominal adjectives.

#### Single prenominal adjectives.

Single prenominal adjectives are the most straightforward to order, usually taking the second to last position within the noun phrase (Parrott, 2010), for example, 'a very old car'. When dealing with one prenominal adjective the ordering is clear, however, the task of ordering multiple prenominal adjectives is more complex. The following section provides a description of this task.

#### Multiple prenominal adjectives.

When faced with more than one prenominal adjective there is a decision to be made as to which adjective should be closer to the head noun. Wulff (2003) proposes that there are four factors which can affect the order of multiple prenominal adjectives including phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. However, syntax and semantics are the two areas which influence adjective order the most (McMahon, 2008) and for that reason, those are the factors which the paper focuses on.

#### Syntactic and semantic factors.

The relationship between adjective order and semantics is one which raises many challenging questions (McNally & Kennedy, 2008). The reason is that, in English, adjectives have a greater range of flexibility in relation to order when compared to

other syntactic categories (McNally & Kennedy, 2008), for example, sentence structure. For this reason, adjective ordering is characterised by semantic properties (Svenonius, 2007). The examples in (1) and (2) demonstrate that while both sentences have the adjectives before the noun, a native English speaker's intuition would say that (2) is incorrect.

(1) a big red car

(2) \* a red big car

Dixon (1977) makes the argument that the adjective with a colour property should be placed closer to the head noun than the adjective with a size property. Examples (1) and (2) show that there is a preferred adjective order in English. Classification of adjectives is something which Dixon (1977) tried to explain with the creation of semantic classes.

There are seven classes, the first class 'colour' is ordered closest to the head noun with the subsequent classes following in the order (1-7) shown below. The class ordered the furthest away from the noun is 'value'.

Below is a list of Dixon's (1977) semantic classes

7. Value (good, bad) 6. Dimension (big, long)

5. Physical Property (hard, sweet)

4. Speed (quick, slow)

3. Human Propensity (happy, kind)

2. Age (new, young)

1. Colour (red, white)

Using Dixon's (1977) semantic classes in real examples, it is clear to see that the classification of adjectives has a meaningful application. Both examples (3) and (4) adhere to Dixon's classification and are syntactically and semantically correct.

(3) a big new promotio

(4) a kind young man

While in many cases Dixon's (1977) semantic classes are clear and functional, the issue of classification shines a light on some of the inadequacies of Dixon's seven classes. Wulff (2003) highlights these inadequacies with the question of where to classify adjectives describing date and time (pre-war, annual), position (left/right), and adjectives which mean 'pertaining to' or 'relating to' (mathematical, financial etc.). Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) propose that the adjective which is

most (relatively) inherent to the head noun is placed closest to the head and is followed by adjectives relating to opinion. Examining (1) in more detail it is evident how this works, as the car is inherently red, however, the modifier 'large' is a matter of opinion, as the car needs to be compared to another smaller car in order to be perceived as large. Based on this subject objectivity theory, Hetzron (1978) developed a thirteen semantic class scale, however, like Dixon's (1977), there were still adjectives that couldn't be clearly classified.

The syntactic freedom of prenominal adjective order has led to a more semantic approach to preferred adjective order. Matter of opinion and subjectivity make it hard to pin down a definitive all-inclusive order which can be followed. Nonetheless, the semantic classifications that are described above (Dixon, 1977 & Hetzron, 1978) have been adapted and are being introduced into the classroom. The British Council (n.d.) describe a class system which states that prenominal adjectives are 'usually' ordered as follows: General Opinion > Specific Opinion > Size > Shape > Age > Colour > Nationality > Material. This system accounts for the subjective and inherent properties of prenominal adjectives and orders them appropriately. Having described pre-nominal adjective order in English, the paper now comprises a discussion of post-nominal adjective order in English.

## Post-nominal Adjectives

There are two types of post-nominal adjective positions. The first is known as the predicative position. The predicative position is when the adjective is placed after a noun with a linking verb. A predicate adjective modifies the subject of a noun phrase and is connected to the subject by a linking verb. An example of an adjective in a predicative position can be seen in (5).

(5) The man is old

Swan (2005) provides the following list as the most common linking verbs: be, seem, appear, look, sound, smell, taste, feel, become, get.

The second post-nominal position is postpositive. A postpositive adjective modifies the item which it follows. A postpositive position doesn't require a linking verb. Some adjectives must appear in a postpositive position and in doing so have a different sense (Quirk et al. 1985) to an attributive or predicative position. Quirk et al. (1985) give the example of the adjective 'elect', meaning soon to office.

(6) The president elect

A postpositive position can also describe a more temporary situation. Quirk et al. (1985) provide the following examples:



(7) The stars visible

(7a) The visible star

In this case, (7) insinuates that the stars are visible at a specific time, while (7a) refers to a group of stars that can always be seen. Having provided an analysis of adjective order in English, a similar analysis of adjective order in Spanish now follows.

## Adjective Order in Spanish

As a learner of Spanish, one often hears the phrase “in case of doubt the learner will be safe in placing the adjective last” (Ramsey, 1956). However, this all-inclusive rule is misleading advice as adjectives in Spanish can occur both before and after the noun being modified, with only 63 per cent of adjectives being found in a post-position (Bull, 1950). In fact, adjective position in Spanish is relatively free, since the position of the adjective can be manipulated for stylistic effect (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). A description of adjective position in Spanish is now presented, followed by an explanation of how adjective position in Spanish can affect meaning.

## Prenominal Position

In Spanish, adjectives which express inherent characteristics or features which are obvious and known to all, are placed before the noun (8) (Gordon & Stillman, 1999).

(8) La blanca nieve

the white snow

When expressing a subjective judgement of a speaker the adjective also takes a prenominal position (9) (Gordon & Stillman, 1999). Common subjective adjectives include *bueno* (good), *malo* (bad), *mejor* (better) and *peor* (worse). Adjectives that express quantity are also normally placed before the noun (10) (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). Common adjectives of quantity include: *mucho* (much), *poco* (little), *bastante* (a lot) and *alguno* (some).

(9) vivimos en una pequeña ciudad

we live in a small city.

(10) muchísimas preguntas

very many questions.

The prenominal position can also be used for non-literal or ironic effect (11) (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003) and exclamations with *¡Qué!* (12) (Gordon & Stillman, 1999).

(11) ni un triste céntimo

not (even) a miserable cent

(12) ¡Qué mala suerte!

What bad luck!

## Post-nominal Adjectives

Adjectives which express a distinctive or contrastive attribute of a noun are placed post-nominally (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). Such adjectives can denote nationality (13), place of origin, shape, substance, purpose or colour (14) (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003).

(13) El gobierno irlandés                      The Irish government

(14) Una casa azul                              A blue house

A post-nominal position is also used to describe a subset of a particular type of noun (Kattan-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003).

(15) Los libros técnicos                      The technical books

In (15) the adjective 'técnicos' is describing some books, from a larger set of books, as technical.

## Difference in Meaning

In Spanish, adjectives can occur in both a pre and post-nominal position, often creating a difference in meaning (Whitley, 1986). Bull (1965) used mathematical organisation to define the difference between the pre and post-nominal position. Bull (1965) states that prenominal position expresses totality (the whole set) while post-nominal position expresses partitiveness (subset). In order to explain this, Bull (1965) gives the following examples:

(16) Los blancos caballos de Don Hugo    The white horses of Don Hugo

(17) Los caballos blancos de Don Hugo    \*The horses white of Don Hugo

In the first example, the speaker presumes that all of Don Hugo's horse are white, but in the second the speaker implies that he is talking about those horses of Hugo's which are white (not all of them are white).

## Emphasis

Ramsey (1956) proposed that a postpositive position of an adjective can be used to highlight emphasis. Place and Torres-Rioseco (1943) also support this idea by stating that an adjective which is inherent to the noun is placed in the unstressed position (before the noun), while if the adjective is being used to distinguish itself from others of the same class it is placed in the stressed position (after the noun). Ramsey (1956) provides examples (18) and (19) below.

(18) vivos colores

bright COLORS

(19) colores vivos

colors BRIGHT

In (18) the importance is given to the noun 'colours' and in (19) the importance is given to the adjective 'bright'. Bolinger (1972) developed this idea further drawing parallels between the English verb phrase (VP) and the Spanish noun phrase (NP). Bolinger's (1972) theory was that the last element in the phrase carries the most semantic weight. This theory gave way to what Bolinger (1972) described as "linear modification". Linear modification aims to explain the order in a Spanish NP where there is more than one adjective. Whitley (1986) provides an example (20) of how linear modification functions.

(20) las grandes repúblicas democráticas europeas

\*The great democratic republics Europeans

First the determiner 'las', then the speaker wishes to highlight the greatness associated with the republics which are being spoken of. The speaker then sub-classifies the great republics by limiting them to only democratic ones, and finally, the speaker adds the most informative information which is that these great democratic republics belong to Europe. A different organisation of the adjectives would result in a different referential specification of republics (Whitley, 1986).

## Specific adjectives

Apart from highlighting emphasis from the speaker, Ramsey (1956) identified several adjectives which give different meanings in prenominal and post-nominal position respectively. Adjectives mentioned by Ramsey (1956) include; antiguo (old), cierto (true), grande (big), nuevo (new), and pobre (old) amongst others. To demonstrate the differences, Ramsey (1956) provides the following example:

(21) El antiguo nterlang

the former president

(21a) El nterlang antiguo

the ancient (very old) president

The above example demonstrates that along with emphasis, adjective-noun order in Spanish can also affect the meaning of an NP.

As is regularly the case in linguistics, there are a number of theories which try to find a definitive answer to a long-standing problem. In the case of this paper, I have summarised the most important theories relating to adjective-noun order in both Spanish and English. Now, the paper provides a discussion and one possible approach to solve the challenges faced by Colombian learners.

## Discussion and Solutions

The paper thus far has focussed on the challenges faced by Colombian learners and factors which affect adjective-noun order in both English and Spanish. Now, the paper discusses one possible approach which can be used to help Colombian learners understand the differences between English and Spanish adjective-noun order. The approach proposed is use of the learners' L1, in this case Spanish, through translation activities.

Hunter and Smith (2012) describe how older teaching methods tend to be “packed up” and put in the “dustbin of history” as soon as a new approach is revealed. Hunter and Smith (2012) add that the shelving of old methods leads to them being perceived as unnecessary or useless when, in fact, they are connected to or in part led to the discovery of the new approaches. As a teacher who was trained in line with the communicative approach, I have also been guilty of disregarding what appeared to me as outdated methods with no current value. However, my mind has been changed. Translation or use of the students' L1 is one of the methods I overlooked.

As mentioned early, many Colombian language institutes use Communicative Language Teaching in their classrooms. This approach allows for little to no use of the students' first language. According to Kerr (2014) setting first language restrictions are futile since the teacher may be able to control what language is used in the classroom but cannot control how the student thinks. Kerr (2014) explains that even though teachers may explicitly prohibit the use of the students' L1 and translation, students are still constantly translating in their heads. Kerr (2014) then proposes that if these students are already translating on some subconscious level why not take advantage of this by putting it to work for language acquisition.

I now believe that the neglect of translation as a useful tool for language acquisition is a huge oversight as many of the reasons why translation was initially introduced as an approach, for example, the grammar translation method, still stand true to this day. The following section details the reasons why translation is still and always has been a legitimate tool in the language classroom. The reasons below have been selected from Kerr's (2014) work on translation. Not all the reasons Kerr (2014) lists in his work are listed below, only the ones which are relevant to the context of this article.

### Own Language as a Reference Point

Prominent psychologist Vygotsky (1934, cited in Kerr, 2014) describes the importance of having some sort of reference point between the world of objects and the new language being learned. The importance of the learners' L1 is also advocated

by cognitive linguists and neuroscientists. Many opponents of translation point to the fact that using a learner's L1 in language learning is a bad idea since it can lead to negative transfer or the misunderstanding of false friends (cognates). While it is true that negative transfer and false friends exist, it is also true to say that there may be just as many or even more examples of positive transfer and true friends.

It is also worth noting that problems such as negative transfer can be solved through direct comparison of the two languages in question. Word order is one example of negative transfer. An efficient way to create awareness of word order differences is comparing the two languages side by side.

## Intercultural Competence

Identity and language go hand and hand. Learners associate their identity with the language that they grew up speaking. To prohibit the use of a learner's first language in substitute for a foreign language may cause tension. Instead of creating tension, the use of the student's L1 in the classroom can create intercultural competence since the students are driven to understand similarities and differences between the two languages. Mediation is a skill listed in the Common European Framework of Reference for language (North & Piccardo, 2016), it appears contradictory to foster mediation in a classroom while suppressing one language and promoting another.

## Practicality

Along with the cognitive and cultural benefits, use of a learner's first language saves time. In some cases, it is the simplest and most time-efficient way to explain certain aspects of language. This is not to say that translation is better in all instances. There are moments where guided discovery, demonstration or explanations take precedence; although, when time is limited translation would appear to be the most efficient option. Variety is key to keeping the class motivated and engaged so adding one more teaching method, in the form of translation, can add to this variety.

To summarise, the use of a learner's L1 in EFL environments receives criticism from supporters of the target language only position as it is believed that use of L1 interferes with the acquisition of the target language (Pan, 2010). However, the benefits of appropriately using a learner's L1 in order to promote the transition from L1 to the target language are beginning to be recognized once more (Shamash, cited in Pan, 2010) (Kerr, 2014). In fact, avoiding the use of the learner's L1 can lead to various problems, one of which is word order error (Macaro, 2005). Using a contrastive analysis of the two languages, a method can be developed to reduce

errors relating to adjective-noun order. I believe that “reverse translation” activities which permit the use of the learner’s L1 can be used to solve this problem. One such activity is described below as a possible example to tackle the noun order error.

Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a text in English. This text should have various examples of the grammar point, in this case, adjective-noun order. Each pair translates the text into their L1. Then, the texts are collected and redistributed throughout the class. The pairs then translate the new text they have received back into English. When all the students have finished, they compare the text they have translated with the original text. This comparison allows the students to discover the contrast in the rules between their L1 and the target language. Activities such as this one can be altered to focus on speaking. For example, a role play which involves one student acting as a tourist and the other as a translator. These types of activities can also help EFL teachers highlight areas of errors which perhaps have slipped under the radar. This sample exercise is limited to monolingual classes such as the ones in Colombia where the majority of students’ mother tongue is Spanish. It is also important that the teacher has a solid understanding of the students’ L1.

## Conclusion

Adjective noun order is a seemingly small and simple part of English grammar; however, Colombian students at all levels continue to make errors regarding this topic. A clear difference of grammatical rules regarding adjective- noun order between English and Spanish could explain the presence of this error in learner output. While, the overemphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy in the communicative teaching method is one possible reason why this type of error has persisted. To solve this problem, a combination of teaching methods is required since the over reliance on one method can lead to some areas of language being developed more than others.

In the case of adjective-noun order errors, an awareness from both the students and teacher of the problem is needed along with the development of activities which deal with the problem. Such activities should take advantage of the student’s L1, through translation, to demonstrate the contrast between English and Spanish adjective order and allow them to understand the difference in a more complete way. Along with translation methods other solutions may be possible and need to be further investigated.

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