

Gist **Education and Learning** **Research Journal**

No. 21, July-December 2020



No. 21, July - December 2020

GiST Education and Learning Research Journal

Table of Contents

Editorial

Carlo Granados-Beltrán, PhD 5

Research Articles

Learning Vocabulary Through Instructional Subtitled Videos

Jorge Luis Romero-Villamil
and Claudia Patricia Guzman-Martínez, Colombia 7

Situating Local Literacies at the Core of ELT Curriculum in Higher education

Yuly Andrea Nieto-Gómez and Amparo Clavijo-Olarte, Colombia 27

Computer-Based Reading Texts to Support Fourth-Graders'

Reading Comprehension

Meral Gözükcük and Nilgün Günbaş, Turkey 47

Influence of Discrimination in the Field of TESOL:

Perspectives of Mexican EFL Teachers

Edgar Emmanuell Garcia Ponce, Mexico 69

Educational Innovation through ICT-Mediated Learning Strategies
in the Initial Teacher Education of English Language Teachers

Luis Jesús Rincón-Ussa, Yamith José Fandiño-Parra,
and Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez, Colombia 91

Cooperative Learning to Foster Reading Skills

Marian Lissett Olaya
and Gladys Marta Elena González-González, Colombia 119

Case Studies

EFL Students' perceptions on Gender Stereotypes through their narratives Jhonatan Vásquez-Guarnizo, Maribel Chía-Ríos and Mairon Felipe Tobar-Gómez, Colombia	141
---	-----

Voices of the Hard-of-Hearing about their L2 Acquisition Struggles: A Case Study Rigoberto Castillo and Laura Stefany Flórez-Martelo, Colombia	167
--	-----

Reflective Articles

Challenges in the Design and Implementation of an English Placement Test for a Colombian Public University Alexander Ramírez, Colombia	191
--	-----

Task-Based Language Assessment: Implications for the Language Classroom Frank Giraldo, Colombia	209
--	-----

Promoting an Academic International Profile in Undergraduate Students of Psychology Programs in Colombia Germán Andrés Torres-Escobar and Rolan Arcadio Correa-Lopez, Colombia	225
---	-----

Guidelines for authors	243
------------------------	-----

Reviewers	251
-----------	-----

Editorial

Carlo Granados-Beltrán, PhD*

Welcome to a new edition of GiST Journal. I want to start by thanking the members of our editorial and scientific committees, authors, and readers for their help during these uncertain times. This issue is a sample of the wide variety of topics in ELT researchers are interested in. Some contributions address disciplinary knowledge, for example, assessment and the teaching and learning of skills, whereas others contribute to the sociocultural component of ELT.

Disciplinary contributions are represented by **Romero-Villamil and Guzmán Martínez** who inquired about how the implementation of instructional subtitled videos help students' increase students' range of vocabulary. The next two articles addressed assessment. **Ramírez** narrates his experience regarding the challenges faced when designing of a placement test for a Colombian public university and **Giraldo** discusses the implications of Task-Based Assessment for language classrooms.

Authors **Gözüküçük and Günbaş** from Turkey present how fourth graders' reading comprehension through computer-based reading texts. Also, **Rincón-Ussa, Fandiño-Parra, and Cortés** describe an implementation of ICT-mediated teaching strategies to promote both autonomy and collaborative learning in a teacher education program. An area that has not been quite explored in ELT is the ways English is taught to university students from other majors; in this direction, **Torres-Escobar and Correa-López** analyzed how bilingualism English-Spanish could be promoted in undergraduate psychology programs.

In relation to sociocultural aspects, **Nieto-Gómez and Clavijo-Olarte** explored local literacies in an EAP program by using community assets. **Vásquez-Guarnizo, Chía-Ríos and Tobar-Gómez** inquired EFL students' perceptions of gender stereotypes. In the same vein, Castillo and Flórez-Martelo addressed the experiences hard-of-hearing people when learning a foreign language. Also, **García-Ponce** studies the influence of discrimination in the field of TESOL in Mexico from the perspectives Mexican EFL teachers. Finally, **Olaya and González-González** present the impact of

Cooperative Learning to Foster Reading Skills in an engineering program.

We hope to continue communicating findings and reflections from both Colombian and international English language teachers so that we consolidate a community of learning, practice, and research.

***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

Learning Vocabulary Through Instructional Subtitled Videos¹

Aprendizaje de Vocabulario a través de
Videos Instructivos Subtitulados

**Jorge Luis Romero-Villamil
and Claudia Patricia Guzman-Martinez^{2*}**

Universidad del Tolima, Colombia

¹ Received: April 1st 2020/ Accepted: July 18th 2020

² jromerovillamil@yahoo.com; claudiap0308@hotmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to learn how the implementation of instructional subtitled videos contributed to improving students' range of vocabulary in real life contexts. This mixed method research paper was developed by using action research approach and the applied data collection technique was stratified into five steps: a pre-test, three classroom observations, a teacher/investigation diary, a semi-structured interview, and a post-test. The analysis of the data demonstrated that the employment of instructional subtitled videos helped students learn vocabulary. The students performed better in post-test compared to the pre-test, due to the three cycles of intervention. The target words were contextualized and presented through the simultaneous combination of sounds, images, and text. The data also showed that the participants considered the videos to be useful so as to remember new words and to be able to use them in communicative contexts. After discussing the findings of the study in light of the theory, the implications and limitations are presented, as well as some considerations for further research are suggested.

Keywords: instructional subtitled videos; vocabulary learning; EFL (English as a Foreign Language); ESA (Engage, Study, and Activate) Model; and Action Research.

Resumen

El propósito de esta investigación es determinar cómo la implementación de videos subtítulos contribuye a mejorar el rango de vocabulario de los estudiantes en contextos de la vida real. Para el desarrollo de esta investigación se utilizó el método mixto, bajo el enfoque de la Investigación Acción Participativa. La técnica de recolección de la información se llevó a cabo en cinco pasos: una prueba preliminar, tres observaciones de aula, un diario de investigación del maestro, una entrevista semi-estructurada y una prueba posterior. El análisis de los datos mostró que la utilización de videos subtítulos hizo posible que los estudiantes obtuvieran mejores resultados en la prueba posterior aplicada que en la preliminar. Las palabras meta fueron contextualizadas y presentadas a través de la combinación simultánea de sonidos, imágenes y texto. Un factor determinante en el aprendizaje del vocabulario fue el trabajo de retroalimentación del investigador en cada uno de los ciclos de intervención. Además, se estableció que los videos son útiles para recordar las palabras nuevas y que los participantes las utilizaron en contextos significativos. Después de discutir los resultados del estudio a la luz de la teoría, se presentan las implicaciones y limitaciones, así como algunas consideraciones para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras claves: videos instructivos subtítulos; aprendizaje de vocabulario; EFL (inglés como lengua extranjera); Modelo ESA (Participar, Estudiar y Activar); Investigación Acción.

Resumo

O propósito desta pesquisa é determinar como a implementação de vídeos legendados contribui para melhorar a categoria de vocabulário dos estudantes em contextos da vida real. Para o desenvolvimento desta pesquisa foi utilizado o método mista, sob o enfoque da Pesquisa Ação Participativa. A técnica de coleta da informação foi realizada em cinco passos: uma prova preliminar, três observações de aula, um diário de pesquisa do professor, uma entrevista semiestruturada e uma prova posterior. A análise dos dados mostrou que a utilização de vídeos legendados fez possível que os estudantes obtivessem melhores resultados na prova posterior aplicada que na preliminar. As palavras meta foram contextualizadas e apresentadas através da combinação simultânea de sons, imagens e texto. Um fator determinante na aprendizagem do vocabulário foi o trabalho de retroalimentação do pesquisador em cada um dos ciclos de intervenção. Além disso, estabeleceu-se que os vídeos são úteis para lembrar as palavras novas e que os participantes utilizaram-nas em contextos significativos. Depois de discutir os resultados do estudo considerando a teoria, apresentam-se as implicações e limitações, bem como algumas considerações para futuras pesquisas.

Palavras chaves: vídeos instrutivos legendados; aprendizagem de vocabulário; EFL (inglês como língua estrangeira); Modelo ESA (Participar, Estudar e Ativar); Pesquisa Ação

Introduction

An obvious fundamental component when learning a foreign language is vocabulary. Vocabulary is to communication as grammar is to transmission. (Wilkins, as cited in Heidari and Araghi, 2015). Learning vocabulary is a critical issue because a limited vocabulary in a foreign language interferes with fluid communication. Proper language use relies on effective interaction so long as the speaker has a sufficient set of words to construct messages in diverse contexts.

The process of expanding vocabulary depends on using appropriate strategies to learn new words. Learning new words implies that students have an idea about how to use them, (Ellis and Farmer, as cited in Susanto, 2017). Students should link previous word knowledge to the new one in order to process new information. A basic knowledge of grammar structures and word functions aid students in communicating ideas, opinions, and facts to people, when participating in common conversation.

Subtitled videos are a multisensory resource. They have sound, image and text related to diverse topics: the arts, science, literature, social life, culture, and technology. Furthermore, anybody can find current issues about life in the future life, mobile phone use, girls' makeup, free personality development, early pregnancy, and drug consumption, sports figures/results. These alternatives permit students to explore what they would like to work on and could enhance learning vocabulary in contextualized situations. Likewise, teachers could decide the type of video which best fits the students' expectations and needs.

As such, the purpose of this study is to answer the following question: to what extent does the implementation of instructional subtitled videos influence the students' learning of new vocabulary. Moreover, there are two subordinates areas: to determine how students use the target words when they developed the tasks for each video; and the advantages and disadvantages of using subtitles. Thus, it is expected the teacher-researcher can improve their classroom practice. By exploring useful alternatives in order to boost students' vocabulary learning. Likewise, teachers and researchers might take advantage of this investigation in order for them to approach vocabulary learning from a very different perspective, going beyond the traditional way of doing so.

Literature Review

Learning vocabulary is crucial to communicate ideas in a new language, in this case, English. Some researchers have done studies and written academic papers about learners' difficulties when they are in contact with vocabulary activities. Additionally,

investigators have explored the type of methods and strategies teachers use to overcome unsettled issues related to vocabulary learning, word formation, type of words, and English language English subtitled videos. However, the instructional subtitled videos information was limited. It means, that researchers have focused on authentic material such as video clips, sitcoms, TV news, and documentaries. While there are plenty of non-instructional materials available to for people to watch, listen to and read the subtitles in the English language, for this study instructional or classroom designed material was used. The difference between these two resources are that classroom designed material, has the slowdown by small percentage.

The following papers support the use of subtitles in the field of L2 teaching/ learning. Their findings suggest beneficial effects of vocabulary learning and content comprehension.

The study conducted by Wang (2012), "Learning L2 Vocabulary with American TV Drama From the Learner's Perspective, sought to explore the process of implementing American TV drama in L2 vocabulary learning from the learners' perspective. Authentic video clips from three different American dramas were chosen- "How I met your mother", "The King of Queens", and "Reba" . Three sessions of class activities: clip watching, class discussion, and word listing were implemented.

All the participants were adult Taiwanese learners between twenty to forty-five years old. Fifteen of them were females and thirteen were males. Before being assigned to classes, all twenty-eight students took a placement test (based on a reading). The results revealed low-intermediate to intermediate level learners. The researchers conducted the study during normal class sessions.

The results of the investigation showed that students not only supported the positive effects of using American TV drama to promote L2 vocabulary learning, but they also illustrated the process of learning. For example, they found that the video contained "images" that facilitated new words to be more easily memorized and remembered. According to students, the plots, the events, and the characters' emotions all helped them to learn the target words. Moreover, repetitions provided a chance for memory enhancement. For example, some of the words appeared more than once in the clip and subsequently drew the learners' attention.

Another study was "Smart subtitles for vocabulary learning", by Kovacs and Miller. (2014). Their main objective was to compare smart subtitles against dual subtitles in their effectiveness in teaching vocabulary. After viewing a 5-minute video with one of the tools, participants took a vocabulary quiz, wrote a summary of the video clip, and filled out a questionnaire. They then repeated this procedure on another clip, with the other tool.

The Smart Subtitles system currently supports videos in Chinese, Japanese, French, German, and Spanish. This system can be extended to other languages in which bilingual dictionaries are available.

The findings of this project included but were not limited to the following observations: users correctly defined over twice as many new words on the vocabulary quiz when using Smart Subtitles than with dual subtitles; viewing times did not differ significantly between the tools; viewers' self-assessed enjoyability did not differ significantly between the tools, and viewers' self-assessed comprehension did not differ significantly between the tools.

Naghizadeh and Darabi (2015), reported findings in study called: "The Impact of Bimodal, Persian and No-subtitle Movies on Iranian EFL Learners' L2 Vocabulary Learning". The participants included 27 male and female teenage (15-17 years old) intermediate learners who were studying English in Parvaz language institution in Izeh, Khuzestan, Iran. For the sake of homogeneity, the Oxford Placement Test (2007) was given to all learners.

Within the Iranian context, the role of video materials in developing vocabulary had not been considered seriously. The findings can be beneficial to all people, engaged in language programs including curriculum and course designers, teachers and students. Course designers can benefit from the findings by incorporating subtitled movies of various types as a part of vocabulary development materials. It can also help teachers in choosing the right type of subtitles for the purpose of teaching new vocabulary to their student.

The researchers found that the employment of subtitles is an effective factor influencing vocabulary learning. Additionally, bimodal subtitling is more influential in teaching and learning vocabularies than other subtitles. On the other hand, Persian subtitling e.g., L1 produces the same results as if no subtitles had been used.

Visual Literacy

Several types of "literacy" have been identified over the years. The use of adjectives is alive and well so as to identified things such as "Cultural literacy","Computer literacy" and even so gender pronoun literacy. For our purposes, the idea of visual literacy is salient.

"Visual literacy refers to the ability to make meaning from information in the form of the image. The "reader" of this image has the competence or ability to interpret, evaluate, and represent the meaning in visual form. We live in a visual culture. Students' everyday lives reflect the dominance of images on screen that are colorful, that have animation, texture, and dimensionality. The combined influences of the image have

shifted the way students make meaning” (Rowse, McLean and Hamilton. 2012, p.445)

Today, constructing a true meaning of anything is more complex since there are more mediums, materials and modalities. Nowadays, learners can activate more than one of five senses through the use of the multimedia material on the internet. For example, when they interact with video games, animations, risky virtual adventures, racing car competitions, they have to be skillful in reading and following instructions, finding solutions for puzzling situations or decision making process to select the best alternative.

The concept of visual literacy is important to learn how to use dynamic materials that can be downloaded freely from the internet. The students in this digital area need to develop skills that intertwine sounds, images, movements, and actions to communicate social and familiar information in more than one mode. For instance, a subtitled video that has been posted on a closed Facebook group can be played as many times as needed. By considering literacy within educational boundaries, Rowse and Walsh (2011), identify new beliefs and views about the meaning of literacy which can be characterized as follow:

- There is more emphasis on cultural practices than cognitive development.
- Home and community is more involved in educational work.
- Wider emphasis on screen textual structure than book textual structure.
- Individuals who are achieving skills to become literate in terms of multimedia are observed carefully.

In the field of new literacy studies, the literacy perspective has to do not only with the idea of mastering reading and writing abilities but multimedia technological texts, as well. Consequently, learners should be seen as multi-literate learners that are able to manage a paper-based text, and also computer-based or digital text (Street, 2009)

Different types of subtitles

Subtitles are defined as the permanently affixed onscreen text that represents the narration, dialogue, music, or sound effects in a program. Subtitled videos let learners not only listen but also simultaneously read the narrative of a speaker. Some applications permit students to deactivate subtitles to try to understand the content of the dialogues without any written reference. In the classroom, teachers can stop the video to emphasize in a specific part that requires an explanation or to pause when new words have to be taught and learnt.

There are different types of subtitles in English, and other languages. Standard subtitles (L2 audio with L1 captions), bimodal subtitles (L2 audio with L2 subtitles), and reversed subtitles (L1 audio with L2 captions).

L2 audio with L2 subtitles are used for this study because the main purpose is to encourage students to see and hear as much English as possible. L2- L1 can be an interference that creates a negative students' habit: understanding only has place if they can translate from English to Spanish. (Vaezi, Sarkeshikian and Shah-Ahmadi, 2013).

In the case of Colombia a huge gap can be observed between the use of subtitled videos and learning vocabulary films and in academic settings. In order to bridge this gap, the researcher tackled this issue and conducted a study to determine the role of instructional subtitled videos in learning vocabulary in a secondary school context. In fact, the study aimed to determine to what extent the use of subtitles videos influence the process of learning vocabulary.

Methodology

Action research is the most convenient method to follow since teacher-researcher can get immediate feedback from students' about their performance. Subsequently and it is possible to make positive with respect to the resources.).

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) developed a concept for action research. They proposed a spiral model comprising four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting:

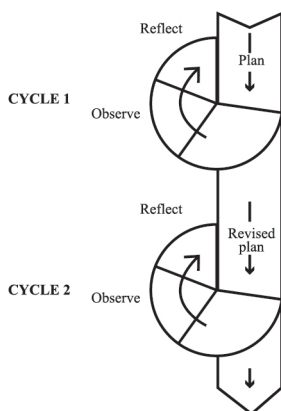


Figure 1 Research Model

Carr and Kemmis (1986) claim that AR is “simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (p. 162). Hence, AR provides the necessary elements to think of teaching as a way to increase and foster the learning opportunities of their students, which at the same time, allows teachers to develop as professional because AR “seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers” (Richard and Farrell, 2005, p. 4).

Taking into account the specific objectives that were set in this research, some steps were implemented to make the development of the research possible under a constant reflective process on the use of the strategy to learn vocabulary:

Step 1. In this stage, a pre-test was applied to identify and measure the learners’ difficulties when they were working on the target words that were selected from the videos (ten words for each one)

Step 2. After applying the pre-test, three sessions were developed by using 3 instructional subtitled videos downloaded from YouTube. The session was planned according to the stages proposed by Harmer (2009): engage, study and activate. The teacher facilitated and provided a clear idea about the purpose of each video task.

Step 3. The classroom observations phase took a fundamental role in this inquiry since they helped teacher-researcher to highlight a set of relevant aspects that contributed to getting enough information about students’ performance during the whole process.

Step 4 To know how the process of learning vocabulary using instructional subtitled videos progressed, the teacher-researcher used a diary with the aim of documenting conclusions drawn after each session.

Step 5. After the task, a semi-structured interview was applied to receive students’ comments about the instructional subtitled videos as a visual strategy to learn vocabulary. Moreover, a post-test was applied with the purpose of determining how useful the use of the instructional subtitled videos was to learn vocabulary. Finally, the pre-test and post test results were compared and contrasted.

By knowing how well subtitled instructional videos help students to learn vocabulary and the way they react in front them, four instruments were applied: teacher’s diary, students’ semi-structured interview, classroom observation, a test, and post- test. The three subtitled videos were : The pianist by By Brij Kothari (6’05”), Zyppe the Zebra by Umilla Ellappan (4’50”), and The Salt March by Esther David (5’01”).

The analysis of information was be done under two paradigms: Quantitative and Qualitative. The second one is related to the categories that emerge from students’

performance and the way they see the strategy. The first one has to do with the number of words students learn from the content of the videos.

In order to explore the utility of instructional subtitled videos, this research addresses three questions:

RQ1 To what extent instructional subtitled videos influence on students' learning vocabulary?

RQ2 What are students' reactions using instructional subtitled videos in learning vocabulary?

RQ3 What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos to learn vocabulary?

Participants

The instructional subtitled videos were shown to the 8-1 student cohort, composed of 15 learners: 10 boys and 5 girls, 13-16 years old. Most of them belong to the lower middle classes. They have a basic A1 (CEFR), English level being familiar with vocabulary related to the house, family, days of the week, months of the year, weather, festivities, time, animals, routines, nationalities, ordinal and cardinal numbers, jobs, sports, likes and dislikes, things they can/can't do.

The institution where this research was developed (Tolima-Ibagué), provides an educational service to 1700 students, in primary and secondary school.

There are two (2) English and (2) Spanish teachers who are members of the Humanities Faculty. The students attend thirty (30) class hours a week, three (3) of which are English, 10% of instruction time.

Data collection procedure

For gathering the information, several instruments were selected to achieve the necessary information to provide answers to the research questions asked. In this study a pre-test, students' artifacts, class observation, a researcher's diary, and a post-test was used. The teacher-researcher collected the data over three sessions (three videos). A worksheet was elaborated for each video consisting of five exercises: (1) matching pictures to words, (2) synonyms and antonyms, (3) definitions, (4) fillings in the gaps, and (5) sentence writing activities. Students and teacher performance was recorded on video for each session. To know students' reactions during the process of intervention class observation was used. A semi-structured interview was conducted to see the advantages and disadvantages of instructional subtitled videos as a visual strategy.

Sagor (2000) states that triangulation “involves the use of multiple independent sources of data to establish the truth and accuracy of a claim.” (p. 113) For that reason, it is fundamental to address the research questions from different angles using diverse instruments of data collection. The following triangulation matrix adapted from Sagor (2000) shows three interdependent relationships: (1) the instruments (2) the research questions they attempt to answer and (3) their level of importance to the questions. (p.115)

Table 1. Triangulation Matrix (After Sagor’s, 2006)

Research Questions	Data	Data	Data	Data
	Source # 1	Source # 2	Source # 3	Source # 4
To determine to what extent do instructional subtitled videos influence students’ learning of vocabulary?	Teacher’s diary	Semi-structured interview	Classroom observation	Student’s artifacts
What are students’ reactions by using instructional subtitled videos in learning vocabulary?	Teacher’s diary	Classroom observation	Semi-structured interview	
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos to learn vocabulary?	Semi-structured interview	Teacher’s diary	Classroom observation	

Source: the Author (2017)

Data analysis

Interpreting the data was based on four aspects: First, the subtitled video where the data was collected; second, the type of instrument used to collect the data; and third, the participant from whom the data was collected. A code was assigned to each aspect, and the data was labeled with different codes.

Table 2. Coding process

Aspect of Data	Code	Meaning
Subtitled video	ZZ	Zyppy the Zebra
	TP	The Pianist
	SM	Salt March
	TD	Teacher’s Diary
Data source	CO	Class observation
Participant	SI	Semi-structured interview
	S1	Student 1
	S2	Student 2
	S3	Student 3
	T	Teacher

Source: The author (2018)

This coding process was useful to identify the data that illustrated the categories and sub-categories emerging from the data analysis. For instance, information that is related to a participant 1, subtitled video ZZ, from teacher's diary, it would be identified as S1.ZZ.TD. The exactitude of the coding process permitted a thorough and exact reading of the data. By searching evidence in the data that legitimized or questioned it, the categories and subcategories that emerged from analysis were identified.

The data analysis process in this study was realized under the grounded approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Consequently, the categories are the result of inductive analysis of the data gathered to develop a deep understanding of the phenomena under study. The data analysis procedures consisted of reading all the data collected through the classroom observation, teacher's diary, students' semi-structured interview, students' artifacts that provided validity and reliability to the findings of this study. Careful reading began right after the data gathering process started; in a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis (Johnson and Christensen, 2004).Source: The Author (2018)

Table 3. Categories resulting from the analysis

Research Questions	Categories	Subcategorias
To what extent do instructional subtitled videos influence students' vocabulary learning?	Learning new words.	Vocabulary presentation
What are students' reactions, by using instructional subtitled videos in learning vocabulary?	Subtitled videos Participants' previous experiences. Participants' performance in learning vocabulary	Funny interesting videos Students engagement Students participation The target words
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos to learn vocabulary?	Images and words	The use of images and texts.

Category 1: Learning Words. Explains students' performance to learn new words and there is sub category related to the unknown words.

Category 2. Subtitled Videos. Refers to subtitled videos as visual strategies and it has subcategory: positive attitudes towards the use of videos

Category 3. Participant's Previous Experience. Identifies students' vocabulary activation. It has two subcategories: students' engagement and participation.

Category 4. Participants' Performance in Learning Vocabulary. Concentrates on the way students performed during the implementation of the video tasks. It has a subcategory: the target words.

Category 5. Images and Words. Suggests the importance of supporting vocabulary learning with images. It has one sub-category: The use of images, and texts.

The categories are reference points in the analysis of class observation, the teacher's diary, and the semi structured interview in each video used as part of the action research process.

Findings

By using instructional subtitled videos the participants obtained better results in learning the target vocabulary, implying that the information was received through multisensory channels: audio, images and text. The students' senses were interacting with movement, color, sound effects and the picture sequences that support the plot of each story,

According to the semi- structured interview, the students thought that the use of instructional subtitled videos assisted them, to learn vocabulary more easily, practiced pronunciation and intonation, and had a more positive view of their English class, going beyond the traditional activities that can be boring and non-motivational in L2 acquisition.

To facilitate students' interaction with the videos and tasks, ESA (Engage, Study, Activate), (Harmer,2009, p.52) was used so as to have a didactic sequence, and activate students' background. Each video topic conveyed a particular context where the students' reactions were diverse. For instance, some liked Zyppy the Zebra more than Salt March, because the Zebra was trying to get rid of the fleas in an annoying but humorous situation,. It made some students laugh, especially when the animal was scratching on the ground with his legs upside down, literally going belly up.

The students were able to predict, interpret and understand the video plot by following the sequence of events that take place while the video was playing. The learners concentrated on visual clues such as facial expression, dress, gesture, posture and on details of the environment. to construct meaning

It is worth noting that there were some disadvantages related to students' performance during the intervention process . On the one hand, students risked only reading the subtitles and not focusing on the video images. On the other hand, subtitles might interfere with the students who simply wanted to enjoy the video images. The students who were able to follow images and subtitles concurrently had more chances to understand the plot of the stories.

Likewise, students may get a little bored if there is too much information being illustrated in the same picture. The instructional subtitled videos did not have characters' speech audio but a narrator that described the story, using pictures related

to the facts that occurred during the development of the plot of the video. For instance, in “The Pianist”, there is a scene where the child pianist is sitting at the piano, and the narrator explains how the little pianist practiced not only at school but also at home. It is illustrated with two pianos: a big one that was located at the school and a small one whose owner was the child. To give the idea that the pianist practices at both places, both images of the piano are shown separately.

Pre-test and Post- Test Results

Undoubtedly, the use of instructional subtitled videos was a powerful strategy that helped students learn vocabulary in an easier way since they had the possibility to have information in oral and written visual form simultaneously. Hence, some could remember the new words when they see them inserted in full complete sentences, when the words were narrated or when the images of the video images illustrated what was taking place

By contrasting the pre-test and the post-test, we observed from figures below that the students performed much better in the post-test. None of them failed the post- test and all of them got a higher score with respect to the pre- test. In the pre-test only five (5) students had a score above fifteen (15) right answers, and one student obtained (18). However, in the post-test, the minimum score of all of the students succeeded in reaching more than twenty two (22) out of thirty (30) answers. It indicated that the intervention during the three cycles was useful and permitted the students to learn the target words thanks to the use of instructional subtitled videos as visual strategy.

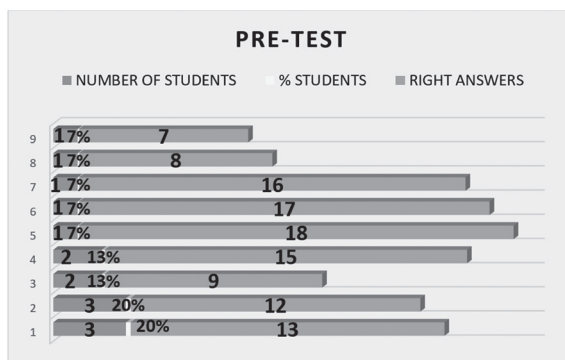


Figure 2. Post -Test

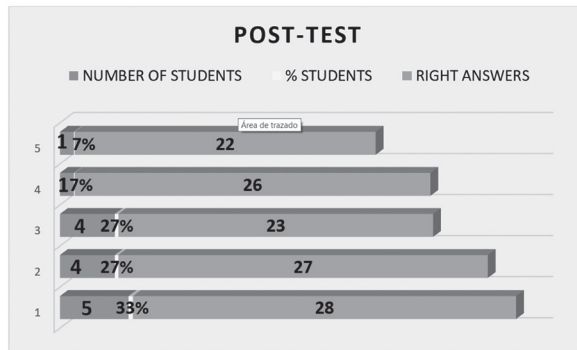


Figure 3. Post- Test

According to research by Naghizadeh and Darabi (2015), the participants performed better results when they were exposed to bimodal subtitles (subtitles and audio in English). In the same vein, the learners of the present research showed better as the three cycles experiment unfolded.

Concerning to the use of multimedia resources that can be downloaded for free from the internet, Harji, Woods, & Alavi, (2010), point out that learners who received the language through multisensory channels had a wider spectrum to put into practice their skills so as to work out the target vocabulary. In a similar context, the students who came into contact with subtitled videos could experiment how beneficial aural, text and images were to making sense out of the new words to be learnt.

Conclusions

The goal of this research was to know to what extent instructional subtitled videos could influence students' learning vocabulary. These videos were Zippy the Zebra, The Pianist and The Salt March. The findings are not in doubt, the implementation of subtitled videos contributed to learning vocabulary. The main factors associated with the outcome of this research included (1) the participants' interest in the implementation process (2) the methodological procedure which took into account the following steps: Engage, Activate, and Study, which are suggested by Harmer (2009). EAS highly contributed to appropriately using the video material. The use of words in their visual context supports vocabulary learning.

Regarding to the writing production process, students were able to organize their ideas by using the target words and the pictures as learning aids. The majority of them went from simple words to complete sentences during the three cycles. This achievement showed how the activation of learners' background play a crucial role in creating a suitable atmosphere to be prepared to watch the videos.

The design of video task material played an important role in this investigation making learning easy because the exercises could gradually motive students to learn the L2 vocabulary. Also, the students established a connection between the subtitled images, sound, and text, which made learning meaningful, and interactive. By using new words and pictures in a real context, the students were engaged in their learning process. Regarding the strategies to learn vocabulary: word association, synonyms/ antonyms sentence construction, all of them pave the way to communicate ideas, enabling the students to go beyond the words so as to express what they wanted to say in written form.

The analysis showed that the systemic reflection process in each cycle of this study made it possible to incorporate changes in favor of instructional subtitled videos as a visual strategy since new details appeared during the intervention process. For instance, it was necessary for the students to develop skills and perform extra activities to gain experience in reading, watching, and listening. This research also showed that subtitled videos motivated students to learn English because of their acceptance and positive attitude toward them. It means that the vocabulary was related to artistic real social life situations. On the other hand, by writing down sentences the design of the video tasks let students go from simple exercises to more complex ones.

Limitations

This study, like any other study, had its limitations. One of them was that students' knowledge of the language varied greatly, some of them were not competent enough,

which was noticeable during the implementation of the three videos. While some only wrote words associated with the images, others could write complete sentences. More importantly each student advanced according to his or her own skill possibilities.

In the future, they should face authentic subtitled videos, as they progress in their learning. In the same direction, it is important to embody subtitled videos with characters and issues, that students identify with. In that way, they should be more committed to learning it. In other words, videos in which speech is clear enough for them to understand the topic addressed, and the message behind it, should engage students enough so that they will continue learning English.

Future Research

This study allowed the comprehension of the use of instructional subtitled videos in learning vocabulary in 8-2 grade, Ibagué, Colombia. However, it would be interesting to conduct further studies in this field in other EFL skills like reading, listening or writing. For example, pronunciation. Viewing without sound only reading, then read out loud. Students could then compare their pronunciation to that of the video.

References

- Harji, M. B., Woods, P. C., & Alavi, Z. K. (2010). The effect of viewing subtitled videos on vocabulary learning. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning (TLC)*, 7(9).
- Kovacs, G., & Miller, R. C. (2014, April). Smart subtitles for vocabulary learning. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 853-862). ACM.
- Naghizadeh, M., & Darabi, T. (2015). The Impact of Bimodal, Persian and No-Subtitle Movies on Iranian EFL Learners' L2 Vocabulary Learning. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(2), 66-79.
- Rowse, J., & Walsh, M. (2011). Rethinking literacy education in new times: Multimodality, multiliteracies, and new literacies. *Brock Education Journal*, [online]. 21, 53-62. Available from: <http://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/brocked/home/article/viewFile/236/174>
- Rowse, J., McLean, C., & Hamilton, M. (2012). Visual literacy as a classroom approach. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(5), 444-447.
- Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*. Virginia: ASCD.
- Shamshirian, M. (2015). Assessing the effect of utilizing monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on EFL learners' vocabulary. *Language in India*, 15(7), 175-188.
- Squires, S. W., Grotzinger, J. P., Arvidson, R. E., Bell, J. F., Calvin, W., Christensen, P. R., ... & Johnson, J. R. (2004). In situ evidence for an ancient aqueous environment at Meridiani Planum, Mars. *science*, 306(5702), 1709-1714.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures*
- Street, B. V. (2009). Multiple Literacies and. *The SAGE handbook of writing development*, 137.
- Susanto, V. (2017). The effect of in-class listening activities on the vocabulary mastery of the English Department students (Doctoral dissertation, Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya).
- Vaezi, M. N., Sarkeshikian, S. A. H., & Shah-Ahmadi, M. R. (2013). The Impact of Pre-Modified Input on Iranian EFL Learners' Listening. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 222.
- Wang, Y. C. (2012). Learning L2 Vocabulary with American TV Drama" From the Learner's Perspective". *English Language Teaching*, 5(8), 217-225.

Authors

* **Jorge Luis Romero-Villamil** is a Teacher and researcher at José Celestino Mutis School. He holds a Master degree in English Didactics and a BA in Modern Languages from Universidad del Tolima. He has been teaching English for over 20 years. His research interests include Foreign Language Didactics and English Learning Vocabulary.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1446-9593>

Claudia Patricia Guzman-Martinez holds a Master degree in English Didactics from Universidad del Tolima. He holds a BA in Plastic Art from Universidad del Tolima. She is an English teacher at La Aguadita school in state of Tolima, Colombia. She studied Bilingual and Computer Secretary at Instituto Meyer in Bogota. Her research interests encompass Didactics of Pedagogy, and Innovation in Education.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9796-9365>

How to reference this article: Romero-Villamil, J. L., & Guzman-Martinez, C. P. (2020). Learning Vocabulary Through Instructional Subtitled Videos. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 7-25. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.841>

Situating Local Literacies at the Core of ELT Curriculum in Higher Education¹

Las Literacidades Locales Situadas
al Centro del Currículo de Inglés en la
Educación Superior

**Yuly Andrea Nieto-Gómez
and Amparo Clavijo-Olarte*²**

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas,
Colombia

¹ Received: February 21st 2020/ Accepted: September 10th 2020

² yulyandreanieto@gmail.com; aclavijoolarte@gmail.com

Abstract

This qualitative interpretive study carried out with four EFL teachers in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia addresses the disconnect that exists between curricular content and the life of students in education. From our understanding of literacy as a sociocultural practice, we proposed a pedagogical approach that immersed teachers and students in community explorations to study local issues informed by different disciplines. Therefore, this study describes the ways teachers designed and implemented curriculum using community assets (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2003) to develop student agency. The issues addressed by students in their inquiries included improving civic practices in the cycling route; fostering river preservation; environmental issues with garbage in Bogotá; and possibilities to access higher education for young populations in Colombia. Using a grounded theory approach, we collected and analyzed data from class discussions, curricular units, semi-structured interviews and class observation. Findings reveal that community explorations fostered students' agency towards studying social issues and promoted the construction of context-embedded opportunities for learning using students' realities and topics of local relevance (Canagarajah, 2005). The target language was used to reflect, pose problems, produce texts and participate in social reflections within an academic environment.

Key words: Foreign languages; literacy education; communities; teachers' role; higher education.

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo interpretativo realizado con cuatro maestros de EFL en un curso de inglés para propósitos académicos en una universidad privada en Bogotá, Colombia, aborda la desconexión que existe entre el contenido curricular y la vida de los estudiantes. Desde nuestra comprensión de la literacidad como una práctica sociocultural, propusimos una pedagogía que involucró a maestros y estudiantes en exploraciones comunitarias para estudiar temas locales informados por diferentes disciplinas. Por lo tanto, este estudio describe las formas en que los maestros diseñaron e implementaron el plan de estudios utilizando los activos de la comunidad (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2003) para desarrollar la participación estudiantil. Los problemas abordados por los estudiantes en sus indagaciones incluyeron la mejora de las prácticas cívicas en la ciclo ruta; preservación del río Tunjuelito; problemas ambientales con basura en Bogotá; y posibilidades de acceder a la educación superior para poblaciones jóvenes en Colombia. Utilizando un enfoque de teoría fundamentada, recolectamos y analizamos datos de discusiones en clase, unidades curriculares, entrevistas semiestructuradas y observación en clase. Los resultados revelan que las exploraciones de la comunidad fomentaron la participación de los estudiantes para estudiar los problemas sociales y promovieron la integración de las realidades del contexto para el aprendizaje utilizando temas de relevancia local para los estudiantes (Canagarajah 2005). El inglés se utilizó para reflexionar, plantear problemas, producir textos y participar en reflexiones sociales dentro de un entorno académico.

Palabras clave: Lenguas extranjeras; formación para la literacidad; comunidades; el rol de los docentes; educación superior.

Resumo

Este estudo qualitativo interpretativo realizado com quatro professores de EFL em um curso de inglês para propósitos acadêmicos em uma universidade particular em Bogotá, Colômbia, trata sobre a desconexão que existe entre o conteúdo curricular e a vida dos estudantes. Desde a nossa compreensão da alfabetização como uma prática sociocultural, propomos uma pedagogia que envolveu a professores e estudantes em explorações comunitárias para estudar temas locais informados por diferentes disciplinas. Portanto, este estudo descreve as formas em que os professores desenharam e implementaram o plano de estudos utilizando os ativos da comunidade (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2003) para desenvolver a participação estudantil. Os problemas tratados pelos estudantes nas suas indagações incluíram a melhora das práticas cívicas na ciclovía; preservação do rio Tunjuelito; problemas ambientais com lixo em Bogotá; e possibilidades de acessar a educação superior para populações jovens na Colômbia. Utilizando um enfoque de teoria fundamentada, coletamos e analisamos dados de discussões em aula, unidades curriculares, entrevistas semiestruturadas e observação em aula. Os resultados revelam que as explorações da comunidade fomentaram a participação dos estudantes para estudar os problemas sociais e promoveram a integração das realidades do contexto para a aprendizagem utilizando temas de relevância local para os estudantes (Canagarajah 2005). O inglês foi utilizado para refletir, propor problemas, produzir textos e participar em reflexões sociais dentro de um entorno acadêmico.

Palavras chave: Línguas estrangeiras; formação para a alfabetização; comunidades; o papel dos docentes; educação superior.

Introduction

This qualitative interpretive study addresses the disconnect that exists between curricular content and the life and professional interests of students in English classes in higher education. It serves as a reflection on the exploration of local literacies in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). While we widen our understanding of socially embedded pedagogies with teachers, we propose pedagogical and curricular connections with local resources to foster language and literacy development (Clavijo & Ramírez, 2019).

This project emerged as a response to university EFL teachers' interest to participate in an innovative project that implied designing curricula, and creating local inquiries collaboratively with their students. They were accountable for teaching English as a requirement in the disciplines, but they were also interested in expanding the content to make students' community realities closer to their learning experience. Using community as curriculum was the starting point to engage students in innovative and contextualized practices in the classroom. The teachers were eager to learn about ways to establish links between teaching language and inquiring about social and environmental issues of the local context. Thus, we regarded community pedagogy as a possibility for teachers and students to recognize and critically address community problems using students' academic background to develop sensitivity towards their context.

Through field explorations and professional development workshops we invite teachers to recognize the sources available in the community to engage learners in knowledge embedded in social, cultural and material contexts (Gee, 2004). We believe that professional reflections and curriculum design that use local assets as resources to promote awareness of local literacies as content for learning were key aspects of the pedagogy we implemented with teachers in the language classroom.

The focus of this project is on community pedagogies (CP) that explore the local resources that influence the life of both teachers and students. Thus, students' funds of knowledge and experiences (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) are critical resources to promote local inquiries among them. We considered community assets (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) as powerful and valuable resources that involved learners and teachers in a critical reading of the community. One of the main goals of CP is to build learning environments that foster students' inquiries and engage them in text production using information from their professional fields and disciplines. Thus, the English language promoted reflection, problem posing, and student agency around social issues that they found locally relevant to inquire about. The question that guides our study explores *How do EFL university teachers use local resources for curriculum and teaching?*

Theoretical Framework

We found the work of scholars and researchers whose effort has been recognized locally and globally key to understanding the relevance of local literacies in language and literacy education. We restate the contributions on critical issues on literacy (Freire and Macedo (1987); Luke and Woods (2009); and Comber (2013,2016); situated literacies (Gee, 2004); local literacies and community pedagogies, proposed by Sh & Author 2 (2013) 2013; Sharkey, et al, (2016) and (Author2 & R, 2019) critical views of local pedagogies by Canagarajah (2005); and place-based pedagogies by Greenwood (2013); and Demarest (2014).The former concepts allow to propose a community-oriented vision of language pedagogy and curriculum in ELT.

Through this theoretical support our stance is based on a sociocultural perspective to teacher education. It fosters teacher agency and a critical perspective to language and literacy, through involving the social and cultural contexts where individuals live. Thus, this literature review places agency as the engagement of actors with temporal-relational context in order to take action (Hempel-Jorgesen, 2015). It implies a central dimension in teachers' professionalism, since it involves developing the capacity to own social change and achieve educational social justice. One way to promote a contextualized practice is to focus teachers' pedagogy on students' social realities as the starting point of the development of literacy.

Literacy as a Socially Constructed Practice

When literacy is approached from a socially-situated perspective, the context becomes the starting point for teaching and learning as a process of interacting and negotiating with local texts. It shapes an individual's perception of their own reality. This occurs by teachers fostering a sense of agency in students, as they reorganize and transform their environment with the production of new texts. All uses of language are directly related to reality; therefore, literacy, as proposed by Freire & Macedo (1987) refers to "how to write and rewrite reality, transforming it through a conscious work" (p. 23). Thus, literacy constitutes a framework to contextualize and raise awareness from the EFL classroom.

In this sense, literacy as a socially constructed practice, accounts for an exercise that evolves from the analysis and interrogation of the historical and cultural context of places (Comber, 2016). It problematizes social and classroom textual practices, through granting teachers and students the possibility to move from awareness to action (Pandya & Ávila, 2013). Teachers and students can become researchers that use language to question and produce texts informed by their own reality.

In this project, EFL teachers explore and learn with students about river preservation; city practices in the cycling route; environmental issues with garbage; access to public and private education to develop inquiry projects. This, according to Comber, Thomson, and Wells (2001) is a way to negotiate critical literacies, since these practices represent a teachers' commitment with ethical and pedagogical values that respect students' ways of knowing, as well as cultural and political histories. Thus, the local context in which teachers are immersed has a direct impact in curriculum, pedagogy, and theory. Now, situated literacies can be encouraged from pedagogies whose curriculum evolves from the negotiation with the place and the community. This leads us to base our research in CP, to use local literacies in the EFL curriculum.

Local literacies and community pedagogies (CP)

We believe that the practice of teaching and learning is concerned with collective and community actions that allow their members to make their own choices to deal with social processes, to exercise their citizenship. Accordingly, the local, as political, cultural, economic and identity reality, provides the individual with the basic instruments to construct a relationship with the global. For this reason, local knowledge becomes the essence of educational action by fostering cultural negotiation and dialogue (Mejía, 2011).

For Canagarajah (2005) “local knowledge has to be veritably reconstructed—through an ongoing process of critical reinterpretation, counter discursive negotiation and imaginative application” (p. 12). This notion suggests that teachers are involved in the exploration of the relevance and complexity of local knowledge as to create a curriculum that integrates values, perceptions, and diversity within the community by fostering a continuous reflection that leads to a search for an alternate reality.

From this perspective, situated literacies present a way to evolve into critical literacy practices, which fosters a sense of possibility, agency, and transformation by recognizing the assets in the place and space of study (Comber, 2017). This idea is mirrored by Rincón and Clavijo (2016) whose community project with students from a low-socio economic public school in Bogotá fostered a community mapping experience, students crafting multimodal texts and creatively participating with others in a group blog while they critically reflected on their role within the community. Such local inquiry justifies that when teachers expose their students to challenging settings, based on a pedagogy of place, they envision the emancipatory role of language practices in their lives. This opposes the assumption that teacher, student, and school achievement can be measured by isolated, individualistic, and quantifiable classroom routines (Greenwood, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003a).

Furthermore, when place along with cultural issues acts as the core of the curriculum, teachers and students can immerse themselves in the investigation of their society with a broader view by including different disciplines. Sharkey, Clavijo & Ramírez (2016) conducted a study with teachers from different content areas in a public school that has sustained a partnership with the university for the last twenty years. The authors aimed at learning with teachers about how they developed and implemented CP, after designing curricular projects that connected students' lives and learning. Projects such as understanding the semiotics of graffiti, the analysis of the socioeconomic reality of the students' neighborhood, interviewing workers and families, and finding out about Colombian history from their own and their families' voices, display, as described by the participants, that appreciating local knowledge as a curriculum resource increases teachers' autonomy and ownership, as well as students' motivation, engagement, and family involvement.

Community-oriented vision in a continual process of self-development

Collaborating and learning with teachers in schools is a central goal for us as teacher educators in teacher education programs. By doing so, teachers and teacher educators can be immersed in a continual process of self-development through accepting and being aware of the sociocultural reality that influences classroom practices, while including both the linguistic and social needs of the learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). Accordingly, the language teacher becomes attentive to their practice as an opening not only to maximize learning opportunities in the classroom, but, at the same time to understand and transform them outside the classroom.

When developing sensitivity towards a situated curriculum, we acknowledge the recognition of learners' experiences that are negotiated in different places and times. The language teacher can get involved in an exploration of their roles as a community teacher (Murrell, 2011) who contextualizes the knowledge of the community, culture, and identity of the students and families they work with, in order to build a successful teaching practice in diverse settings. This standpoint questions the separation of the academic environment from the everyday world of students, since the interaction of situated learning and practice allows individuals to engage in a purposeful activity. Within this perspective, teachers build knowledge and analytical capacities by undertaking an analysis of the population they work with, learning about students, their families, incomes, and educational histories; exploring students' funds of knowledge; developing linguistic knowledge; revising what they know about pedagogy; and re-thinking about literacies in this time and the new literacies teachers and students need to learn (Comber, 2001).

Teachers' readiness to face socially-embedded pedagogies is based on dispositional as well as experiential factors that enable them to teach being aware and sensitive of their population. Mills and Ballantyne (2009) claim that two dispositional factors lead to commitment to social justice from the classroom: Self-awareness/ Self reflectiveness, which encompass thinking critically about one's own beliefs and attitudes towards the teaching practice. The authors posit that their pre-service teachers, first semester students as participants in their study, showed that such dispositions evolved developmentally by promoting intercultural experiences, support group experiences and educational experiences.

In terms of the experiential factors, teachers value field investigations that allow understanding the dynamics in a community, through the consideration of its physical spaces, individuals, local economy, institutions and associations (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). Such local recognition permits the teachers to critique official standardized models or imposed curricula which perpetuate overgeneralizing realities that do not fit in locally produced knowledge. On the contrary, standardized models may lead to the reinforcement of social inequalities (Gonzalez, 2007) restraining the teacher from being considered a valuable member of decision-making, teaching effectively, as well as becoming autonomous of their development.

Methodology

This qualitative interpretive study analyzes EFL teachers' praxis using CP in the context of higher education. The voices of the teachers are the most prominent as they become critical researchers of their own community, by using local resources as the foundations for their teaching practice.

Context and participants

This study took place at the language center in a private university in Bogota. The participants in the study are four EFL teachers who accepted the invitation to join the professional development workshops. They are from 28-35 years old. The participants were 3 female and one male teacher. They all hold a B.A. in foreign language teaching and have an overall experience with university students of more than 7 years. In this project they worked with students from Social communication, Industrial Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Marketing and Trade, systems engineering, psychology, Law, Economy, and digital marketing.

Data collection instruments

We collected data through field notes of group discussions in the professional development sessions and class observations, curricular units of community projects, an initial and final semi-structured interview. Through discussions we could observe their perspective on literacy teaching, teachers' awareness of their students' world, and teachers being willing to transform their practice. The field notes intended to depict teachers' reflections about the ways they went about to identify and get out of deficit perspectives. The curricular units that teachers designed were a source of information and analysis of their decision making individually and in groups. Semi-structured interviews were also carried out to gain teachers' insights about constructing the curricular unit, identifying the links the teachers set with the local resources, the way in which they bring them to the curriculum and students' texts that reflect the local realities in their community. Finally, the field notes from class observations for three weeks provided insights about students' project development.

Grounded theory guided the framework of analysis, provided the systematic and yet flexible procedure to collect and analyze data that constructs understanding of the sources of information (Charmaz, 2006). The examination of data in this framework encompasses the process of sorting and synthesizing information through qualitative coding. This process consists of classifying segments that start to represent emerging themes and categories. It entails open coding, axial coding, selective coding and finally, using theories that support all the coding process, and permit theorizing as the final step in grounded theory. We utilized an analytical lens by examining the data sources (field notes, observations, curricular units and interviews) to identify teachers' pedagogical decisions and actions that integrated students' inquiries about different community issues in their teaching of English and their development of inquiry skills. Through the analysis of outcomes teachers rethinking pedagogy came out as a challenge in the process of teacher praxis.

The pedagogical proposal

The structure of the pedagogical project entailed participating in four professional development workshops that engaged teachers in readings about professional experiences of teacher researchers using community resources for language teaching; guided discussion about key concepts related to CBP; field experiences; curriculum design; implementation of community field projects with students; and reflections on the pedagogical outcomes.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide a space where teachers could reflect on their role, language literacy teaching, as well as the ways in which they can promote awareness on the local reality, by identifying the resources they can bring into the EFL curriculum, as to foster sensitivity on social issues from the academic culture.

An example of teachers and students exploring local resources was the community mapping they conducted together by walking around the university to take pictures of the urban culture that called their attention. This exercise allowed them to pose problems about the local reality. Figure 1 describes the classification of resources that the teachers discovered.

Thus, the workshops were planned in a way that evolved from group discussion of professional readings, as well as conducting asset-mapping through the consideration of the physical spaces, individuals, local economy, institutions and associations (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993) around the university. Each workshop lasted four hours, and the topics addressed were 1) How do we get out of deficit pedagogies; 2) what is the culture around the university; 3) How do we build a curricular unit) and; 4) what are the standards that guide our curricular unit and how to polish up curricular units.

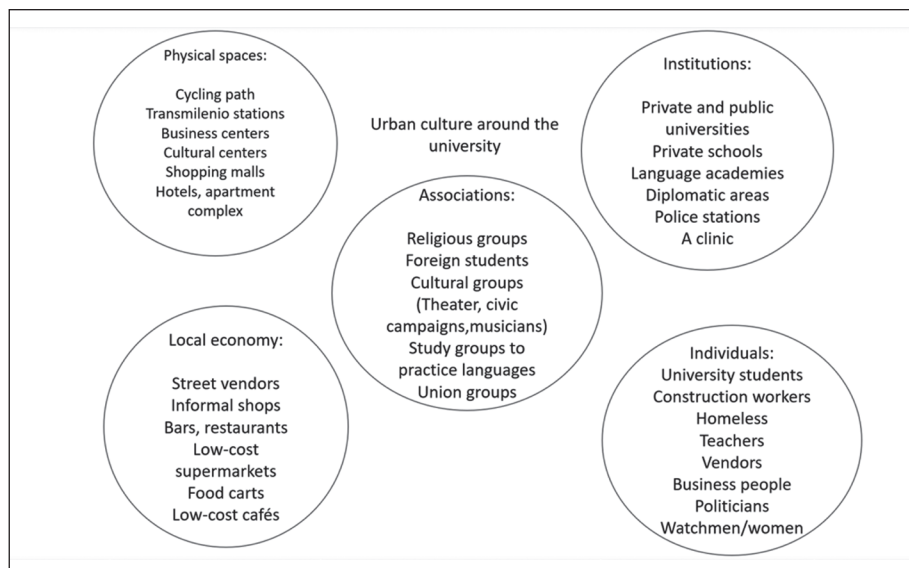


Figure 2. Steps to understand a context-embedded pedagogy

Findings and discussion of findings

The findings reveal two major themes in the praxis of EFL teachers using CP in higher education. *Teachers rethinking the sources of curriculum to promote situated literacies* and *Situating local literacies within students' professional fields in ELT*.

Teachers re-thinking the sources of curriculum to promote situated literacies

For this study, rethinking the sources for curriculum implies taking professional risks towards understanding and acting together new pedagogies that require social exploration. The construction of context-embedded opportunities for learning using students' realities helped teachers question a static skill-based curriculum.

During Teacher Development (TPD) workshops all participants were adamant about considering their disposition, open-mindedness and creativity, as the starting point to renovate the curriculum with a community-oriented vision. Re-thinking the sources of curriculum inspired the exploration of community resources and members; with the aim of encouraging students to question, propose, and imagine the path to contribute to transformations from their disciplines of study. Teachers' disposition to rethink their pedagogical practice and curriculum using CP, led them to pose questions as to overcome recurrent challenges and tensions along the process. These included raising students' curiosity to learn English using community assets and developing students-led inquiries; designing a contextualized curricular plan that addresses inquiry topics from students' professional disciplines and the language goals for the English levels. Finally, teachers were interested in making inquiry projects the source to find a common ground through their fields of knowledge. Below, we provide an explanation on how teachers addressed CP in their practice. Figure 2 categorizes the process teachers underwent to understand a context-embedded pedagogy.

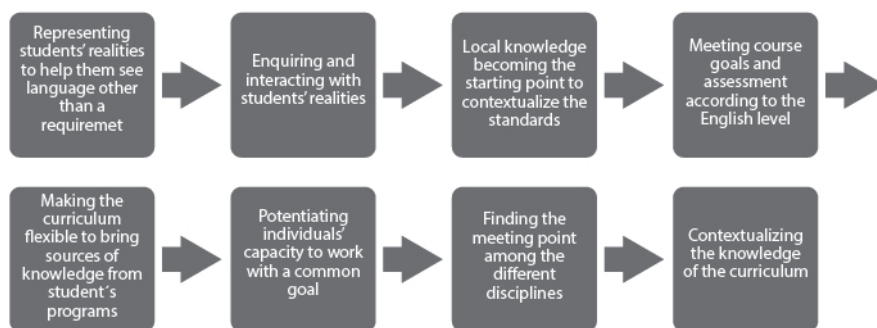


Figure 2. Steps to understand a context-embedded pedagogy

The steps portrayed in Figure 2 emerged from the professional reading discussions, and the construction of the curricular units. In the discussions during the initial workshops, teachers' first concern was regarding organizing content in the English

curriculum. Teachers realized the need to interact with students' realities themselves to identify local assets and find the way to connect them to teaching and learning English. The statement below describes Teacher 4's reflection about what it takes to develop a project from being aware of students' world, by rethinking their pedagogical decisions.

The success of these kinds of pedagogical projects depends a lot on the teachers' knowledge of such context, students' interests, the situations and experiences lived every day. We need to leave the classroom as well, and be really curious about the reality that surrounds our students.

(Teacher 4. Semi-structured interview. December 6, 2018)

The social awareness about students' context leads teachers to become involved in the exploration of situated literacy development practices in the EFL class. Teachers read students' world and involved students in a multimodal text production that depicts their realities by providing out-of-class spaces to develop problem-posing skills. In-class teaching was oriented to gain new perspectives on the issues they identified. Teachers constantly mediated, scaffolded text production, and provided positive feedback.

In the following excerpt, teacher 3 refers to text production as a process that fosters social consciousness, sensitivity, and action taking. They reconsidered teaching writing beyond a skill development process to acquire the target language, and promoted text production as a form of cultural appropriation (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000).

I found [the experience] it very powerful and engaging for them and for me. I have always been concerned with the development of writing production, this curricular unit allowed the students to produce texts based on a social awareness, not only as a task, but following a process that permitted them to raise their own questions from their observations and concerns discovered in the mapping...the process taught students valuable lessons, such as that of working collaboratively with their classmates, community members, and academic experts, in order to gain sensitivity of what happens in the real world where they interact, and construct their writing skill from that consciousness.

(Teacher 3- interview. December 6, 2018)

The examples illustrate Freire and Macedo (1987; 1998) concept of literacy regarded as a medium that values the historical and existential experiences inside a cultural production, considered as an integral way for people to produce, reproduce, and transform meaning. Thus, teachers rethink sources of curriculum to promote situated literacies when they engage their students in an inquiry process that empowers them to become researchers of their own reality, promoting a curious spirit, and guiding

them through the constructions of socially situated text. Hence, as Comber (2013) posits texts evolve from inquiring, analyzing and interrogating the context of places of study.

Teachers re-thinking the sources of curriculum to promote situated literacies is further explained through the second theme: *situating local literacies within students' professional fields in ELT*. It describes the ways teachers fostered the interaction of communities inside and outside the EFL classroom.

Situating local literacies within students' professional fields in ELT

In the study, the participating teachers situated local literacies through the observation of five key aspects suggested by Kretzmann and McKnight, (1993). They refer to associations, physical spaces, institutions, local economy, and individuals in the neighborhood. The starting point was to identify the assets that surround the context of the university and the community. In the projects developed by the teachers and students, the assets comprised institutions, neighborhoods, river preservation, cycling path, community members at/around university (academic community, family members, students, and street vendors).

Additionally, teachers reflected on students' professional programs as a local asset through which they geared curricular content, in order to develop awareness on social issues. The following response describes the teacher's perception on local resources.

For me a local resource is their own careers, when constructing the unit, I thought it was important to promote solutions from their different careers, in order for them to see possibilities to tackle the problem by using their academic knowledge. Finally, and what I consider innovative in my unit is that student's families, citizens, people in general, are not usually included as a source of information.

(Teacher 1 interview. November 1, 2018)

When students' professional disciplines became visible as a local resource, the teachers started to pose questions that brought about the synergies in the classroom. In the curricular units that addressed social problems, teachers situated local inquiries at the core and invited students to take actions collaboratively. Working in groups students provided peer feedback to gain perspectives from their field of expertise. The teachers promoted text production among students, to analyze the social issues from different perspectives; to consider peer feedback, and the fulfillment of language standards.

For example, in the curricular unit from participant 3, the teacher proposed a project to create a pedagogical campaign about environmental issues with garbage in Bogotá. The students from the law school proposed possible solutions and supported their arguments in a written report using Colombian environmental regulations. Additionally, students designed together an interview to an expert professor on regulation to environmental issues. The teacher comments follow.

[...] I have always considered that students' programs need to be reflected on addressing solutions to the social issues they encounter. Then, the English class has to deal with content within students' fields. My strategy was to have students write driving questions for the analysis of environmental issues, because I think that is how they can give direction to the topics based on what they really want to enquire.

(Teacher 3. Interview December, 6, 2018).

From the teacher's quote we inferred that situated literacy is developed through granting students the possibility to move from awareness to action (Pandya & Ávila, 2013) while becoming researchers that use language to question and produce texts informed and motivated by their own reality. In this case, students' practice is evolving from the analysis of issues which students find personally significant: their cultural context, academic interests, community problems, and aspirations to rename and reconstruct their own version of the world (Luke & Woods, 2009).

Another relevant aspect for teachers to think about when guiding the community project, among the different disciplines, was the incorporation of class goals according to the CEFR. Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) assert that when working with a community asset-based perspective, teachers are invited to include the realities of the curriculum standards they must meet, and to place the local knowledge and resources as the starting point for their teaching. In addition to following English levels requirements (CEFR), the teachers planned their units in a way that permitted them to use valid forms of assessment for the EFL class. Through CP meeting the standards becomes a collaborative task of both teachers and students who involve the community as partners in the curriculum design (Demarest, 2014). Teachers integrated alternative forms of assessment from the process experienced by students in the inquiry project. Teacher 4 worked on a project that explored possibilities to access private and public higher education for the young population in Colombia. She created the assessment criteria with the students using the standards for the language level and including the experiences students had with their context exploration. The criteria to construct the text follows.

1. The social issue presented is clearly located and supported with evidences
2. The analysis from the different programs needs to be visible

3. The text presents the bibliography
4. The text has gone through a revision process from other classmates (groups)
5. It is well structured, cohesive, and coherent.
6. The texts show task completion. (Class observation – Nov.12, 2018)

We can conclude that by exploring local literacies with students, the teachers widened their understanding of CP and curriculum design. Cochran-Smith (2005); Zeichner & Conklin (2008) state that effective educators understand the surroundings of the population they work with, and therefore acknowledge their motivations. Teachers' effective praxis evidenced the relevance of studying social issues through inquiry projects led in the EFL classes.

Finally, the convergence of communities is evident in the curricular unit from students in teacher's 1 class. She proposed to make a historical record of what has happened to the Tunjuelito river. Thus, students collaboratively designed an interview to have more information about the river, asking elder people in their families who have always lived in Ciudad Bolívar, their neighbors, and the young population. Afterwards, the group visited the place. With this information in mind, the group conducted research about strategies for river preservation, how organizations can be distributed to clean these areas. In the interview, the teacher explained:

Finally, and what I consider innovative in my unit is that student's families, citizens, people in general, are not usually included as a source of information, I found that local resource as a key if we want students to be able to provide solutions that include all the members included in the problem or issue.

(Teacher 1. interview. November. 1, 2018)

In this fashion, the EFL class evolves into a cross disciplinary dialogue (Smith & Sobel, 2010) which inspires teachers and students to explore problems and projects beyond their area of knowledge. To conclude, communities inside and outside the classroom intertwined when teachers guided their students to interact with people in communities as a learning opportunity to research social issues. Through this process, the teachers developed sensitivity towards a situated curriculum, and got involved in an exploration of their roles as community teachers (Murrell, 2011).

Conclusions

From this research experience we inform the fields of literacy development and language teacher education. Our response to the question How do EFL university teachers use local assets as sources for curriculum and teaching? acknowledges teachers' use of local literacies for curriculum and teaching to promote language learning and community engagement. From this perspective, teachers re-thinking the sources for curriculum allowed them to enquire and interact with students' realities themselves to identify local assets and to find the way to connect their professional fields as local assets. It enabled them to be responsive to their students' interests and everyday sociocultural practices. Hence, teaching evolved from the problems that inquiry awoke in students, which emerged from the reality they feel committed and related to.

This study aimed at identifying the links that language teachers from a private university establish with local resources to make decisions about EFL literacy teaching. To accomplish this goal, the teachers were participants of teacher professional development (TPD) workshops based on the studies by Sharkey, et al (2016). Through this experience, they became involved in asset mapping in the university surroundings; they held group discussions about socially embedded pedagogies, and designed curricular units using students' realities as the core for their learning experience.

Through the intervention it was possible to observe how TPD invited teachers to reflect upon their pedagogical practice and curriculum. It was oriented to propose using local literacies for curriculum design and context-embedded pedagogies. It provoked tensions and challenges among the teachers; provided that they were constantly rethinking their pedagogical frameworks, in order to renovate their conceptions about the language class, literacy, the local reality, and decisions about curriculum design.

Additionally, the teachers managed to potentiate individual capacity by fostering the analysis of social issues from students' fields of knowledge. This way, students explored, interpreted, reflected upon their local reality though working collaboratively with a common goal, and contributing from what they know.

Furthermore, the teachers were able to intertwine communities from the EFL class by providing spaces for students to interact with the outside communities, and act informed by their reality. Their actions consolidated a community inside the English class to analyze and propose actions of betterment (McInerney, Smyth, and Down, 2011) from the academic environment.

Finally, this study is an invitation for language departments at universities, as well as for ELT university programs to consider teachers professional development beyond subject matter, linguistic content, and skill development. The language class needs to acknowledge and appreciate students' realities and local resources, so that they become

the core of a contextualized curriculum that promotes students' inquiries and leads them to take actions informed by their own everyday practices. Teacher professional programs can challenge teachers to rethink their role and practices, by inviting them to enquire about their students' world, which allows to build a context-sensitive view of the act of teaching.

References

- Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in Context*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Canagarajah, S. (2005). *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice*. Mahawh, NJ: Lawrence Elbaum Associates.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage publications.
- Clavijo, A. (2014). *Implementing community-based pedagogies in a language teacher education program in Colombia*. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Distrital.
- Clavijo, A., Guerrero, C., Torres, C., Ramírez, L., & Torres, N. (2004). Teachers acting critically upon the curriculum: Innovations that transform teaching. *Íkala: Revista de lenguaje y cultura*, 9(15), 11-41.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2005). The new teacher education: For better or for worse? *Educational Researcher*, 34(7), 3-17.
- Comber, B. (2013). Schools as meeting places: Critical and inclusive literacies in changing local environments. *Language Arts*, 90(5), 361-371.
- Comber, B. (2016). Critical and inclusive literacies: Pedagogies of belonging. In B. Comber (Ed.), *Literacy, place, and pedagogies of possibility* (pp. 33-63). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Comber, B. (2017). Literacy geography and pedagogy: Imagining translocal research alliances for educational justice. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336917717479>
- Comber, B., Thomson, P., & Wells, M. (2001). Critical literacy finds a "place": Writing and social action in a low-income Australian grade 2/3 classroom. *The Elementary School Journal*, 101(4), 451-464.
- Demarest, A. (2014). *Place-based curriculum design*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy. Reading the word and the world*. Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey.
- Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Gonzalez, A. (2007). Professional development of EFL teachers in Colombia: Between colonial and local practices. *Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 12(18), 309-332.

- Greenwood, D. (2013). A critical theory of place-conscious education. In J. Dillon & M. Brody (Eds.), *International handbook of research on environmental education* (pp. 93-100). New York. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203813331.ch9>
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 619-654. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312040003619>
- Kretzmann, J., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). *Toward a postmethod pedagogy*. San José, CA: San José State University
- Luke, A., & Woods, A. (2009). Critical literacies in schools: A primer. *Voices from the Middle*, 17(2) 9-18.
- Mejía, M. R. (2011). *Educaciones y pedagogías críticas desde el sur. Cartografía de la Educación popular*. Lima: Editorial Quimantú.
- Mills, C., & Ballantyne, J. (2009). Pre-service teachers' dispositions towards diversity: Arguing for a developmental hierarchy of change. *Teaching and Teacher education*, 26(3), 447-454.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (2005). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Murrell, P. (2001). *The community teacher: A new framework for effective urban teaching*. New York, NY: Teachers' College Press.
- Pandya, J., & Ávila, J. (2013). *Moving critical literacies forward: A new look at praxis across contexts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sharkey, J. (2012). Community-based pedagogies and literacies in language teacher education: Promising beginnings, intriguing challenges. *Íkala*, 17(1), 9-13.
- Sharkey, J., & Clavijo-Olarde, A. (2012). Promoting the value of local knowledge in ESL EFL teacher education through community-based field assignments. In B. Medrado & C. Reichmann (Eds.), *Projetos e praticas na formação de professores de língua inglesa* (pp. 39-58). Paraiba, Brasil: Editora Universitaria.
- Sharkey, J., Clavijo, A., & Ramírez, M. (2016). Developing a deeper understanding of community-based pedagogies with teachers: Learning with and from teachers in Colombia. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116654005>

- Smith, G., & Sobel, D. (2010). *Place-and community-based education in schools*. Routledge. London: Routledge.
- Zeichner, K. M., & Conklin, H. G. (2008). Teacher education programs as sites for teacher preparation. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K.E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (pp. 269–289). New York: Routledge.

Authors

***Yuly Andrea Nieto-Gómez** holds an MA in Applied Linguistics to TEFL from Universidad Distrital, Bogotá, Colombia. She is currently a professor of academic English at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. She is currently a member of the research group Lectoescrinautas. She has presented locally and internationally at conferences in language teaching education. Her latest publication is "Promoting the Use of Local Literacies in EFL Pre-Service Teachers to Inspire their Teaching Practice". In: Colombia Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3758-9213>

Amparo Clavijo-Olarte holds a PhD in Education from The University of Arizona. She is currently a professor of Literacy and Qualitative Research Methods at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá, Colombia. She is the director of the research group Lectoescrinautas LCPB (2000-2020). Has done international research collaborations with scholars from USA and U.K. and with public school teachers from five districts in Bogotá. Her research interest is related to Community based pedagogies and literacies in Language Teacher Education. Her most recent publications *Pedagogías de la Comunidad a través de indagaciones locales en el contexto urbano de Bogotá* (2019) and *Developing a Deeper Understanding of Community-Based Pedagogies With Teachers: Learning With and From Teachers in Colombia* (2016)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3752-7020>

How to reference this article: Nieto-Gómez, Y. A., & Clavijo-Olarte, A. (2020). Situating Local Literacies at the core of ELT curriculum in higher education. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 27-46. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.830>

Computer-Based Reading Texts to Support Fourth- Graders' Reading Comprehension¹

Textos Diseñados en Computador para
Apoyar la Comprensión de Lectura en
Estudiantes de Cuarto Grado

Meral Gözüküçük and Nilgün Günbaş^{2*}

Kafkas University, Turkey

¹ Received: January 16th 2020/ Accepted: September 21st 2020

² meral.yaprak@hotmail.com; ng2248@tc.columbia.edu

Abstract

In this study, four computer-based reading texts with text related static and animated visuals and background sounds were created with a visual programming language by the researchers for fourth grade students. These texts included before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities. The purpose was to see the effect of these computer-based reading texts on students' reading comprehension. In an experimental research design, elementary school fourth grade students ($n = 60$) were randomly assigned to either computer-based reading ($n = 31$) or traditional reading ($n = 29$) environment. The groups completed a pretest, before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities and then a posttest. The research has been completed in a six-week period: the pretest in the first week, the four texts in the following four weeks, and the posttest in the sixth week respectively. The results indicated that the computer-based group had significantly better posttest scores than the traditional group had and had significantly better improvement from pretest to posttest. However, there was no significant difference between students' reading comprehension results from pretest to posttest in the traditional group. As a result, presenting students with multimedia-supported reading activities had a positive effect on their reading comprehension. Thus, we recommend teachers to use visually-supported computer-based reading texts to improve students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; Elementary Education; Fourth Graders; Computer-Based Reading; Animated Visuals

Resumen

En un diseño experimental de investigación, estudiantes de cuarto grado ($n=60$) fueron asignados aleatoriamente a textos diseñados en computador o a condiciones de lectura tradicionales. Los grupos completaron actividades de pre-lectura, lectura y lectura posterior en computador o en formato tradicional respectivamente. Los textos diseñados en computadores incluían elementos visuales estáticos o animados y sonidos de fondo. En cada grupo se completó una prueba previa, cuatro textos de lectura y una prueba posterior en un periodo de seis semanas así: la prueba previa en la primera semana, los cuatro textos en las siguientes cuatro semanas y la prueba posterior en la sexta semana. Los resultados mostraron que, aunque no se halló una diferencia significativa entre los resultados de la prueba previa del grupo, el grupo asignado a los textos diseñados por computador obtuvo mejores resultados en la prueba posterior que el grupo tradicional. Además, los estudiantes de cuarto grado, en el grupo de los textos diseñados por computadores, mejoró significativamente su comprensión de lectura. No obstante, no hubo una diferencia significativa entre los resultados de comprensión de lectura de la prueba previa a la prueba posterior en el grupo tradicional. Como resultado, el presentar a los estudiantes actividades de lectura con apoyo multimedia tiene un impacto positivo en la comprensión de lectura. Por lo tanto, se recomienda a los profesores textos de lectura individuales y textos de lectura basados en computadora con soporte visual para mejorar la comprensión de lectura de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: comprensión de lectura; educación primaria; estudiantes de cuarto grado; textos diseñados en computador; elementos visuales animados.

Resumo

Em um desenho experimental de pesquisa, estudantes de quinto ano ($n=60$) foram designados aleatoriamente a textos desenhados em computador ou a condições de leitura tradicionais. Os grupos completaram atividades de pré-leitura, leitura e leitura posterior em computador ou em formato tradicional respectivamente. Os textos desenhados em computadores incluíam elementos visuais estáticos ou animados e sons de fundo. Em cada grupo se completou uma prova prévia, quatro textos de leitura e uma prova posterior em um período de seis semanas assim: a prova prévia na primeira semana, os quatro textos nas seguintes quatro semanas e a prova posterior na sexta semana. Os resultados mostraram que, mesmo que não se encontrou uma diferença significativa entre os resultados da prova prévia do grupo, o grupo designado aos textos desenhados por computador obteve melhores resultados na prova posterior que o grupo tradicional. Além do mais, os estudantes de quinto ano, no grupo dos textos desenhados por computadores, melhoraram significativamente a sua compreensão de leitura. Embora isso, não houve uma diferença significativa entre os resultados de compreensão de leitura da prova prévia à prova posterior no grupo tradicional. Como resultado, o apresentar aos estudantes atividades de leitura com apoio multimídia tem um impacto positivo na compreensão de leitura. Portanto, recomenda-se aos professores textos de leitura individuais e textos de leitura baseados em computador com suporte visual para melhorar a compreensão de leitura dos estudantes.

Palavras chave: compreensão de leitura; educação primária; estudantes de quinto ano; textos desenhados em computador; elementos visuais animados.

Introduction

Text is extensively used as an important medium in most academic subjects (Soemer & Schiefele, 2018). Thus, reading comprehension is a topic in educational research studies. Öz (2006) defines reading as grasping and vocalizing the meaning of words while the eyes move along reading lines and see the shapes of words. Karadağ and Yurdakal (2016) claim that reading activity includes interpretation and evaluation of what the eyes perceive, which creates a complicated structure. Sever (2011) argues that reading is not a one-dimensional basic process, on the contrary, it is a development process consisting of cognitive, sensory and psychomotor skills.

According to Keskinçilic and Keskinçilic (2007), students' reading habits and reading skill especially improve during their elementary education. Additionally, the development of reading skill is important for students to develop their identity and build healthy relationships with the society they live in. In elementary school, there is a great emphasis on reading comprehension as being an important skill in both society and academic achievement (Soemer & Schiefele, 2018). An adequate development of reading comprehension leads to enjoyment of academic success and this skill influences students' academic performance in the long term (Başar & Gürbüz, 2017). Moreover, it is essential that students, especially in elementary school, develop their reading skills, in order to be successful in all content areas. For example, the study conducted by Björn, Aunola and Nurmi (2016), indicates that this will contribute to students' success in other content areas, such as problem solving in mathematics if elementary school fourth grade students achieve reading comprehension well. It might strongly indicate they will not graduate from high school on time if the students' reading comprehension is not well achieved in elementary school (Hernandez, 2011).

As can be inferred from the literature, reading comprehension dramatically influences students' success both in school and life. Therefore, reading comprehension must be taken into consideration and improved with a variety of methods starting from elementary education. The studies in the literature indicate that students don't pay enough attention to and show interest in traditional reading environments (e.g. Gün, 2012). However, taking advantage of computer technology is suggested to enrich classroom learning activities and reading comprehension (Batur & Alevli, 2014). Animated and static objects, and individualized learning can be provided on computers for reading activities. These elements improve students' comprehension, interest, attention, inference making and information retrieval (e.g. Altun, 2018; Çakıroğlu et al., 2018; Roque, Teodoro, Cunanan & Evangelista, 2017; Takacs & Bus 2016; Niknejad & Rahbar, 2015; Ertem, 2010). In this regard, our purpose was to use computer technology for students' reading comprehension and see whether the computer-based readings have any effect on students' reading comprehension. In other words, the purpose of this study was to see the effect of computer-based reading

texts consisting of visuals, animated objects, and sounds on fourth grade students' reading comprehension. Hence, we compared the students' reading comprehension results with a control group who read the same texts in traditional paper format in order to reveal the real effect.

Literature Review

Reading is one of the four fundamental language skills and reading comprehension contributes to both the students' school success and their life. Reading comprehension includes interpreting visuals, finding appropriate titles, determining the characteristics of the characters, and the place and time of the events, and comprehending the conclusions of texts (Kavcar, Oğuzkan & Hasırcı, 2016). Güneş (2014) emphasizes three reading comprehension activities: before-reading, during-reading and after-reading. In these stages, a reader interacts with the texts and the environment where reading takes place while mentally constructing the meaning of texts. The reader undertakes planning in the before reading, in which its plot and type of the texts are guessed. In the during reading, they apply planning while reading the text and compare their pre-knowledge with what is read. In the after reading, they evaluate what they read. In this stage, they check what they understand: what was done, how it was done, and the difficulties they faced. Epçaçan (2009) argues that it is crucial for a reader to be active in before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities, and use necessary strategies and techniques in order to comprehend a text completely.

The interviews with teachers teaching Turkish lessons reveal that traditional reading environments may not be appealing to students (Gün, 2012). Based on the interviews, teachers mostly report that students showed no interest in reading activities. They believed these activities did not help students to be active, since the students were getting bored while doing the same activities over and over again, and the activities were not suitable to improve reading skills. Individual learning and step-by-step teaching are recommended to solve reading and comprehension issues (Çaycı & Demir, 2006). Additionally, it is recommended that the activities be enriched and the use of information technology in classrooms be enhanced in order to increase reading ability (Batur & Alevli, 2014).

Değirmenci (2014) used educational software called Morpa campus, including animated visuals, reading and listening texts, educational games and interactive activities. She has projected the reading texts in the educational software from the projector to the board for the whole class. She has found no significant difference between reading comprehension scores for first grade students who read texts on the educational software and those who read traditional textbooks. However, the teachers who observed the students' reading processes stated that the educational software was

attractive and useful for students, enriched educational settings, supported teachers, and made them save time, and supported students' active participation. Çakiroğlu et al. (2018) used computer software to improve reading performance of students with learning difficulties in their studies. This software, including stories, allows students to individually progress by personalizing the learning environment the software provides. At the end of their studies, the researchers have interviewed teachers and students. As a result, teachers thought that it is important to use visuals in order to support texts. They commented that students did not display problematic behaviors while using the software and that they liked the stories.

Duke and Pearson (2009) suggest that the visuals are more concrete and memorable than texts. Furthermore, they claim "a visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember some of those thousand words" (p.112). Moreover, visuals help in representing information through relationships among knowledge, comprehension and memory, which mutually and actively influence each other. Furthermore, concrete or abstract formatted visuals used along with texts are more effective on knowledge and knowledge transfer than text without visuals (Mason, Pluchino, Tornatora & Ariasi, 2013). Enriched meaning construction occurs when visuals and texts are combined with pre-knowledge (Akyol, 2012). Moreover, visuals such as pictures and/or photographs enhance comprehension and expression of a text when used appropriately. Arifin (2015) argues that the use of visuals can improve students' interest and participation in reading comprehension, which contributes to students' achievement in learning dramatically.

In the present study, the reading texts were presented with pictures representing the texts. The texts were designed in a computer-based reading environment. The rationale behind this design comes from the multimedia learning theory. Mayer (2005), the founder of this theory, indicates that learning occurs when learners construct knowledge from learning material, combining words (i.e., text or voice) and pictures (i.e., photos, animation etc.). In addition, when the words and relevant pictures are simultaneously presented near to each other, students learn better than when the words are presented alone. Knowledge construction occurs when learners process information by activating their dual-coding channel (i.e. visual/pictorial and auditory/verbal) in an active manner. A great number of the studies show the effectiveness of this theory in different learning areas.

This theory has positive effects on reading comprehension as well. For example, while doing reading comprehension-related exercises, García, Rigo and Jiménez (2017) observed students made fewer mistakes as they focused more on these multimedia-based exercises. In addition, they remembered more and learned more accurately. This was probably because their motivation was high. Reading a multimedia story has positive advantages over reading a traditional story in terms of vocabulary learning and engagement in reading (Zhou & Yadav, 2017). Interactive multimedia reading

materials are superior to traditional reading materials in students' critical and creative reading (Ayob, 2017). The stories with high interactivity support students' story comprehension in comparison with the stories with low interactivity (Kao, Tsai, Liu & Yang, 2016). Moreover, interactive animated stories are more effective than animated stories and static story books for students' vocabulary learning (Smeets & Bus, 2015).

Some studies show that reading comprehension may not be different on paper versus computer (e.g., see Başaran, 2014; Ertem & Özen, 2014) or may be even better on paper (e.g., see Baştuğ & Keskin, 2012; Ercan & Ateş, 2015; Mangen, Walgermo & Brønnick, 2013). However, texts are not presented differently with extra features, such as static or animated visuals, background sounds or feedback supporting students' reading comprehension in these studies. Texts are given on screen in PDF format, which is not superior to texts presented on traditional paper format in terms of supporting students' understanding. The only difference is that these texts are presented on a computer screen with no additional and supportive features.

One of these features is feedback. Feedback is one of the important elements of education and can be offered by instructors, books, friends or experience. It is generally given after providing knowledge to develop desired behavior, skills or attitude and provided based on learners' performance and understanding (Hattie & Timberley, 2007). Feedback can be given either immediately or with delay. The studies show that immediate feedback better yields students' performance than delayed feedback (Thai, De Wever and Valcke, 2017). Since feedback also has a positive effect on learners' reading comprehension (Burns, Maki, Karich & Coolong-Chaffin, 2017), we provided immediate feedback both in the computer-based reading texts that were provided from computer or in the traditional texts that were provided from the instructor to improve students' reading comprehension in this study.

According to Takacs and Bus' (2016) eye-tracking study, the animated objects, which are supportive for story comprehension, attracted students' attention to the story and helped them comprehend the story well. Altun (2018) examined the effect of multimedia story books on five-year old preschool students' story comprehension. The multimedia story book group comprehended the explicit and implicit meaning of the story significantly better, remembered more story components and retold the story in more detail better than the traditional story group. The results were attributed to the multimedia illustrations as presented in animated format in the story. Animations in e-books make students remember and understand the texts (Roque, Teodoro, Cunanan & Evangelista, 2017). Moreover, dynamic visuals have significantly better impacts on students' reading comprehension (Niknejad & Rahbar, 2015), recalling information and making inferences (Ertem, 2010). A study conducted by Lysenko and Abrami (2014) showed first and second grade elementary school students who completed two digital, interactive, multimedia applications presented on the web outperformed the students who received traditional instruction in reading comprehension.

Technology applications create a positive effect on K-12 students' reading as opposed to traditional reading environments based on a meta-analysis study completed with 84 studies carried out by Cheung and Slavin (2012). However, the studies in reading comprehension in computer environments are limited. Beek, Brummer, Donker and Opdenakker (2018) completed a review on reading comprehension studies conducted between 2000 and 2017. Their focus was on the studies related to the improvement of secondary school reading comprehension. They initially read 321 abstracts of related studies and then removed 304 of them as they were not conducted in a computer environment or digital format. As a result, they have found that only the 17 remaining studies were conducted in a computer environment.

Based on the related literature, we see that the studies in reading comprehension in computer environments are very limited. Moreover, the computer-based environments were not presented with additional features, which are not available in traditional format in these studies. Computer-based texts are mostly presented for the whole class from the projector to boards. Thus, individual learning is not provided. With these gaps in mind, we wanted to examine whether computer-based texts including animated, static objects and background sounds would give students any benefit over their reading comprehension as opposed to traditional reading. The purpose of this study was to see whether computer-based texts have any effect on fourth grade students' reading comprehension. In addition, the purpose was to see whether this improvement, would be larger compared to the control group attending traditional reading activity.

Methodology

Design

A quantitative research method, an experimental design, was used in this study which has been completed in six weeks. In this design, 60 fourth grade elementary school students were randomly assigned to either experimental or control groups: computer-based treatment ($n = 31$), traditional treatment ($n = 29$). Both groups have completed a pretest in their classrooms in the first week. In the following four weeks, they have completed four texts including before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities on either computer or traditional paper format. After the completion of the treatments, both groups have completed a posttest in the sixth week.

Participants

The fourth-grade students ($n = 60$) who have participated in the experiment are in a public school in Turkey. This school was selected because it is one of the representative schools in the area. Its socioeconomic status, location in the city center and its average success level were effective for this selection. This information was retrieved from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Turkey. In the school, all the fourth-grade students were invited to the study with the permission of the Provincial Directorate. The assignment was made with basic random sampling method. A Turkish reading comprehension pretest was applied to both groups to see whether two groups start to experiment with similar reading abilities.

Procedure

As a pretest-posttest experimental design, this study has been completed in a six-week period during regular class hours. In the first week, participants have individually completed a reading comprehension test as a pretest in their classrooms. In the following four weeks, they have completed four reading texts, one of which is completed each week, either in computer or traditional paper format. In the last week, all the students have individually completed the same reading comprehension test as in the pretest in their classrooms. The procedure and the texts used each week are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The study plan and information about the texts used in the study

Week #	Procedure and the Texts Used Each Week			
1	PRETEST WEEK			
2	Text type	The theme of the text	The name of the text	The plot
	Narrative Text	Atatürk (Atatürk)	The Mirror of the Self (Kişinin Aynası)	The life of Atatürk, the founder of Republic of Turkey
3	Narrative Text	Health and Environment (Sağlık ve Çevre)	The Rope-Legged Alien Child (İp Bacaklı Uzaylı Çocuk)	Unhealthy nutrition
4	Informative Text	Our World and Space (Dünyamız ve Uzay)	The Life of Astronauts (Astronotların Yaşamı)	A day of an astronaut in space
5	Poem	Production, Consumption and Productivity (Üretim, Tüketim ve Verimlilik)	In the Week of Domestic Goods (Yerli Malı Haftasında)	Introduction to domestic goods produced in Turkey
6	POSTTEST WEEK			

Both treatment groups have completed before-reading, during-reading and after reading activities. However, the completion of these activities was different in some aspects. The procedure for each treatment group and details about each condition were explained below:

Traditional Reading Treatment

This process was completed under the supervision of one of the researchers, who has 5-years of elementary school teaching experience. The traditional reading group completed the experiment in a classroom without laptops. Under these conditions, before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities were completed in students' classrooms with one of the researchers, as mentioned before. The purpose here was to complete the activities in a traditional class environment. In the before-reading activities, students guessed the plot of the text using the title and the meaning of the most important words from the text written on the board. The during-reading texts were provided to the students in traditional paper format. Students themselves read the texts in the same way as they usually do reading activities in their classrooms. In after reading activity, they searched for the answers to wh-questions (what, where, when, how, why and who) in the text, determined synonyms and antonyms of words from the text, figure out cause and effect relationships and unknown words from the text, and found the relationship between the title of the text and its content. Furthermore, they answered some grammar questions such as making a meaningful sentence, finding misspelled words and punctuating. The researcher gave feedback based on students' answers in the class environment in traditional reading condition. This situation was provided for each individual student who gave the answer and for the whole traditional-reading group. This situation gave the whole group the chance to improve their understanding of text. It was believed that the way of giving feedback could help especially quiet students, who hesitate answering questions.

Computer-Based Reading Treatment

Students in the computer-based reading treatment group completed before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities in a classroom with laptops brought by the researchers. The computer-based texts were the same as in the traditional format. Unlike the traditional condition, the students completed all the activities (i.e., before, during and after reading) by themselves in an individual learning environment. In the before-reading activity (see Appendix 1), the students guessed the plot of the text using the title and visuals, the meaning of the most important words from the text, and match the words with the relevant pictures, which did not take part in the traditional format. They answered questions in the before-reading activities and received individual feedback provided from the computer. In the during-reading activities (see Appendix 2), the texts were divided into small parts on the screen with related pictures (e.g., static and animated), each of which representing the part of the text that needed to be read. A button was provided at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen for readers to go to the next page upon finishing reading. The purpose here was that they would read each page based on their own reading speed. Static pictures as well as animated ones were also presented for the characters in the texts. In

the after-reading activity (see Appendix 3), unlike the traditional format, the students completed the activity with animated and static visuals. In addition, matching visuals with the words was included in this activity. The students answered the questions in the after-reading activities and received individual feedback provided on the computer based on their own answers. Feedback was unique for each student as each individual student received feedback according to their own incorrect and correct answers in computer-based reading condition. Background music and sound effects were also provided for all activities.

Materials

Texts

The texts used in the implementation stage were selected from a Turkish textbook published by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MNE, 2015). There are three types of texts in Turkish: narrative texts, informative texts and poems (MNE, 2018). Two of the texts were narratives, one was informative and one was a poem in this study (see Table 1 above).

Reading Comprehension Test

The reading comprehension test (KR-20 = 0.74) used in this study was developed by Susar Kırmızı (2006). The test included 41 items based on 17 fourth grade learning objectives from the reading domain in the Turkish Curriculum in 2005. The numbers of the items and related objectives are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The translation of the learning objectives in the reading comprehension texts.

Learning Objectives	Item #
1. "Search for the answers to question words (e.g. what, where, when, how, why, and who) in a text"	15, 22, 23, 37, 38, 39
2. "Put events in order based on the level of importance"	9, 18
3. "Distinguish the introduction, development and conclusion of a text"	34, 35
4. "Distinguish emotional and exaggerated expressions in a text"	28
5. "Distinguish reality and imagination in a text"	1, 12
6. "Determine the main theme of a poem"	25, 26, 27
7. "Determine the topic of a text"	13, 24, 32
8. "Distinguish the main idea of a text"	20, 30
9. "Determine the story components of a text"	7, 8, 17
10. "Make inferences from a text"	10, 19
11. "Establish cause and effect relationships from reading"	40, 41
12. "Guess the meaning of new words encountered in the text"	11, 21
13. "Answer text-related questions (pre-reading, while-reading, after-reading)"	3, 14
14. "Examine the relationship between the title and the content"	2, 31, 36
15. "Read bold, colored, underlined expressions emphasizing important points"	4, 5
16. "Make different inferences from a text"	6, 16
17. "Find and distinguish the sentence distorting meaning in a paragraph"	29, 33

In the present study, the reliability coefficient of the test calculated with the Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-20), was 0.88. This value is between 0.70 and 0.90, which indicates a high reliability for the test (Özdamar, 2017).

Data Analysis

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run to see whether the data was normally distributed. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p
Computer-based group (pretest)	.191	.005*
Traditional group (pretest)	.165	.041*
Computer-based group (posttest)	.207	.002*
Traditional group (posttest)	.185	.013*

* $p < 0,05$

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that pretest scores of neither computer-based group ($D(31) = .191$, $p = .005$) nor traditional group ($D(29) = .165$, $p = .041$) follow a normal distribution. Additionally, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results indicated that posttest scores of neither computer-based group ($D(31) = .207$, $p = .002$) nor traditional group ($D(29) = .185$, $p = .013$) follow a normal distribution. Because the data was not normally distributed, non-parametric tests were used.

Findings

A Mann Whitney U test was used to see whether there is any difference between computer-based and traditional reading groups' pretest and posttest scores. A Wilcoxon Signed-ranks test was conducted to see whether or not the groups increased their reading comprehension scores after being exposed to the treatments.

Pretest Score Comparisons

Table 4. Mann Whitney U Test Results on Fourth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Pretest Scores

Groups	n	Mean Rank	Sun of Ranks	U	Z	p
Computer-based group	31	34.42	1067.00	328	-1.801	0.072
Traditional group	29	26.31	763.00			
Total	60					

A Mann-Whitney test showed that there was no significant difference between students' pretest scores in computer-based reading and traditional groups, $U = 328$, $p = .072$.

Posttest Score Comparisons

Table 5. Mann Whitney U Test Results on Fourth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Posttest Scores

Groups	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sun of Ranks	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Computer-based group	31	35.45	1099.00	296	-2.277	0,037*
Traditional group	29	25.21	731.00			
Total	60					

* $p < 0,05$

A Mann-Whitney test showed that there was a significant difference between students' posttest scores in computer-based reading and traditional reading groups, $U = 296$, $p = .037$.

Traditional Group Reading Comprehension Results

Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test Results on Fourth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Scores in Traditional Group

Traditional group	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sun of Ranks	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Negative Ranks	9	10.17	91.50	-1.686	0.092
Positive Ranks	15	13.90	208.50		
Ties	5				

A Wilcoxon Signed-ranks test indicated that there is no significant increase from pretest to posttest for students in traditional reading group, $Z = -1.686$, $p > .05$.

Computer-Based Group Reading Comprehension Results

Table 7. Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test Results on Fourth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Scores in Computer-Based Group.

Computer-based group	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sun of Ranks	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Negative Ranks	4	6.13	24.50	-3.736	0,000*
Positive Ranks	21	14.31	300.50		
Ties	6				

* $p < 0,05$

A Wilcoxon Signed-ranks test indicated that there is a significant increase from pretest to posttest for students in computer-based reading group, $Z = -3.736$, $p < .05$.

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to improve elementary school fourth grade students' reading comprehension with the use of computer-based texts including visuals, animated objects, and sounds. We compared the students' reading comprehension results in the computer-based texts with those in the traditional texts in order to reveal the real effect. The results showed that the fourth-grade students significantly improved their reading comprehension with the computer-based texts. However, there was no significant increase in the traditional text group's reading comprehension.

Mayer (2005) argues that a well-designed learning material combining words and visuals in a multimedia learning environment helps learners build knowledge. Ayob (2017), Zhou and Yadav (2017), and Altun's (2018) studies show students comprehend a story better when it is presented in multimedia form. In this form, visuals and texts are simultaneously presented near to each other. Consistently, in the present study, the texts were presented with visuals as a multimedia learning environment. Accordingly, students' improvements on reading comprehension in the computer-based texts might be attributed to combining visuals and texts in a multimedia learning environment.

The computer-based texts in this study had text-related visuals. These visuals were provided along with the texts in order to support students' reading comprehension. In the literature, visuals are mentioned to be more concrete and memorable (Duke & Pearson, 2009) and they enhance comprehension (Akyol, 2012). Consistently, we can assume that the computer-based group improved their reading comprehension with the use of visuals. Students in the computer-based text group had visual support,

whereas the traditional text group did not. Results showed that the computer-based text group answered the paper-based posttest questions significantly better than the other group did. When students read texts combined with visuals, they gain knowledge and transfer knowledge better compared to the texts without visuals (Mason, Pluchino, Tornatora & Ariasi, 2013). As a result, we can assume that although they solved the posttest reading questions on paper, they seemingly gained knowledge and transferred this knowledge from the computer-based reading to traditional reading.

We used not only static visuals but also animated visuals in the computer-based texts. A great number of studies show that animated visual objects in computer-based reading platforms are effective on students' comprehension, remembering, understanding and inference making (e.g., Altun, 2018; Roque, Teodoro, Cunanan & Evangelista, 2017; Takacs & Bus 2016; Niknejad & Rahbar, 2015; Ertem, 2010). Accordingly, it might be inferred from the claims that students improved their comprehension scores in the computer condition in this study. It can be told that animated visuals in the computer-based texts might be effective on students' reading comprehension results.

An individual learning environment was provided to students in the computer environment in this study. However, the traditional text group was exposed to the texts in their classrooms rather than in an individual learning atmosphere. The students read the texts, which were divided into shorter parts, on computers and based on their own reading speeds. They moved forward on the texts with the "I have read" button upon completing reading each part of the texts. Considering the results were positive in favor of the computer group, we may argue that this outcome can be a result of an individual learning environment. Inconsistently, Değirmenci's (2014) study indicated non-significant difference between reading comprehension in educational software vs. traditional textbooks. In her study, however, an individual learning environment was not provided in the computer condition, as opposed to the present study. Nevertheless, she projected the reading texts in educational software from the projector to the board for the whole class. Thus, the result of the present study might be attributed to an individual reading process.

Since feedback has a positive effect on learners' reading comprehension (Burns, Maki, Karich & Coolong-Chaffin, 2017), an animated character asked questions and provided feedback in the before- and after-reading activities. The feedback explained the correct answer immediately as soon as students answered the questions. Providing immediate feedback rather than delayed feedback yields better learning performance according to Thai, De Wever and Valcke (2017). Additionally, each student in the computer-based reading group received immediate feedback according to her/his individual answer. Thus, the difference in reading comprehension of the experimental and control groups could be attributed to feedback provided immediately and individually.

During the implementation stage, students were seemingly willing to read and enjoyed the reading activities. In an individual computer-based reading environment, where visuals were provided, teachers claimed that students like the reading activities and do not show problematic behaviors in a study carried out by Çakıroğlu et al. (2018). Based on that, we can infer that students' interest, participation and reading comprehension can be increased when they individually complete computer-based reading texts with visuals.

Conclusion

As it is an important skill for language development, reading comprehension is also an indicator for students' academic achievements in general. In this study, we aimed to search for further improvement of elementary school fourth grade students' reading comprehension. We created before-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities in a computer environment. Students read four texts either on computer or traditionally on paper. In the computer condition, we provided static and animated text-related visuals in an individual learning environment. Background music, sounds and feedback were also provided. The results indicated that the students' reading comprehension significantly improved with computer-based reading texts thanks to their visuals, background sounds features and individualized learning opportunities. Additionally, we consider that computer-based learning environments are interesting for students. Based on our observation, fourth-grade students enjoyed such learning activities more than traditional learning activities. Thus, we recommend that teachers use individual and visually-supported computer-based reading texts to improve students' reading comprehension. Moreover, the fourth-grade students are in a public school and coming from low-income families. As a result, it is highly possible that they do not often interact with technological tools in their lives. Thus, this learning environment might be interesting for the students.

Limitations

It was a limitation of our study that the school where the experiment took place was not equipped with computers. For this reason, we, as researchers, took laptops to the school where we implemented our study with the fourth graders. To increase the number of such studies and derive the most benefit from such a type of learning, schools equipped with computers are needed. In addition, we only looked at the effect of computer-based texts on students' reading comprehension in this study. We strongly recommend that students' motivation during reading activities should be measured by future studies, since the students' positive reading comprehension results might be affected by their motivation during their computer-based text reading.

References

- Altun, D. (2018). The efficacy of multimedia stories in preschoolers' explicit and implicit story comprehension. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 46(6), 629-642. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10643-018-0916-8>
- Akyol, H. (2012). *Türkçe öğretim yöntemleri* (5th Ed.) Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Arifin, Z. (2015). Improving students' reading comprehension of procedure text through picture word inductive model strategy. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 4(6), 1-16. <http://jurnal.untan.ac.id/index.php/jpdpb/article/view/10460>
- Ayob, A. (2017). The effect of digital material towards standard two students' achievement in reading. *International E-Journal Advances in Education*, 3(8), 261-267.
- Başar, M., & Gürbüz, M. (2017). Effect of the SQ4R technique on the reading comprehension of elementary school 4th grade elementary school students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(2), 131-144. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1138366.pdf>
- Başaran, M. (2014). 4. sınıf seviyesinde ekrandan ve kâğıttan okumanın okuduğunu anlama, okuma hızı ve metne karşı geliştirilen tutum üzerindeki etkisi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(2), 248-268. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/202210>
- Baştuğ, M. & Keskin, H. K. (2012). Okuma becerilerinin okuma ortamı açısından karşılaştırılması: Ekran mı kâğıt mı? *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 16 (3), 73-83. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ataunisosbil/issue/2831/38447>
- Batur, Z., & Alevli, O. (2014). Okuma becerileri dersinin PISA okuduğunu anlama yeterlilikleri açısından incelenmesi. *Okuma Yazma Eğitimi Araştırmaları*, 2(1), 22-30. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/oyea/issue/20481/218136>
- Beek, M., Brummer, L., Donker, A. S., & Opdenakker, M. C. J. (2018). Supporting secondary school students' reading comprehension in computer environments: A systematic review. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34, 557-566. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12260>
- Björn, P. M., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J. E. (2016). Primary school text comprehension predicts mathematical word problem-solving skills in secondary school. *Educational Psychology*, 36(2), 362-377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2014.992392>

- Burns, M. K., Maki, K. E., Karich, A. C., & Coolong-Chaffin, M. (2017). Using performance feedback of reciprocal teaching strategies to increase reading comprehension strategy use with seventh grade students with comprehension difficulties. *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 22(1), 21-33. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1168884>
- Cheung, A. C., & Slavin, R. E. (2012). How features of educational technology applications affect student reading outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 7(3), 198-215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2012.05.002>
- Çakıroğlu, O., Özyurt, Ö., Melekoğlu, M. A., Özyurt, H., Bıyık, M., & Özdemir, C. (2018). Okuma performansını geliştirmede bilgisayar yazılımı kullanımına yönelik öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi. *İlköğretim Online*, 17(1), 336-346. <http://ilkogretim-online.org.tr/index.php/io/article/view/2790>
- Çaycı, B., & Demir, M. K. (2006). Okuma ve anlama sorunu olan öğrenciler üzerine karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 4(4), 437-458. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/tebd/issue/26118/275152>
- Değirmenci, H. (2014). Eğitim yazılımının birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin okuma becerileri üzerindeki etkisi: Morpa Kampüs uygulaması [*The impact of the educational software on first grade students' reading skills: Morpa Kampüs application*] (Doctoral Dissertation). Gazi Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Duke, N. K., & Pearson, P. D. (2009). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education*, 189(1-2), 107-122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022057409189001-208>
- Epçaçan, C. (2009). A general view to the reading comprehension strategies. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(6), 207-223.
- Ercan, A. N., & Ateş, M. (2015). The comparison of reading from paper and screen in terms of comprehension levels. *International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 10 (7), 395-406. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.8032>
- Ertem, İ. S., (2010). The effect of electronic storybooks on struggling fourth graders' reading comprehension. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 9 (4), 140-155. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ908080.pdf>
- Ertem, İ. S. & Özen, M. (2014). Metinleri ekrandan okumanın anlam kurma üzerine etkisi. *International Journal of Social Science*, 24, 319-350. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9761/JASSS2161>

- García, J. D., Rigo, E., & Jiménez, R. (2017). Multimedia and textual reading comprehension: Multimedia as personal learning environment's enriching format. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 6(1), 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2017.1.180>
- Gün, M. (2012). İlköğretim ikinci kademe Türkçe dersi okuma etkinliklerinde karşılaşılan sorunlar. *International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 7(4), 1961-1977. http://www.turkishstudies.net/files/turkishstudies/2009355512_G%C3%BCnMesut_S-1961-1977.pdf
- Güneş, F. (2014). *Türkçe öğretimi yaklaşımlar ve modeller* (3rd Ed.). Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4624888>
- Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Kao, G. Y. M., Tsai, C. C., Liu, C. Y., & Yang, C. H. (2016). The effects of high/low interactive electronic storybooks on elementary school students' reading motivation, story comprehension and chromatics concepts. *Computers & Education*, 100, 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.04.013>
- Karadağ, R. & Yurdakal, İ. H. (2016). Okuma eğitimi. In Susar Kırmızı F. (Ed.), *İlk ve ortaokullarda Türkçe öğretimi* (pp. 107-162) Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Kavcar, C., Oguzkan, F. & Hasırcı, S. (2016). *Türkçe öğretimi. Türkçe ve sınıf öğretmenleri için* (9th Ed.). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Keskinçiliç, K. & Keskinçiliç, S., B. (2007). *Türkçe ilkokuma yazma eğitimi*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Lysenko, L. V., & Abrami, P. C. (2014). Promoting reading comprehension with the use of technology. *Computers & Education*, 75, 162-172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.01.010>
- Mangen, A., Walgermo, B. R., & Brønnick, K. (2013). Reading linear texts on paper versus computer screen: Effects on reading comprehension. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 58 (2013), 61-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2012.12.002>
- Mason, L. , Pluchino, P., Tornatora, M. C., & Ariasi, N. (2013). An eye-tracking study of learning from science text with concrete and abstract illustrations, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 81(3), 356-384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2012.727885>

- Mayer, R. E. (2005). Introduction to multimedia learning. In Mayer, R. E. (Ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Ministry of National Education of Turkey (2015). *İlköğretim Türkçe 4. Sınıf Öğretmen Klavuz Kitabı*. Ankara: Engin Yayınevi.
- Ministry of National Education of Turkey (2018). Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programı İlkokul ve Ortaokul 1-8. sınıflar. <http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/Dosyalar/201812312239736-T%C3%BCrk%C3%A7e%20%C3%96%C4%9Fretim%20Program%C4%B1%202018.pdf>
- Niknejad, S., & Rahbar, B. (2015). Comprehension through visualization: The case of reading comprehension of multimedia-based text. *International Journal of Educational Investigations*, 2(5), 144-151.
- Öz, F. (2006). *Uygulamalı Türkçe öğretimi* (3rd Ed.). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Özdamar, K. (2017). *Ölçek ve Test Geliştirme Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi*. Eskişehir: Nisan Kitabevi.
- Roque, V. J., Teodoro, L. A., Cunanan, B. M., & Evangelista, M. T. (2017). *Using animated e-storybooks to develop Filipino vocabulary and story comprehension among preschool children*. Presented at the DLSU Research Congress: De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. <https://xsite.dlsu.edu.ph/conferences/dlsu-research-congress-proceedings/2017/LLI/LLI-I-028.pdf>
- Sever, S. (2011). *Türkçe öğretimi ve tam öğrenme* (5th Ed.). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Smeets, D. J., & Bus, A. G. (2015). The interactive animated e-book as a word learning device for kindergartners. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 36(4), 899-920. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716413000556>
- Soemer, A., & Schiefele, U. (2018). Reading amount as a mediator between intrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension in the early elementary grades. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 67, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2018.06.006>
- Susar Kırmızı F. (2006). İlköğretim 4 sınıf Türkçe öğretiminde çoklu zekâ kuramına dayalı işbirlikli öğrenme yönteminin eriş, tutumlar, öğrenme stratejileri ve çoklu zeka alanları üzerindeki etkileri [*The Effects of cooperative learning method based on multiple intelligence theory on success, attitudes, learning strategies and multiple intelligence domains in teaching Turkish to 4th grade of primary*] (Doctoral Dissertation). Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.

- Takacs, Z. K., & Bus, A. G. (2016). Benefits of motion in animated storybooks for children's visual attention and story comprehension: An eye-tracking study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 1591. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01591>
- Thai, N. T. T., De Wever, B., & Valcke, M. (2017). The impact of a flipped classroom design on learning performance in higher education: Looking for the best “blend” of lectures and guiding questions with feedback. *Computers & Education*, 107, 113-126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.01.003>
- Zhou, N., & Yadav, A. (2017). Effects of multimedia story reading and questioning on preschoolers' vocabulary learning, story comprehension and reading engagement. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 65(6), 1523-1545. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-017-9533-2>

Authors

***Meral Gözüküçük** is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Kafkas University in Turkey. She completed her PhD in Elementary Education at Pamukkale University in Turkey. Her research interests include literacy, bilingual education, primary reading and writing, and Turkish language education.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1620-5073>

Nilgün Günbaş is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Kafkas University in Turkey. She completed her Ed.D. in Instructional Technology and Media program at Columbia University, Teachers College. Her research interests include computer-based learning, multimedia learning, educational video games, teacher education, and computer-programming to improve learning.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2578-3083>

How to reference this article: Gözüküçük, M., & Günbaş, N. (2020). Computer-Based Reading Texts to Support Fourth Graders' Reading Comprehension. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 47-68. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.820>

Influence of Discrimination in the Field of TESOL: Perspectives of Mexican EFL Teachers¹

Influencia de la Discriminación en el
Campo de la Enseñanza del Inglés:
Perspectivas de Maestros de Inglés en
México

Edgar Emmanuell Garcia Ponce^{2*}

Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico

¹ Received: March 1st 2020/ Accepted: September 30th 2020

² ee.garcia@ugto.mx

Abstract

In the last few decades, several studies have documented the discrimination that teachers face in the field of Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). To date, these studies have shown that discrimination tends to be motivated by issues concerning the native- versus non-native language status of these professionals. Moreover, recent studies have suggested that discrimination in TESOL is intricate involving factors which are associated with the language status of teachers, their pronunciation, gender, race, sexual preference, age, among others. However, despite the fact that there is research discourse which has revealed the struggles of these professionals, no research discourse, to my knowledge, has documented the extent to which this phenomenon impacts on the professionals' feelings, perceptions of the profession, and decision making. In response to this, the present study was conducted to understand the influence of discrimination in the field of TESOL in Mexico from perspectives of 78 Mexican English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. Through an online questionnaire, the teachers were asked to describe the instances in which they felt discriminated, and how these influenced their feelings, perceptions concerning their profession and decision making. The results show that the discrimination practices impact in complex ways, showing a negative influence on the professionals' feelings, perceptions of the profession, and decisions regarding their current profession. The findings of this study call for more effective strategies in order to stop the discriminatory acts that English language teachers commonly face.

Keywords: discrimination; Mexican TESOL; EFL teachers; Effects of Discrimination; Perceptions

Resumen

En recientes décadas, varios estudios han documentado la discriminación que profesores han experimentado en el área de la enseñanza del inglés. Hasta la fecha, se ha mostrado que la discriminación en esta área es mayormente motivada por cuestiones de estatus de lengua de los profesores y la distinción entre el ser nativo y no-nativo. Recientemente, se ha sugerido que la discriminación en TESOL puede ser iniciada por un amplio número de factores que son complejos por naturaleza. A pesar de que se han mostrado las dificultades que estos profesionistas experimentan comúnmente en este campo, no se ha mostrado hasta el momento la forma en que este fenómeno impacta en sus emociones, percepciones de la profesión y toma de decisiones. En respuesta a esto, el presente estudio se realizó para entender la influencia de la discriminación en el campo del TESOL a través de las voces de 78 maestros de inglés como lengua extranjera en México. Con la ayuda de un cuestionario en línea, se le preguntó a los maestros describieran las veces en las que se han sentido discriminados, y cómo esto ha tenido un impacto en sus emociones, percepciones de la profesión y toma de decisiones. Los resultados muestran que la discriminación percibida por estos maestros tiene un impacto de manera compleja y afecta significativamente sus emociones, percepciones de la profesión y sus decisiones como profesionistas. Esto hace un llamado a formular estrategias efectivas para erradicar este problema el cual continúa afectando a maestros de inglés.

Palabras clave: Discriminación; TESOL; maestros de inglés; enseñanza del inglés; efectos; percepciones

Resumo

Em recentes décadas, vários estudos documentaram a discriminação que professores experimentaram na área do ensino do inglês. Até a data, mostrou-se que a discriminação nesta área é principalmente motivada por questões de status de língua dos professores e a distinção entre o ser nativo e não-nativo. Recentemente, tem-se sugerido que a discriminação em TESOL pode ser iniciada por um amplo número de fatores que são complexos por natureza. Apesar de que se têm mostrado as dificuldades que estes profissionais experimentam com frequência nesta área, não se tem mostrado até o momento a forma em que este fenômeno impacta nas suas emoções, percepções da profissão e tomada de decisões. Em resposta a isto, o presente estudo foi realizado para entender a influência da discriminação na área do TESOL através das vozes de 78 professores de inglês como língua estrangeira no México. Com a ajuda de um questionário em linha, perguntou-se aos professores que descreveram o número de vezes nas que se sentiram discriminados, e como isto tem tido um impacto nas suas emoções, percepções da profissão e tomada de decisões. Os resultados mostram que a discriminação percebida por estes professores tem um impacto de forma complexa e afeta significativamente as suas emoções, percepções da profissão e as suas decisões como profissionais. Isto faz uma chamada a formular estratégias efetivas para erradicar este problema, o qual continua afetando a professores de inglês.

Palavras chave: Discriminação; TESOL; professores de inglês; ensino do inglês; efeitos; percepções

Introduction

For decades, research has shown the prevalence of discriminatory practices in the field of TESOL in different parts of the world (Figueiredo, 2011; Louber, 2017; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2014; Selvi, 2014). Much of this research has suggested that these discriminatory practices tend to be motivated by the distinction between the native and non-native status of English teachers (see Braine, 2010; Holliday, 2005; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Kubota, 2004; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Llurda, 2005; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Recently, it has been suggested that the discrimination in TESOL is far more complex than we thought; there is an array of factors which can motivate discrimination against English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. These factors are associated with the language status of teachers, their pronunciation, gender, race, sexual preference, age, among others. Evidence of this comes from The Author (2017) which showed that a high number of Mexican EFL teachers have faced a wide range of discriminatory practices which are profession-related, physical, and linguistic in nature.

In the research literature, the primary aim of investigating the discriminatory practices in TESOL worldwide has been to eradicate this phenomenon. However, it seems that the main obstacle is that stakeholders in TESOL, i.e., administrators, teachers, students and parents, do not often know about this phenomenon and how it affects EFL teachers (Lengeling, Crawford, Mora Pablo & Blomquist, 2016). Thus, it is highly important that we direct our efforts towards raising awareness of this problem. To do this, there is a need to understand both the nature of discrimination in TESOL and the influence it has on English teachers' feelings, perceptions of the profession, and decision making. To contribute to this, the purpose of this study is to explore how discrimination in TESOL influences the feelings, perceptions of the profession, and decisions of 78 Mexican EFL teachers. The study is guided by the following research question: What is the perceived influence that discriminatory acts have on the Mexican EFL teachers' feelings, perceptions of the TESOL profession, and decision making?

As suggested in this research question, the importance of this study is that it provides an examination of the extent to which discrimination in the field of TESOL have an impact on the realities of these professionals who dedicate their time to teach the English as a foreign language (EFL). Therefore, the insights gained from this study will contribute to existing knowledge of the nature of discrimination in the TESOL profession in Mexico.

Background

In the research literature, several definitions of ‘discrimination’ have been suggested. This is because the concept of discrimination is complex in nature (The Author, 2017), that is, it is often motivated by several factors whose essence is also intricate. For the purpose of the present study, the study adapts The Author’s (2017) definition of discrimination in TESOL as prejudiced actions which are motivated by gender, ethnicity, physical appearance, temporal or permanent physical or cognitive impediment, and linguistic competence (involving pronunciation, accent or any linguistic aspect related to the language) which initiate inequalities for obtaining resources or opportunities in the profession of foreign language teaching. This definition and others have been a timely attempt to define the complex construct of discrimination in the TESOL profession. However, this article will show that discrimination in the Mexican TESOL not only initiate inequalities for obtaining resources or opportunities in the profession, but also have important effects on the Mexican EFL teachers’ feelings, perceptions concerning the profession, and their decision making concerning their professional lives.

In general, discrimination has been observed in different contexts and through different lenses. In the case of education, discrimination has been seen to be motivated by “actions of institutions or individual state actors, their attitudes and ideologies, or processes that systematically treat students from different racial/ethnic groups disparately or inequitably” (Mickelson, 2003, p.1052). As previously mentioned, this is a problem that still exists in the TESOL profession in Mexico and worldwide, despite the presence of position statements against it, for example:

TESOL is opposed to discrimination that affects the employment and professional lives of the TESOL members on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, language background, disability, health/medical condition, including HIV/AIDS, age, religion, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. (TESOL, 2016)

According to The Author (2017), the prevalence of discrimination in TESOL is due in large part to the ignorance of students, teachers and administrators. Drawing upon my experience as an EFL teacher, I have perceived that discrimination is often motivated by factors which are associated with teachers’ gender, ethnicity, temporal or permanent physical impediment, and linguistic competence. My own perception, fed by comments from other colleagues working in the same field, suggest the possibility that discriminatory practices in the Mexican TESOL still exist and in different forms, and might continue to affect thousands of professionals who teach the language in

Mexico and other EFL contexts. The idea that discrimination is still alive in the Mexican context is supported by recent research evidence (see The Author, 2017; Lengeling et al., 2016). For example, The Author (2017), in a small-scale study conducted at a state university in Mexico, found that a high number of EFL teachers have experienced some kind of discrimination while looking for jobs or working in the Mexican TESOL. Based upon their evidence, they call for contextually sensitive research because they maintain that the nature of discrimination in TESOL is context dependent, and this nature changes from one context to another one. These investigations would contribute to bringing this evidence to light, formulating strategies to prevent discrimination in this field, and continue raising awareness among stakeholders of discriminatory behaviours in the profession. In general, they maintain that all efforts need to be directed towards evidencing and eradicating the discriminatory practices.

However, in Mexico, little is known about this social phenomenon within the TESOL field. Only a limited number of studies have been carried out to explore the non-native speaking teachers (see The Author, 2017; Lengeling et al., 2016). Therefore, much needs to be done to look at cases where participants describe the discriminatory acts that they have faced in the Mexican TESOL profession and the likely influence of these acts. Taking up this call for such investigations, the present study set out to explore how discrimination in the Mexican TESOL influences 78 EFL teachers' feelings, perceptions of the TESOL profession, and decision making. By doing so, the study makes several contributions to the current research literature. Firstly, this research provides additional evidence with respect to discrimination in TESOL. Secondly, its results add to a growing body of literature on the influence of discrimination in TESOL.

Methodology

Whilst several studies have shown that discrimination is still alive in the TESOL field (Figueiredo, 2011; Louber, 2017; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2014; Selvi, 2014), no studies have been found which document the influence of discrimination on EFL teachers' cognitions (feelings, perceptions, beliefs) and profession-related decisions. Much less is known about the nature of this influence and the role it plays in their professional lives.

In response to the above, the present study explores the influence of discrimination in TESOL on the feelings, perceptions of the TESOL profession, and decision making of a group of EFL Teachers in Mexico. To do this, the study adopted a qualitative approach because this approach is believed to offer an effective way of describing "social phenomena as they occur naturally" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). This was particularly relevant for the purpose of the study as it attempts to develop an understanding of

the potential influence of the discrimination that EFL teachers face EFL teaching and learning contexts. Moreover, because the focus of the study is individuals' subjective opinions, experiences and feelings, a qualitative approach was appropriate for understanding "the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38), that is, the kind of discrimination that they have experienced in the Mexican TESOL profession.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect the data, a web-based questionnaire was administered on SurveyMonkey. According to Wright (2005), online questionnaires are useful because they allow researchers to gain access to individuals and groups who would be difficult reach through other means and channels. The link to the questionnaire was sent out to EFL teachers in Mexico through open calls posted on social media, or directly sent to schools and contacts. The link was active for approximately four months. In order to participate in the study, the individuals had to meet two self-reported criteria: 1) they had to be non-native speakers and 2) EFL teachers in Mexico.

In total, 78 EFL teachers responded the online questionnaire: 52 females and 26 males. As stated by the participants, they had a wide range of teaching experience, from different Mexican states, working in public and private sectors, and teaching in preschool, primary, secondary, high school and university. The questionnaire consisted of ten close-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix I). All the questions asked for information regarding any discrimination practices that the EFL teachers have felt in the profession. In order to understand the influence of discrimination in the Mexican TESOL profession, some question items asked the participants to describe the discriminatory acts that have been initiated against them, and how they felt that these acts have influenced their perceptions concerning their teaching practices, feelings, and the TESOL profession in general (please see items 6-10 in Appendix I).

At the end of the online questionnaire, the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study, and provided consent. Complying with their right to be protected from identification, the participants' names and identities were carefully anonymised in the data. Instead, the word 'Participant' and an identification number are used to refer to them in the extracts, analysis and discussions.

Data Analysis

Once the data were gathered in the online questionnaire, there were transferred to a Word document for processing. The analysis of the elicited data firstly consisted of reading through the participants' responses a number of times to identify emerging

themes which suggested the influence of discrimination in the Mexican TESOL. The data were then categorised by identifying extracts manually in the Word document, and attributing them to themes which emerged from the data. Finally, the emerging themes were condensed, and the following themes were found:

1. The Negative Influence of Discrimination in TESOL
 - 1.1. Feelings of Frustration and Disappointment
 - 1.2. Negative Perceptions of the TESOL Profession
 - 1.3. Negative Perceptions of Teachers' Non-Native Status
 - 1.4. Negative Self-Concepts
 - 1.5. Low Salaries, Social Welfare and Funding for Research
 - 1.6. Job Abandonment

The analysis of the data suggested one main theme (The Negative Influence of Discrimination in TESOL). Within this theme, sub-themes were found which provide support to my argument that discrimination in the TESOL profession impacts in negative ways.

Data Analysis And Discussion

In this section, the results of the present study are outlined and discussed in order to answer the research question (i.e., What is the perceived influence that discriminatory acts have on 78 Mexican EFL teachers' feelings, perceptions of the TESOL profession, and decision making?). In general, the results suggest that the discriminatory practices initiated against the participants have exerted influence which can be categorised as negative. Specifically, these practices seem to have had an impact on the Mexican EFL teachers' feelings, perceptions regarding the profession, and decision making. Moreover, the evidence suggests that the discrimination practices has sometimes resulted in inequalities concerning job conditions for them or the abandonment of their jobs or profession permanently. In the following sections, I discuss these results in greater detail.

Discrimination in TESOL: Negative Influence

In the web-based questionnaire, all the participants claimed to have experienced discriminatory practices in the Mexican TESOL. When asked them to describe the

way these practices influence, the majority of the participants' responses suggested that the discrimination in the Mexican TESOL has had a negative influence. Table 1 summarises their perceived influence.

Table 1. The Influence of discrimination in Mexical TESOL

Negative Influence	87.1% (68 participants)
No Influence	12.8% (10 participants)

As can be seen in Table 1, 87.1% of the participants described discrimination practices which were categorised as having a negative influence. 12.8% of the participants' responses suggested that the discrimination that they have experienced has not had any impact; these practices were categorised as having no influence. The data in Table 1 then means that from the 100% of these teachers who claimed that they have experienced some kind of discrimination, 87.1% of these teachers have faced discrimination which has influenced in some negative way. In the following sections, I provide qualitative data which support my argument that the discrimination practices not only influence the teachers' perceptions of the profession and their self-concepts, but also initiate an array of inequalities which may motivate teachers to obtain more training or quit jobs.

Feelings of Frustration and Disappointment.

When asked to describe the influence of the discrimination practices that they have experienced, 31 participants claimed that they have felt negative feelings, for example:

- Vulnerable and mad (Participant 3)
- Unimportant (Participants 72, 40 and 69)
- Underestimated (Participant 29)
- Marginalized (Participant 25)

Exploring the dataset, it was evident that discrimination practices in TESOL tend to influence EFL teachers' feelings in a negative way. As suggested in the remainder of this paper, discrimination practices in influencing their feelings compel teachers to make decisions, sometimes seeking for more teacher preparation but in some occasions abandoning the TESOL field.

The most recurrent negative feeling that 21 participants alleged that they have had when facing discrimination in TESOL was 'frustration', as shown below.

It is frustrating to deal with the general perception that an English teacher is less qualified, less knowledgeable about teaching.

Extract 1. Participant 38

Frustration that I can anticipate not being treated fairly and being passed over for salary and opportunities for promotion; perceiving white foreigners being better paid and getting promotions despite having lesser qualifications or experience.

Extract 2. Participant 34

They affect me because I consider I have made a great effort to speak and learn English and employers just prefer native speakers. Some of them don't have any qualifications to teach, though.

Extract 3. Participant 17

As can be seen in these three extracts, Participants 38, 34 and 17 have felt different discrimination practices which have initiated feelings of frustration. In Extract 1, Participant 38's feeling of frustration was motivated by misperceptions of other colleagues concerning English teaching. Extracts 2 and 3 show that the feelings of frustration have been motivated by perceived inequalities concerning low salary, race and nativeness. Another feeling which was recurrent in the data was 'disappointment' as follows.

Discrimination make me feel disappointed. 1. Mentioning that women tend to be more committed than men is [sic] only an opinion. People should not base their decisions on opinions. 2. When in institutions prefer a language certificate over a TESOL degree [...] I've seen people with a BA in Tourism getting an English teaching job because their TOEFL score was slightly higher than people with a BA in TESOL.

Extract 4. Participant 43

In Extract 4, Participant 43 suggests that feelings of disappointment have been initiated by opinions and institutional requirements. In 'Mentioning that women tend to be more committed than men is [sic] only an opinion', we can see how he has felt discrimination against this male participant because of his gender and thus feelings of disappointment. In 'institutions prefer a language certificate over a TESOL degree', he has also felt discrimination which again has triggered feelings of disappointment. As evidenced elsewhere (see The Author, 2017), it can be seen that discrimination

practices can be motivated by an array of practices. As shown in Extracts 1-4, these practices influence the participants' feelings which motivate them to see the TESOL field and themselves differently, and sometimes at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues. This argument is reinforced by other data which show other feelings of disappointment motivated by perceived inequalities compared to English native speakers.

I was disappointed that 9 years of teaching experience were not enough because I was not native speaker, and my accent was not perfect.

Extract 5. Participant 68

It sometimes discourages me to see that the TESOL profession in Mexico is mostly in the hands of a few, most of them native speakers. However, I also believe that we non-native speakers need to earn our position in a world, which clearly give an unfair advantage to native speakers, by working twice as hard. We need to overcome the stereotypes as well as to fight the oppression of some native speakers which refuse to let the control of TESOL.

Extract 6. Participant 34

Again, feelings of disappointment can be seen in Extracts 5 and 6. In 'I was not native speaker and my accent was not perfect' and 'the TESOL profession in Mexico is mostly in the hands of a few, most of them native speakers', Participants 68 and 34, respectively, have perceived themselves to be at a disadvantage because of their non-native language status. What these two extracts suggest is that the preference for native speakers still prevails in the TESOL field, and this can motivate disappointment in non-native English teachers when compared to native speakers. It is interesting to see in 'We need to overcome the stereotypes as well as to fight the oppression of some native speakers' that discrimination, alongside feelings of disappointment, can encourage teachers to perceive the TESOL profession differently. The following section shows how the discriminatory acts encourage teachers to have a negative perspective of the TESOL profession.

Negative Perspectives on the TESOL Profession.

The data also suggested the participants' negative perspectives of the TESOL profession because of discriminatory practices initiated against them. Because of perceived inequalities in the TESOL profession, six participants considered the field as "racist". Several reasons were provided by the participants, but these tended to be related to nativeness and race, as follows.

TESOL is a very racist profession, especially at upper institutions.

Extract 7. Participant 34

In Mexico, there is no equality for everybody.

Extract 8. Participant 64

Because of these perspectives on TESOL as a racist field, this appears to have triggered other negative perspectives on the TESOL field, as suggested in the extracts below.

In Mexico we are far from having a real and professional TESOL environment.

Extract 9. Participant 36

It makes you think that English teaching in Mexico it's a joke! Nobody gets serious about it [the profession].

Extract 10. Participant 72

As can be seen in these extracts, Participants 36 and 72 suggest negative perspectives concerning the field. Specifically, in 'Nobody gets serious about it [the profession]', Participant 72 implies a feeling of hopelessness concerning the discrimination he has felt in the field. What is alarming is the possibility that negative perspectives like these may in turn lead EFL teachers to question their teaching abilities, practices and choice of profession. This suggestion is supported by the following extracts.

It makes me feel my job is worthless or cheap.

Extract 11. Participant 63

It has made me question my choice of career. Sometimes I regret being in the TESOL field, but it's too late to change now.

Extract 12. Participant 8

It caused me to question my dedication to teaching.

Extract 13. Participant 25

Because of the discrimination that the participants have felt in the Mexican TESOL profession, this appears to motivate them not only to have negative perspectives concerning the field, but also to question their teaching practices and abilities. In the

following sections, I provide more evidence which suggest that discrimination in the Mexican TESOL field has an impact not only on the way EFL teachers perceive the field, but also on their perceptions of their self-efficacy as teachers.

Negative Perspectives on Teachers' Non-Native Status

As reported in previous studies (Llurda, 2005; Mora Pablo, 2011; Moussu & Llurda, 2008), discrimination in TESOL tends to be initiated by inequalities concerning the language status of teachers, native vs. non-native. It is surprising, yet alarming, that in this study, there was an important number of participants (18) claiming that they have felt some kind of discrimination due to their non-native status, as shown below.

I went to a language school looking for a job and they told me that they only hired British native speakers, it did not matter if they were language teachers or not. For them, it was important to be British because it was better for the students' learning process.

Extract 14. Participant 46

Teachers who were native speakers or had completed high school in the US were promoted after a couple of months; the others had to wait to get trained ever for a year. Native speakers with little or no experience in TESOL are preferred as ideal candidates for a teaching job.

Extract 15. Participant 36

I feel that some Mexican learners believe that native speakers of English are better teachers when compared to their Mexican counterparts

Extract 16. Participant 76

As shown in Extracts 14-16, the participants have felt discrimination against because they have perceived a preference for English native speaking teachers in the labor market. Moreover, these extracts suggest that this kind of discrimination can be initiated because of the language (native/non-native) status of teachers, but also their race, implying a disadvantage for those who are not white. In line with this evidence, Authors, such as Amin (2001) and Tang (1997), have argued that teachers who are not white Anglo-Saxon and do not look like native speakers of English can be subject to racial discrimination when teaching, mainly in English speaking countries. What is surprising is the evidence that this kind of discrimination can be motivated by both administrators or employers (see Extracts 14 and 15) and students (Extract 16), and the fact that these practices have been documented in other studies which were conducted

in non-native English speaking countries like Mexico (see, for example, The Author, 2017; Lengeling et al., 2016). As also reported in the studies previously mentioned, the participants suggested that the preference for native speaking teachers resulted in inequalities for obtaining resources or opportunities in the TESOL profession. This study was not the exception; five participants stated that the preference for native teachers in their teaching contexts has resulted in limited work-related opportunities, as suggested in Extract 17.

Usually native speakers get promotions, the chance to do more challenging projects or simply they get more holidays (with the excuse of having to travel to other country).

Extract 17. Participant 40

This extract suggests the idea that native English speakers have better teaching opportunities in the TESOL field. This study is unable to corroborate if these acts actually happened; however, the recurrent evidence in this study and others suggest that there might be inequalities concerning teaching opportunities for native and non-native teachers. Again, these practices seem to have had an impact on the way the teachers perceive the profession and themselves as teachers, as suggested in the following extract.

They make you think that they career you are studying has no point because, at the end, they would prefer a native speaker with no BA studies. :(My teaching practice is not affected, but yes, sometimes I doubt of how good is studying a BA if at the end is better just to speak English better than others.

Extract 18. Participant 28

In general, this evidence suggests that administrators and students may prefer native (or) white teachers. The problem is that despite the fact that there is evidence that this preference is perceived as discrimination and position statement against these inequalities, there is growing evidence which suggests that non-native teachers may be perceived by administrators or students as not having the language abilities to teach English compared to native speaking teachers. Of course, more needs to be done regarding how non-native teachers are perceived. One possibility would be to raise awareness of this problem which thousands of non-native teachers may be experiencing in language educational contexts.

Negative Self-Concepts.

11 participants suggested responses which show that discrimination in TESOL may have a negative influence on the way they perceive themselves as English teachers and their abilities to teach. This, for example, can be seen in the following extracts:

At that time, it made me feel insecure, it really hurts when people don't believe in you. It made me feel bad, even I doubted about my skills as a teacher.

Extract 19. Participant 46

At the beginning I felt insecure of myself as a teacher, I thought native teachers were better

Extract 20. Participant 77

It makes me feel insecure as a professional and person.

Extract 21. Participant 62

As previously discussed, discriminatory acts in the TESOL profession can be influential on teachers' feelings. These extracts again show that Participants 46, 77 and 62 have felt insecure after facing some kind of discrimination in the field. This in turn suggests that discrimination practices may motivate EFL teachers to question their teaching abilities, as in 'even I doubted about my skills as a teacher' (Participant 46), and their self-efficacy in general, as in 'insecure as a professional and person' (Participant 62). The evidence shown below adds weight to my argument that facing discrimination in the profession may lead teachers to feel 'teaching insecurity', a feeling of being at disadvantage and thus perceptions of not being able to teach as expected.

Sometimes I think I am not really good or enough prepared to teach English, even when I have my certifications, a Master's degree that I studied with a CONACYT scholarship.

Extract 22. Participant 9

I realized that in those institutions it was more important to be interesting than to be a good teacher. This made me feel helpless and defeated, since I was not able to compete with younger, single co-workers who would get all the opportunities.

Extract 23. Participant 11

So far, we have seen that discrimination in the TESOL field can motivate negative feelings and perceptions concerning the TESOL profession and their teaching and language abilities. This should not be happening in this era when there is a high demand for English teachers in Mexico, and the fact that the number of non-native teachers is increasingly growing worldwide. As we will see in the remainder of this paper, discrimination can also result in work-related inequalities, job abandonment and teachers seeking more teacher training.

Low Salaries, Social Welfare and Funding for Research.

As a result of the discrimination that the participants have experienced in the Mexican TESOL field, their responses indicated a range of inequalities regarding access to social welfare, research funding and stricter job requirements. As suggested below, seven participants claimed that as a result of the discrimination against them in the profession, they often obtain low salaries and do not have access to social welfare programmes in Mexico.

Unequal salaries, harder to get a job, increase in favoritism to get promotion. The public sees it as low rated professionals and schools often use payments to hinder teachers forcing them to quit.

Extract 24. Participant 57

Well, I have an illness and, although it's not an impediment to work, I cannot tell the true about it in the school because they won't give me courses to impart. Unfortunately, we are temporary employees, and we don't count with medical services, we have no rights as workers. Our salary is much less than half the base salary, but the obligations are the same, and many times higher.

Extract 25. Participant 69

In Extracts 24 and 25, the participants claimed that they often receive lower salaries than other colleagues, as in 'Unequal salaries' and 'Our salary is much less than half the base salary', respectively. As previously stated, the study is unable to corroborate if these practices actually happened. However, in general, we can see that the participants' responses suggest negative perceptions of the profession ('schools often use payments to hinder teachers forcing them to quit') and themselves as teachers ('The public sees it as low rated professionals'). As indicated in Extract 25, the participant alleges that in her workplace teachers do not have access to social welfare ('we are temporary employees, and we don't count with medical services, we have no rights as workers'). In fact, when teachers are hired to teach per hour (usually short contracts) in Mexico, they do not

often have access to social welfare which is provided by the Mexican government. Moreover, their responses suggested restrictions not only to better salaries and social welfare, but also to opportunities for research funding, as suggested below.

It made me realize that in Mexico there is so much support for the scientific areas of study whereas there is so little for the humanities. I see it as a challenge for my teaching practice.

Extract 26. Participant 4

In general, the problem of these practices is that more and more English teachers continue to claim that they have experienced some kind of discrimination, and that this results in fewer opportunities for better teaching conditions and opportunities to grow as teachers and/or researchers. As previously discussed, discrimination in the TESOL field can be initiated by students, teacher colleagues and administrators. In the case of administrators, the evidence of this study suggests that sometimes administrators or employers may be aware of motivating discrimination against teachers. This is suggested in the Extract 27.

Now, as a language coordinator, I think I have also practiced discrimination against those colleagues who were looking for an opportunity with the same sentences: Do you have any language certification? What level? Are [you] an undergraduate or graduate student? In my experience, I had to follow the recommendations given by Place 1 in my university, in order to enrol English teachers.

Extract 27. Participant 21

As suggested in Extract 27, Participant 21 states that he has to “follow the recommendations given by Place 1 in my university, in order to enrol English teachers”. Based upon this, it is thus possible that discrimination in the TESOL profession is also motivated by institutional requirements and philosophies which may compel employers to initiate discriminatory practices, even if they are aware of them. As suggested below, the results of discrimination or the discriminatory acts themselves may have an impact on teachers abandoning their jobs or seeking for further English teacher training as a way to avoid discrimination in the Mexican TESOL profession.

Job Abandonment

Because of the influence of discrimination in the Mexican TESOL, some participants (23) mentioned that they have decided to leave their jobs or the profession permanently, as follows.

At the beginning, it was hard to accept that [the discriminatory act]. That pushed me to quit that job to find a better place for professional development.

Extract 28. Participant 35

It [discrimination] means you have to keep looking for the right place to work.

Extract 29. Participant 70

As can be seen in these two extracts, because of the influence of the discrimination that they have felt, the two participants state that they decided to quit their former jobs. As suggested in the extracts below, it seems that the influence that discrimination in the profession exerted on the teachers compelled them to abandon the profession. This can be seen in the following extracts.

I decided to get a BA on something that might eventually lead me to something completely different than teaching

Extract 30. Participant 49

I have recently been thinking of quitting teaching. If I could earn as well as native speakers do, I wouldn't think of quitting.

Extract 31. Participant 61

These extracts thus suggest that the discriminatory practices that the participants have experienced in the TESOL profession not only had an impact on their feelings and perceptions of the profession, but also compel them to make profession-related decisions, that is, decisions to quit their jobs or abandon the profession permanently. In summary, the evidence presented in this study suggests that the discrimination that the teachers have faced in the Mexican TESOL field influenced their professional lives in complex ways. This can be from negative feelings; negative perceptions of the field; limited teaching, medical and research opportunities; and abandonment of their language teaching jobs or profession. All in all, this evidence has provided new insights into the influence of discrimination of TESOL on the teachers' professional lives.

Conclusions

The present study explored how discrimination in TESOL impacts on EFL teachers' feelings, perceptions regarding the TESOL profession. The present study was conducted with the intention of 1) documenting these practices and how they negatively influence the teachers' perceptions and decisions, and 2) reaching more and more people to take a more agentive role against discrimination practices in the field of TESOL in Mexico.

As evident in the perceptual data, 78 Mexican professionals have experienced some kind of discrimination in the TESOL profession. As suggested in their responses in the web-based questionnaire, the discrimination that they have experienced has significantly influenced their feelings, perceptions of the profession, and their decision making concerning their professions. Some inequalities were also mentioned by the participants as a result of the discrimination that they claimed to have experienced. These were related to salaries, medical care and research opportunities. As a result of the influence of the discriminatory practices, the participants stated that they have decided to abandon their jobs or the teaching profession permanently. Throughout this article, the data were carefully treated because the study was unable to corroborate if these discriminatory practices and inequalities actually happened in practice; however, the growing evidence presented here and in previous studies suggest the possibility that a high number of EFL teachers in our country continue to face inequalities which put them at a disadvantage.

The above evidence calls for effective strategies to eradicate discrimination in our field because, as shown in this paper, a growing number of EFL teachers continue to claim that they have felt some kind of discrimination which has impacted in negative ways. It is thus important to continue raising awareness among the TESOL community which involves students, teachers, administrators and employers. One possibility would be to inform the education community of these practices, or invite them to participate in workshops whose objectives are to eradicate discrimination practices in TESOL.

Of course, more needs to be done to reach those people who intentionally or unintentionally initiate discrimination against English teachers. There is also a need to conduct further research. It would be helpful to carry out research projects which seek to understand discriminatory acts in TESOL and, based on the findings, formulate strategies which are sensitive to teaching and learning contexts. However, the present study has gone some way towards gaining further understanding of the discriminatory acts that professionals experience within TESOL in Mexico. It is hoped that this study raises awareness of the disadvantageous realities of Mexican teachers which may also be similar or different to other contexts in our profession.

References

- Amin, N. (2001). Nativism, the native speaker construct, and minority immigrant women teachers of English as a second language. *The CATESOL Journal*, 13(1), 89-107.
- Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy, and professional growth*. New York: Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Figueiredo, E. H. D. de. (2011). Nonnative English-speaking teachers in the United States: issues of identity. *Language and Education*, 25(5), 419-432. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2011.574702>
- Holliday, A. (2005). *The struggle to teach English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kamhi-Stein, L. (Ed.) (2004). *Learning and teaching from experience: Perspectives on nonnative English-speaking professionals*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Kubota, R. (2004). Native speaker: A unitary fantasy of a diverse reality. *The Language Teacher*, 28(1), 3-10.
- Kubota, R. & Lin, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Race, culture, and identities in second language education: Exploring critically engaged practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Lengeling, M., Crawford, T., Mora Pablo, I., & Blomquist, N. (2016). Discrimination within the TESOL profession: Perspectives of teachers. *Academia Journals*, 8(5), 3163-3167.
- Llurda, E. (Ed.) (2005). *Non-native language teachers. Perceptions, challenges and contributions to profession*. New York: Springer.
- Louber, I. (2017). Racial Discrimination in TESOL: A Qualitative Study on the Experiences EFL Teachers at a University Preparatory Year Programme in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJBIDE.2017070103>
- Mahboob, A. & Golden, R. (2013). Looking for native speakers of English: Discrimination in English language teaching job advertisements. *Voices in Asia Journal*, 1(1), 72-81. http://www.voiceinasiajournal.com/images/pdf/vol1/File_9_VIAJ_1.1_Mahboob_and_Golden_pp_72-81.pdf
- Mickelson, R. A. (2003). When are racial disparities in education the result of racial discrimination? A social science perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 105(6), 1052-1086. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00277>

- Mora Pablo, I. (2011). *The “native speaker” spin: the construction of the English teacher at a language department of a university in Mexico*. Unpublished doctoral thesis of Canterbury Christ Church University.
- Moussu, L. & Llurda, E. (2008). Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language Teaching*, 41(3), 315-348.
- Ruecker, T., & Ives, L. (2014). White native English speakers needed: The rhetorical construction of privilege in online teacher recruitment spaces. *TESOL Quarterly*, 49(4), 733-756. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.195>
- Selvi, A. F. (2014). Myths and misconceptions about nonnative English speakers in the TESOL (NNEST) movement. *TESOL Journal*, 5, 573–611. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesj.158>
- Tang, C. (1997). On the power and status of nonnative ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 577-580.
- TESOL (2016). Position statement opposing discrimination. Retrieved from: <http://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/tesol-position-statement-opposing-discrimination.pdf>
- The Author (2017).
- Wright, K.B. (2005). Researching internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x>

Author

* **Edgar Emmanuell Garcia Ponce** PhD in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (University of Birmingham, UK), currently works in the Department of Languages at the University of Guanajuato. His research interests are classroom interactions and teacher cognitions. He has recently worked on projects funded by the British Council. He is a member the *Sistema Nacional de Investigadores*, and coordinates the BA in ELT at the Universidad de Guanajuato

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5414-3862>

How to reference this article: Garcia-Ponce, E. E. (2020). Influence of Discrimination in the Field of TESOL: Perspectives of Mexican EFL Teachers. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 69-89. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.837>

Educational Innovation through ICT-Mediated Learning Strategies in the Initial Teacher Education of English Language Teachers¹

Innovación Educativa a través de
Estrategias de Enseñanza Mediadas
por las TIC en la Formación Inicial de
Profesores de Inglés

**Luis Jesús Rincón-Ussa, Yamith José Fandiño-Parra,
and Andrea Margarita Cortés-Ibañez^{2*}**

Universidad de La Salle, Colombia

¹ Received: February 13th 2020/ Accepted: October 20th 2020

² ljrincon@unisalle.edu.co; yfandino@unisalle.edu.co; ancortes@unisalle.edu.co

Abstract

This paper describes the results of the first cycle of a co-joint action research study in methodological innovation in pre-service language teacher education at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. The first part of the study consisted of implementing several ICT-mediated learning strategies that were designed considering the theoretical tenets of educational innovation, autonomy, and mediation. Strategies were implemented in three different academic spaces of a B.A. in Foreign Languages during the first semester of 2019. The purpose of this pedagogical implementation was to examine the value of ICT-mediated learning strategies for methodological innovation. The data analysis results, which were collected through a survey, indicate that ICT-mediated learning strategies play a fundamental role in methodological innovation because they promote collaborative and cooperative learning, foster autonomy, and self-directed learning. In addition, these strategies also seem to provide a range of possibilities for bolstering learning agency development on the part of the pre-service language teachers.

Key words: Teaching innovation; initial teacher education; English language teachers; ICT mediation; teaching strategies.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados del primer ciclo de una investigación acción. Este ciclo del estudio consistió en la implementación de varias estrategias de aprendizaje mediadas por diferentes herramientas tecnológicas. Estas estrategias fueron implementadas durante el primer semestre del 2019, por tres profesores, en tres espacios académicos diferentes en un programa de licenciatura en español y lenguas extranjeras, de una universidad privada, en la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia. El propósito de estas implementaciones fue comprender el valor de este tipo de estrategias para la innovación metodológica en la educación inicial de los docentes de lenguas extranjeras. Los datos se recopilaban a través de una encuesta y su análisis indica que el uso de estas estrategias puede promover el desarrollo del aprendizaje colaborativo y cooperativo, fomentar el desarrollo del aprendizaje autónomo, e igualmente ofrece múltiples posibilidades para apalancar el desarrollo de la capacidad de agenciamiento del aprendizaje en la educación inicial de los profesores de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: Innovación docente; educación inicial docente; profesores de inglés; mediación de las TIC; estrategias de enseñanza.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta os resultados do primeiro ciclo de uma pesquisa ação. Este ciclo do estudo consistiu na implementação de várias estratégias de aprendizagem mediadas por diferentes ferramentas tecnológicas. Estas estratégias foram implementadas durante o primeiro semestre de 2019, por três professores, em três espaços acadêmicos diferentes em um programa de licenciatura em espanhol e línguas estrangeiras, de uma universidade particular, na cidade de Bogotá, Colômbia. O propósito destas implementações foi compreender o valor deste

tipo de estratégias para a inovação metodológica na educação inicial dos docentes de línguas estrangeiras. Os dados se recopilaram através de uma pesquisa de opinião e a sua análise indica que o uso destas estratégias pode promover o desenvolvimento da aprendizagem colaborativa e cooperativa, fomentar o desenvolvimento da aprendizagem autónoma, e igualmente oferece múltiplas possibilidades para apalancar o desenvolvimento da capacidade de agenciamento da aprendizagem na educação inicial dos professores de línguas estrangeiras.

Palavras chave: Inovação docente; educação inicial docente; professores de inglês; mediação das TIC; estratégias de ensino.

Introduction

Teacher education should be an innovating endeavor in which future teachers learn the craft of teaching and, more importantly, where they learn to become innovators and agents of change. In this regard, UNESCO (1990) argues that innovation in teacher education refers to the design, implementation, and assessment of new ideas or practices in specific educational contexts created to meet unsatisfied needs. More concretely, it states that education innovation is “the introduction or promotion of new ideas and methods that are devised in education and school practices which have a substantial effect on changing the existing patterns of behavior of the group or groups involved” (p. 2). Consequently, methodological and pedagogical innovation constitute a dynamic field of study and a critical factor in ensuring the relevance and quality of future language teachers’ education.

In this regard, Serdyukov (2017) maintains that teacher education can help society survive and thrive if it can serve its needs and interests. This capacity demands both a consistent and systematic curricular project and a revolutionary and disruptive formative experience. As a result, he claims:

Schoolteachers, college professors, administrators, researchers, and policymakers are expected to innovate the theory and practice of teaching and learning, as well as all other aspects of this complex organization to ensure quality preparation of all students to life and work (p. 4).

One way to ensure innovation in teacher education is through the use of ICT. This is so because as Ala-Mutka, Punie and Redecke (2008) explain, “New technologies, and especially social computing, provide new opportunities for education and training, as they enhance learning and teaching, and facilitate collaboration, innovation and creativity for individuals and organizations” (p. 6). To boost their effectiveness, they recommend encouraging experimentation with ICT so that teachers and students create new teaching and learning practices that benefit their local contexts. They also suggest improving ICT training of both pre-service and in-service teachers to ensure they learn and disseminate better practices thanks to media and digital technologies. Finally, they advise faculties of education to study ICT’s impacts on teacher education, as empirical evidence is needed to describe how technology facilitates or enhances pedagogic innovation.

This action research study intended to shed some light on the value of ICT-mediated learning and teaching strategies methodological innovation in the initial education of foreign language teachers. It is worth noting that this co-joint research project was part of an ongoing macro-research study in Didactic and Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education. The first cycle of this research consisted of designing and implementing new learning strategies in different programs and disciplines. The

second cycle consisted of consolidating pedagogical and methodological innovative strategies that could be replicable. Consequently, various research groups from other disciplines participated in the study whose primary purpose was to gain insights into pedagogical and educational innovation in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

Educational innovation and the use of ICT-mediated teaching and learning strategies are two concepts that have been discussed by different scholars. The literature review provides an interesting but complex view of epistemological perspectives and theoretical and methodological frameworks. What follows is a concise but complete account of the main definitions and positions found in academic sources.

Educational Innovation

Innovation comes from the Latin word *innovare*, which means into new. Then, it follows that the simplest definition of innovation is doing things in new ways or differently. To Sterberg (2017), innovation can be associated with a new idea, product, device, or novelty. It can also refer to a way of thinking beyond the present and into the future. As a process, it has to do with “generating and combining ideas to make a relationship between present accomplishments and past experiences to solve a future problem” (p. 2). For their part, Baregheh, Rowley, and Sambrook (2009) define innovation as “the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully” (p. 1334). Similarly, O’Sullivan and Dooley (2009) understand innovation as

the process of making changes, large and small, radical and incremental, to products, processes, and services that result in the introduction of something new for the organization that adds value to customers and contributes to the knowledge store of the organization (p. 5).

In education, innovation is understood as

the inducing of functional changes in new ways. It is the reworking of familiar fields of action to new circumstances, and the creation of new ways of perceiving and approaching problems (...) Innovation relies on an orientation toward flexible adaptation, experimentation, and guided change (UNESCO, 1996, p. 23).

Likewise, the OEDC/CERI (2010) understands innovation in education as

“any dynamic change intended to add value to the educational process and resulting in measurable outcomes, be that in terms of stakeholders’ satisfaction or educational performance... [it] focuses on how educational systems monitor and assess innovation and use the results to cumulate knowledge for action in this domain” (p. 12).

Redding, Twyman, and Murphy (2013) maintain that innovation consists of implementing an idea or invention, adapted or refined for specific contexts and needs. Such implementation continues over time, often with adjustments to fit the changes in the context. Over time, an innovation replaces the standard product, program, practice, or process with something better, and as the majority adopts it, the innovation then becomes the new standard (p. 6). In the same line of thought, Mykhailyshyn, Kondur, and Serman (2018) affirm that educational innovation is any new purpose-oriented activity, organizational solutions, system, process, or method to ensure the development of educational organizations and their pertinence (p. 12).

These innovations include curricular innovation, pedagogical innovation, methodological innovation, technological innovation, and administrative innovation. They are defined as follows:

Table 1. Types of educational innovation.

Type of innovation	Definition
Curricular innovation	Any change in aspects of a curriculum such as philosophy, values, objectives, syllabi, materials, assessment, and learning outcomes, among others.
Pedagogical innovation	A change of style in teaching and the organization of the educational process to introduce new models of education that turn the education character in its essence and modify the nature of the interaction of the teacher with the students.
Methodological innovation	An update of the content of educational programs in accordance with the best domestic and foreign counterparts in order to introduce innovative courses creating modern content and teaching practices.
Technological innovation	A use of new or improved learning technologies (such as distance education or online learning, Internet technology, project organized technology, etc.) in order to provide students and teachers with access to new resources, media, systems, etc.
Administrative innovation	An innovative structure or functioning that provides new educational services, subdivisions, procedures, and processes.

Source: Adapted from Măță (2012) and Mykhailyshyn, Kondur, and Serman (2018).

In sum, educational innovation entails implementing new ideas, new practices, and new organizational and administrative mechanisms to directly or indirectly improve learning processes. It is also evident that educational innovation is a continuous endeavor that transforms educational institutions’ culture, empowering all educational community members to be social transformation agents.

ICT-Mediated Teaching Strategies

The classroom is the scenario in which educational innovation comes to life; amid the complex relations and interactions among the participants of learning processes, new strategies and ideas bear fruit if they are successful and validated by the immediate actors of educational processes. Over the last two decades or so, educational agents, institutions, and actors at all levels have deemed that the use of ICT is of paramount importance for the quality and improvement of educational systems, programs, and teaching practices. This need has given way to new notions, concepts, and theoretical frameworks that tackle the interplay of educational innovation, quality of education, and integration of ICT. Three of them are SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition), TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), and B-learning (blended learning).

On the one hand, SAMR describes three different levels of integration of ICT. The first one, substitution, is the level in which a technological tool is used to perform a learning activity without modifying the task, e.g., reading a book in a pdf file instead of reading it on paper. The second level, augmentation, consists of using a technological tool to enrich the learning activity somehow. The third level, modification, implies the use of technological tools to transform, in significant ways, the learning and teaching practices. The last level, redefinition, entails using technological tools to design learning experiences and scenarios that would not be possible without the mediation of those tools (Puentedura, 2012).

On the other hand, TPACK addresses the interplay of content, pedagogy, and technology. Understanding the intersection of these three domains produces knowledge that empowers teachers and learners to design and manage learning processes in which the balance of the three elements ensure the quality of learning experiences (Koehler, Mishra & Cain, 2013). Finally, B-learning is an umbrella term that encompasses different methods and strategies that combine face-to-face instruction with ICT-mediated learning strategies. (Sharma & Berrett, 2008). The overall purpose of b-learning is to "...optimizing achievement of learning objectives by applying the 'right' learning technologies to match the 'right' personal learning style to transfer the 'right' skills to the 'right' person at the 'right' time" (Singh & Reed, 2001).

These theoretical constructs provide useful orientations and insights to understand, design, and implement methodological innovations at different educational levels. They also unveil questions about teacher education and training, such as integrating ICT with teachers' initial education to develop the knowledge and skills in using technology in their future professional practice? How to ensure the quality of educational processes using ICT? What is the role of ICT in changing the educational culture of B.A. programs in foreign languages? These inquiries served a general frame and guide in the development of this study.

To shed light on the previous inquiries, teacher educators have resorted to teaching strategies designed and implemented through ICT, or more specifically to what some authors defined as Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL). To Walker and White (2013), TELL regards technology not merely as a tool to assist language learning, but “as part of the environment in which language exists and is used” (p. 9). This means that technology provides learners with an enriched context where language, communication, interaction, and learning occur in an articulated and purposeful way. Because of its enriched nature and variety, TELL allows teachers and learners to use and assess a greater range of teaching-learning strategies, which open space and time for dimensions such as connectivism, constructivism, interactionism, digitalization, and virtual reality, etc. Some of these strategies deal with structuring information, collaboration strategies, inquiry projects, and metacognition (Hernández, Quiróz & Olarte, 2016).

Autonomy, Mediation, and Emancipation in Educational Innovation

Ultimately, educational innovation aims at promoting new and better practices, processes, and products. Most of them have to do with enhancing teachers’ and students’ understanding and implementing principles such as autonomy, mediation, and emancipation. The word autonomy’s origin goes back to Greece where it meant self-ruling from *autos* (self) and *nomos* (rule). Nowadays, it is understood as “the condition when an agent may determine the conception, the articulation and the execution of concepts, ideas and actions for him or her –self” (Motloba, 2018, p. 418). However, a literature review about autonomy indicates the co-existence of different but complementary theoretical perspectives (Erdocia, 2014). For instance, the Kantian perspective claims that exercise autonomy emerges from individuals’ critical consciousness and their use of reasoning, as opposed to heteronomy, which is based on the acceptance of external coercive regulations. In political theory, autonomy is found in the classical model of democracy, and the idea of freedom understood from a liberal perspective.

In ELT, autonomy is defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning (Holec 1981, p. 3). To him, autonomy is the capacity one develops to do a series of actions in favor of one’s learning. Some of those actions determine one’s objectives, select methods, and techniques to reach those objectives, and monitor their progress towards them. For his part, Dam (1995) defines autonomy as both “a capacity and a willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person” (p. 102). This way, autonomy is not just a capacity one acquires and executes but also a predisposition and attitude one develops and fine-tunes.

When discussing autonomy, Littlewood (1999) describes two types: proactive and reactive. The former resembles Holec's definition as it deals with a self-initiated assumption of one's learning. The latter has to do with one's response to an external stimulus to encourage one to organize resources to achieve an objective. In 2005, Benson described three versions of autonomy in ELT: the technical, the psychological, and the political. The technical version relates to the learning of a language outside educational institutions without the assistance of teachers. It focuses on the promotion of life-long learning. The psychological version deals with the attitudes and emotions learners should construct to learn languages responsibly. It emphasizes understanding the mental and affective characteristics students need to be autonomous. The political version has to do with the control learners need to have of the process and learning context. It revolves around the awareness students must develop about the purposes, the implications, and the potentials of learning for personal and social change.

This co-joint research project is also underpinned by Fox and Riconscente's (2008) discussion on self-regulation and metacognition to complement autonomy. These authors analyzed these two constructs by looking back at the roots in James, Piaget, and Vygotsky's theories. To James, self-regulation and metacognition are inwardly directed activities of the self, which are automated as habits and exercised through efforts in terms of a will. For his part, Piaget stated that metacognition and self-regulation are fundamental knowledge of and control of others and objects, a view of one's thoughts and actions as having the same position and following the same rules as relations with these external realities (Fox & Riconscente, 2008). On the other hand, Vygotsky declared that metacognition is the mind's activity in which one is conscious of being conscious. Simultaneously, self-regulation is implied as one needs to be aware of being self-regulated in his learning process. Nevertheless, this process requires having passed the childhood stage and having social interactions with others so that such a process can become internalized.

Undoubtedly, various studies have used the terms of self-regulated learning and self-directed learning indistinctively. Nonetheless, Loyens, Magda, and Rikers (2008) clarify these terms' similarities and differences. To begin with, both include active engagement as well as a set of goals to achieve. They also develop metacognitive skills. However, self-directed learning is broader than self-regulated learning. The first one infuses the school environment with new practices and discourses, while the latter is a personal feature students need to acquire and develop to define what they want to learn.

It is important to point out that the underpinning principles of this notion derive from diverse disciplines and fields of knowledge regarding mediation. These tenets interweave, creating a theoretical framework that allows a dynamic dialogue among disciplines such as psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and anthropology, among others. In this respect, Tebar (2003) stated that pedagogical mediation's paradigm contributes

to renovating schooling altogether based on fraternity and hope for everyone. Likewise, Manen (1998) affirmed that mediation occurs when the pedagogical and educational processes acknowledge human and social particularities.

The concept of mediation is an integral part of formal and informal adult learning, conceived not as an isolated act of cognition, but rather as interaction via mediation. In this process, learners become competent or proficient as other participants, such as teachers and peers, assist them in learning. As a result, teacher educators' role is to act as mediator figures who work as intermediaries between general programmed contents and specific situated practices. To Azadi, Biria, and Nasri (2018), teacher educators need to provide pre-service teachers with various kinds of mediations so that their academic, disciplinary, and personal development is facilitated and consolidated. This variety can be achieved if teacher educators act as "(i) facilitators of the learning of heuristics, (ii) mediators of knowledge sources, (iii) mediators of lifelong learning, and (iv) designers of the learning environment." (p. 136). Ultimately, teacher educators should act as mediators who help pre-service teachers conceptualize and utilize theory, skills, and attitudes for their classroom practices and formative experiences.

Concerning emancipation, Adorno (1998) defines it as a theory that reflects critically going beyond instrumental rationality that examines reality to control it. Instead, it proposes rationality that seeks to transform reality into a more just and egalitarian experience. To Berrío (2016), emancipation is a form of resistance to current society, its structures, history, and nature itself, but to transform the structures that have denied subjectivity and made it impossible to carry out a project genuinely liberating. In relation to ICT, emancipation implies reflecting on repressive socialization processes and the various social control mechanisms that thwart critical individuals from developing (Binimelis, 2010).

Undoubtedly, emancipation is associated with the work of Habermas (1971 as cited by Adorno, 1998) when he discusses the three interest of knowledge and human interest: technical (the empirical-analytic approach), practical (the hermeneutic approach) and emancipatory (the critical approach). To him, the discovery and construction of knowledge should include but do not limit to predicting/explaining the physical world or interpreting/understanding social realities. Instead, knowledge discovery and construction should lead to a transformed consciousness that allows one to make informed decisions and actions to improve one's sense of who one is and change one's expectations of what one can do.

Such transformed consciousness demands, among other things, reflection, agency, and empowerment. Besides facilitating a dialogue between theory and practice, reflection encourages teachers to move from empirical/practical doing to reflective/critical practice. In other words, reflection takes teachers "from applying learned pedagogical discourse to creating pedagogical know-how, specifically know-how that enables them to criticize and transform their practice and reality" (Restrepo, 2004, as

cited by Fandiño, 2010, p. 115). For its part, the agency has to do with “the creation of local plans and projects for the use and development of resources in response to one’s interests and particular problems” (Baldauf, 2006, as cited by Fandiño & Bermúdez, 2016, p. 13). It is essential to point out that agency is not something that teachers can have – as a property, capacity, or competence – but is something that they do. In other words, agency denotes the quality of teachers’ engagement with temporal–relational contexts-for-action, not a quality of the teachers themselves, which means that agency is understood as an emergent phenomenon of teacher-situation transaction (See Biestaab, Priestley & Robinson, 2015). Finally, empowerment presupposes a process by which teachers develop, increase and validate their experience, decision-making, and authority to have an active voice in their educational practices and circumstances (Fandiño, Bermúdez & Varela, 2016). Empowerment in education, then, consists of processes where institution participants acquire the competence to take charge of their development, and from it, they can address or resolve their problems by developing the mechanisms that are necessary to do so (Kimware, Chirure, and Omondi, 2014).

Methodological Framework

Paradigm, Approach, and Type of Study

This study embraces the socio-critical paradigm since self-critical reflection is the core of social practices that produce the knowledge that transforms culture. This means that “doing and thinking are complementary [since] doing extends thinking in the tests, moves, and probes of experimental action, and reflection feeds on doing and its results. Each feeds the other and each sets boundaries for the other” (Schön, 1983, p. 280).

The study’s purpose and nature are also aligned with the tenets of qualitative research that views individuals as active agents in constructing and determining realities (Cook & Reichardt, 2005). According to SeeVerd & Lozares (2016), qualitative research has three distinctive features: (1) the language used to analyze data is based on the discourse, (2) the perspective of the subjects and the relation to the theoretical issues will be of great importance, and (3) the informative richness of data allows understanding the social phenomena that the subjects are experiencing. These characteristics also framed and oriented the development of the study.

This study followed the overarching principles and characteristics of action research in education as its guiding research method. In view of Carr and Kemmis (1988), action-oriented research has four distinctive tenets: (1) commitment to social practice, (2) intention to improve, (3) use of recursive cycles, and (4) adherence to reflection. Attention to these principles entailed ongoing reflection, collaboration, and solidarity to pursue collective understanding and meaning negotiation and construction.

Data Collection and Analysis

In line with the previous general guiding principles, a combination of closed- and open-ended questions allowed collecting participants' voices and perceptions during the first cycle of the research. The emergent interpretations and insights helped the researchers to relate the studied phenomena with the theoretical framework.

The survey consisted of three parts: Part I: participants' perceptions about the relevance of the learning strategies and TIC, Part II: participants' beliefs about the effectiveness of the learning experience, and Part III: participants' attitudes towards the appropriateness of the learning process. This survey was designed in accordance with Gray's (2004) five-stage process: (a) survey design and preliminary planning, (b) piloting, (c) final survey design, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis and reporting.

Researchers undertook the data analysis as "a set of manipulations, transformations, operations, reflections and verifications made from data to extract relevant meaning regarding a research problem" (Gil, 1994, as cited in Bisquera, 2004, p.153). Besides, this process of meaning-extraction and construction followed the steps of (1) data reduction, (2) data representation, and (3) data interpretation proposed by Rodríguez, Gil, and García (1999).

Pedagogical Intervention

In this co-joint research project, three teacher-educators from a B.A. program in Spanish and Foreign Languages worked together during the second semester of 2018. They designed and implemented innovative ICT-mediated learning activities and learner-centered strategies in three different academic spaces. Such activities and strategies were used to boost the learners' autonomy, self-directed learning, and agency. Researchers selected the technological tools and designed the learning strategies bearing in mind the purposes mentioned above and considering the underpinning theoretical principles of Autonomy, mediation, educational innovation, and ICT-mediated learning strategies.

Table 2 below shows the academic spaces, the participants, the strategies, and the tools.

Table 2. Spaces, participants, ICT tools and strategies used in this pedagogical intervention.

Semester / subject matter	Number of participants	ICT tools / strategies implemented
Third semester / English language	19	-Virtual classroom / forums, workshops, co-evaluation tasks -Blog / E-learning journal -Website / elaboration of vocabulary study sets
Sixth semester / English didactics	12	-Websites / elaboration of graphic organizers
Fourth semester / English language	12	-Language learning Platform / flipped classroom-like activities -Moodle Platform / entry and exit tests -WhatsApp / Peer monitoring activities and communication channel

Source: Own elaboration.

The first pedagogical implementation consisted of the use of a virtual classroom, a blog, and a website to develop several collaborative and cooperative ICT-mediated learning activities: An E-learning journal, forums, co-evaluation activities, and vocabulary development activities. The E-learning journal was a blog in which students compiled written products, written feedback, and a reading log. The forums were part of a virtual classroom where learners shared and assessed peers' written posts and videos. The third activity, co-evaluation, consisted of a workshop in a virtual classroom in which learners published, assessed, and commented on other groups' E-learning journal. The vocabulary development activities consisted of the collaborative construction of study sets on a web site. Thirty-five students of the third semester developed these strategies during one semester. 19 out of the 35 students answered the survey about the strategies at the end of the semester.

Twelve students from the sixth semester of an English didactics course participated in the second pedagogical implementation. It involved the explicit and systematic use of different online websites to design and elaborate graphic organizers. The graphic organizers used in a sequential order where synoptic charts (Summaries), comparative charts (comparisons), timelines (sequence of events), mind maps (part-and-whole relationships), concept maps (relations among concepts), and semantic maps (webs of words). The websites used were www.canva.com, www.infograph.com, www.mindmapfree.com, www.wisemapping.com, www.creately.com/lp/concept-map-maker, www.smartdraw.com, and www.visualthesaurus.com. This number of websites offered students the possibility to know different online alternatives to choose the ones that best fit their interests and needs. This work sought to promote the construction of knowledge, the organization of information, problem-solving, and decision-making. Out of 12 students, 6 students answered the survey at the end of the academic term.

Eighteen students of an English language course participated in the third implementation. At the beginning of the course, an entry test was created in Moodle

and applied to know students' previous knowledge; then, at the end of the course, an exit test, which was the same they presented at the beginning, was done. The objective of this was to know if students had had progress in their learning process. The other tool was an online platform in which students did different type of activities in preparation for the face to face class. In these sessions, students were expected to put into practice what they had prepared beforehand. During this process, a group in WhatsApp was created for peer monitoring, sharing materials, practicing speaking, and reading and listening. In total, twelve students answered the survey.

Findings and Results

The following figures present the six categories that emerged from the first cycle of this co-joint action research project: 1. Level of Satisfaction with the Learning Outcomes and The Strategies; 2. The value of the Technological Tools for the Learning Process; 3. Methodology and the Development of Autonomy, Self-directed Learning, and Agency; 4. The impact of ICT on the Learning Process of Pre-Service Teachers; 5. ICT and the Accomplishment of Learning Objectives in Initial Teacher Education; 6. The Value of ICTs for Methodological and Pedagogical Innovation in the Initial Education of Foreign Language Teachers.

Level of Satisfaction with the Learning Outcomes and The Strategies Implemented

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the overall level of satisfaction with the learning outcomes achieved and the ICTs-mediated learning strategies and activities. These strategies aimed to promote autonomous learning, the learner's participation, and the construction of knowledge and meanings. The respondents' answers indicate an adequate level of gratification with the ICTs-mediated in promoting the aspects mentioned before. The overall level of satisfaction of the learners with the learning outcomes showed the highest level. The line of tendency (totally agree and agree) shows a positive linear correlation between the ICTs-mediated learning strategies implemented and the overall satisfaction with the learning outcomes achieved.

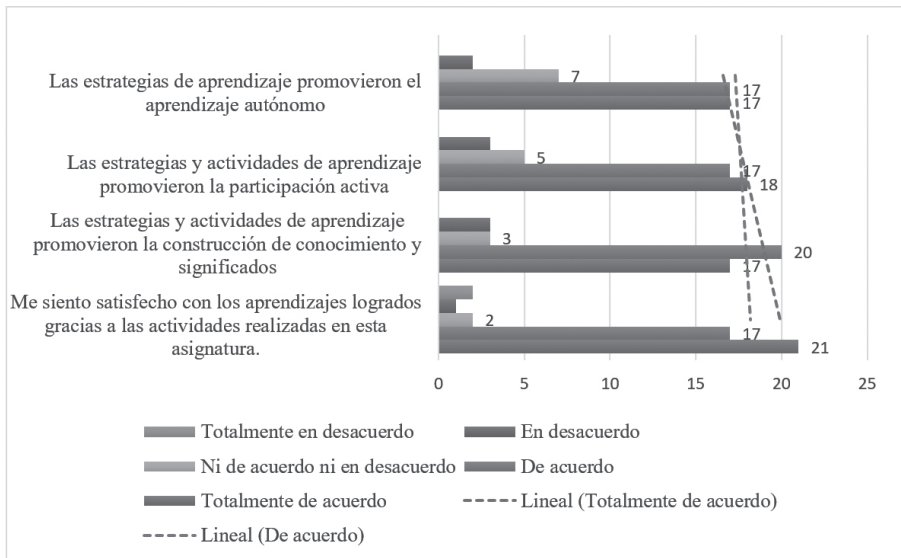


Figure 1. Level of satisfaction with the learning outcomes and the strategies implemented.

The value of the Technological Tools for the Learning Process

This category comprises the results of the value of the technological tools in leveraging the learning process. The use of the technological tools seems to foster collaborative learning, decision making that improves academic attainment, and allow the learner to do activities according to his learning pace and capacity. The results indicate that pre-service teachers value the role of technological tools in developing the aspects mentioned above. The lines of tendency (totally agree and agree) show a positive linear correlation between the use of the tools and their overall value in leveraging the learning process, which is the element with the highest score. Largely, it seems that technological tools might be directly correlated with the learning process's effectiveness and efficiency in developing learning skills and attitudes essential for the educational process.

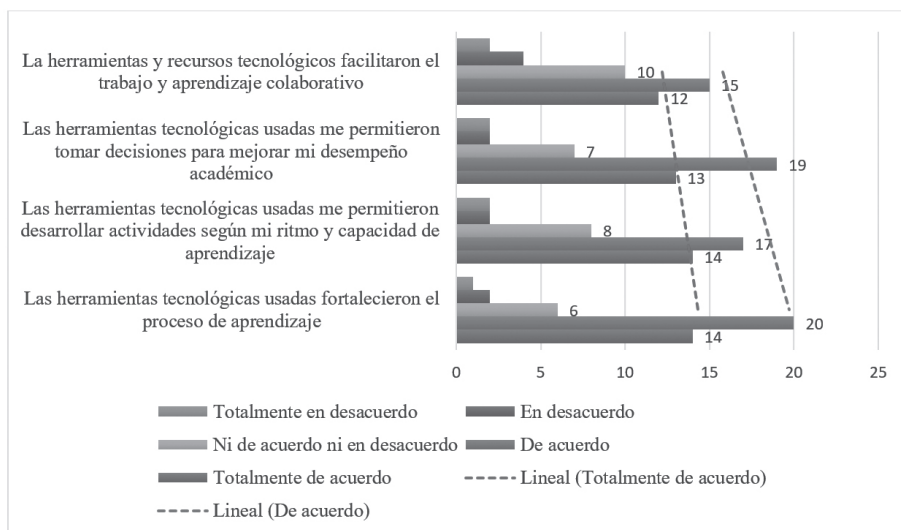


Figure 2. The value of the technological tools for the learning process.

Methodology and the Development of Autonomy, Self-directed Learning, and Agency

In this category, the figure portrays the relationship between the general methodology of the academic spaces and the development of skills and attitudes concerning autonomy, self-directed learning, and agency. In particular, the results suggest students valued making decisions about the learning process according to the learners needs and interests; doing self-evaluation of the learning process, identifying their strengths and weaknesses; and planning the learning process. Broadly, the voice of the pre-service foreign language teachers, represented in Figure 2, inform that the methodology and the strategies implemented had a moderate impact on developing skills and attitudes that allowed them to take control of the learning process and becoming independent learners in different ways.

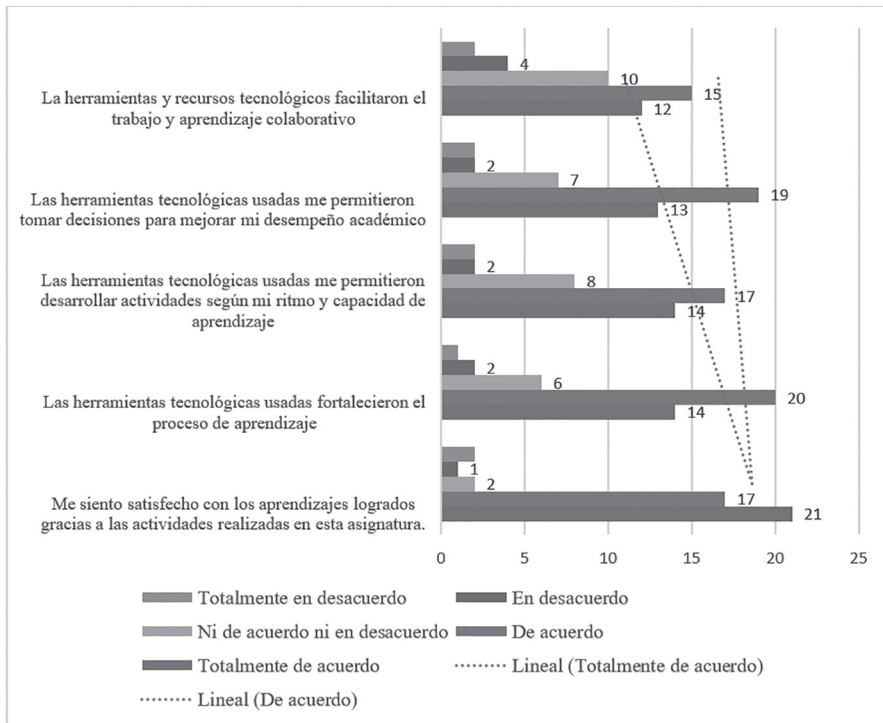


Figure 3. Methodology and the development of autonomy, self-directed learning, and agency.

The impact of ICT on the Learning Process of Pre-Service Teachers

Overall, data show ICTs help innovate methodology in initial teacher education. This is so as this innovation appears to provide future teachers with activities and resources that suit their needs and interests, boosting their metacognition and understanding of their learning. Concretely, the graph shows that the level of pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the accomplishment of learning outcomes was high, as most of them seemed to believe that the activities carried out in their academic spaces helped them achieve their learning goals. The lines of tendency (strongly agree and agree) indicate a positive linear correlation between technological tools and the overall level of satisfaction with the level of the learning achievements. Also, they appear to regard as favorable the fact that the use of ICT allowed them to do

activities according to their learning pace and capacity. This assessment seems to correlate positively with pre-service teachers' sense of strengthening their learning process thanks to ICT use. However, data suggest future teachers may need more or better opportunities to perceive ICTs as a facilitating or assisting resource in terms of decision-making and collaborative work. Overall, there is a strong underlying correlation between technological tools and the general level of satisfaction with the level of learning attainment.

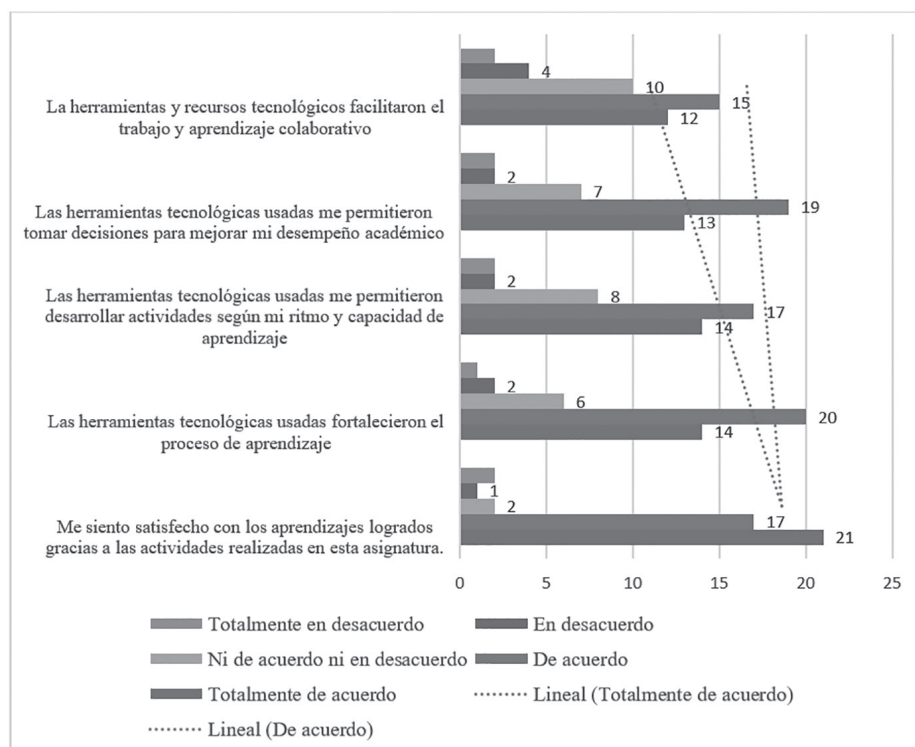


Figure 4. The role of ICT in the methodological innovation of pre-service teachers.

ICT and the Accomplishment of Learning Objectives in Initial Teacher Education

By and large, this category presents information that suggests that the use of ICTs does help future teachers accomplish the learning objectives. This appears to be so as the participants' responses indicate that ICT favor three specific aspects: level of transference, level of learning achievement, and level of learning strengthening. The

first aspect reflects pre-service teachers' perceptions about their capacity to transfer what they learned in the academic spaces being intervened in other academic spaces. In other words, they could use or implement the ICT-mediated strategies in other classes. The second aspect shows pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the learning they achieved because of the activities done in classes based on the new teaching strategies. The third aspect supports the second one, as pre-service teachers appear to think the technologies used in the academic spaces help them strengthen their learning process; put differently, the learning process of future teachers optimizes thanks to ICT-mediated strategies. On the other hand, collaboration, learning pace, and academic performance can require some reinforcement as the participant pre-service teachers' responses show an average overall rating.

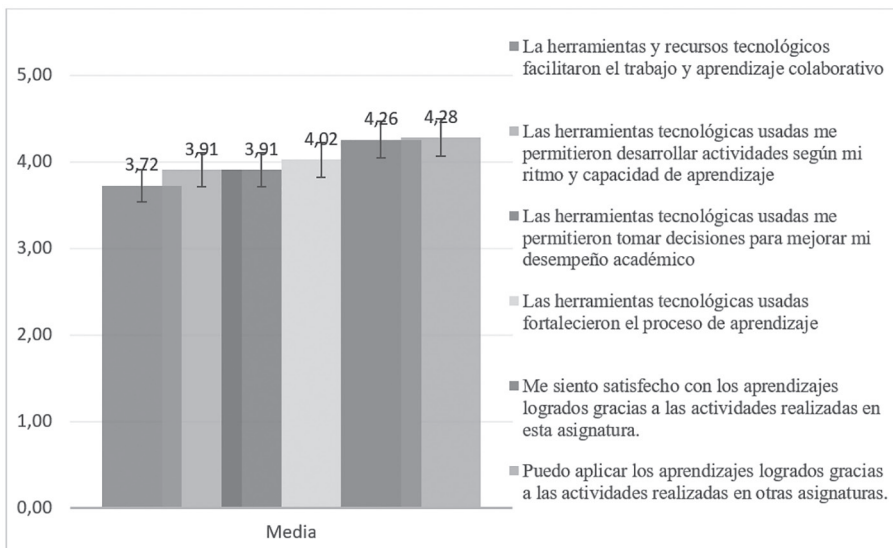


Figure 5. ICT and the level of accomplishment of the learning process.

The Value of ICTs for Methodological and Pedagogical Innovation in the Initial Education of Foreign Language Teachers

Data refers to the methodology and technological tools regarding the pre-service teachers' learning process in this category. It can be noticed that most respondents agreed that the methodology of the subject fostered the capacity to plan their academic process as well as it helped them make their own decisions and act, bearing in mind

their needs and interests. Moreover, the methodology encouraged students to do a self-assessment on their process. On the other hand, a high percentage also shows that technological tools appear to boost their learning process. It is also noticeable that technological tools let students make decisions to improve their academic learning. Furthermore, they promote cooperative learning.

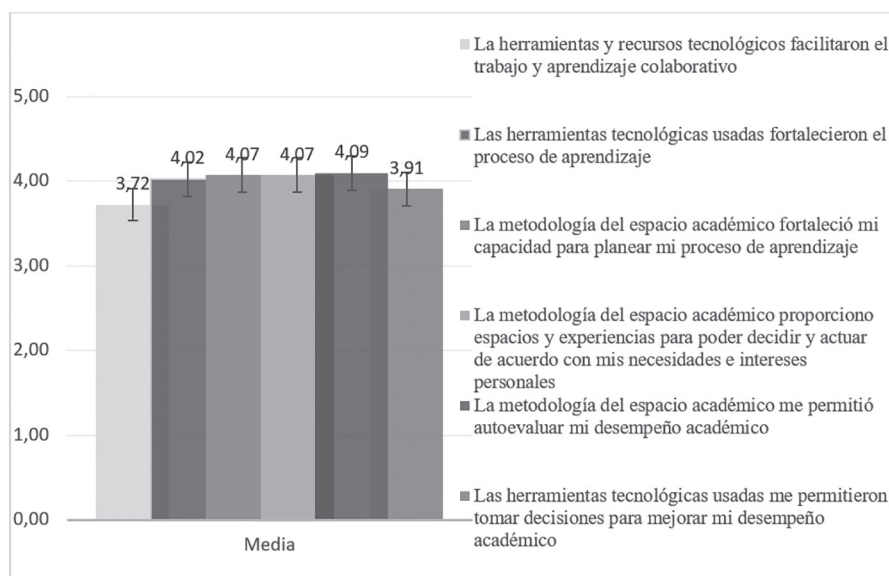


Figure 6. ICT and methodological innovation in the initial education of language teachers.

Discussion

The different technological tools and strategies implemented in the different academic spaces positively impacted several elements of the learning process. Firstly, it seems that there is a correlation between the ICT-mediated learning strategies and the level of attainment of the learning outcomes. Besides, it is relevant that the learners recognize the value of the ICT-mediated strategies to bolster the learning process, improve their academic performance, and plan the learning process. All these elements are essential in promoting the learner's autonomy, self-directed learning, and agency. In this regard, Mostafa, Ahmad, Sosahabi and Berahman (2017) state that "ICT plays an effective role via creating motives, deepening and expanding teaching and sustaining learning as well as removing pervasive boredom and creating subjective skills" (p. 697).

Another aspect that the learners' value is the role of ICT in facilitating decision-making about the learning process and developing learning activities according to their capacity and learning pace. Consequently, it seems that the use of technological tools might promote students' empowerment and ownership of the learning process. This indicates that the ICTs-mediated learning strategies afford the teacher possibilities to develop differentiated and tailored strategies that acknowledge diverse learning styles, levels, and paces. Similarly, Kler (2014) states that "ICT fulfills the needs of the individual learner and also helps them in their learning by motivating them to learn and in this way the learners learn better and in a more effective manner" (p. 256).

A third relevant element is that integrating ICTs seems to be a fundamental factor in methodological innovation in the classroom. This process, however, brings up challenges. On the one hand, it entails the reformulation of the roles of the teacher and the learner. On the teacher's side, he positions as a strategic mediator of the learning process. Someone who designs learning environments in which the pre-service teacher finds diverse learning paths that facilitate the attainment of learning outcomes and agency development. This means the capacity of making decisions about his learning process; assessing his progress and growth; planning and implementing learning strategies; identifying and overcoming hindrances that thwart his steady progress and development. In sum, the comprehensive implementation of ICT-mediated learning strategies empowers the teacher-educator as a transformative agent, who purposefully fosters self-directed and regulated learning and develops a mindset of autonomy and continuous professional growth.

On the part of the learner, it implies that he takes responsibility for his learning process, which means that he can make informed decisions, evaluate and plan his learning process. The reformulation of the roles in the learning process implies the change of the relationships between the participants of the learning process and the dynamics of the learning environment; in other words, the continuous reformulation of the educational culture. When discussing the challenges of teaching and learning with ICT, Shan (2013) maintains that teachers and learners need autonomy, capability, and creativity to be able to develop qualitative teaching and learning with ICT. Among other things, this means they need to acquire and develop new roles and actions to take control of the teaching-learning experience; they can apply and transfer knowledge. They can use new multimedia tools and materials.

Largely, the concrete and situated methodological innovations that integrate ICT constitute opportunities for Classroom-based educational innovation. These small-scale innovations provide insights that promote the collective and collegiality academic discussion needed to drive curricular change, which might produce the adjustment of the organizational and administrative structures and the evolution of the educational community's educational culture. Even more, these situated processes shed light on larger-scale educational innovation endeavors and even might have a significant impact on regional educational policies.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

As a whole, the results indicate that pedagogical and methodological innovations that integrate ICTs in the initial education of pre-service foreign language educators might contribute to:

- fostering the development of skills and attitudes in collaborative and cooperative learning,
- promoting the development of autonomy and self- directed learning,
- enhancing awareness, on the part of the learners, about the learning process and developing skills and attitudes in taking control of it,
- providing a range of possibilities for bolstering emancipatory agency throughout the education process of pre-service foreign language teachers,
- engendering classroom-based educational and pedagogical innovation, and
- empowering future language teachers with experiential-based knowledge about the value of ICTs in language learning and teaching.
- On the other hand, pedagogical and methodological innovative practices that integrate ICTs bring up some challenges and implications. Such challenges and implications are as follows:
- Technology-enhanced teaching strategies need to provide pre-service teachers with interactive activities and reflective experiences that enable them to address their interests and needs from multiple perspectives and complexity levels. This entails competencies, skills, and attitudes in using ICTs on the teacher and the students.
- Methodological and pedagogical innovations that integrate ICTs need to be fully integrated with academic programs and instructional practices, which implies that they need to be selected strategically based on their features and their use to support concrete learning aims. This brings up the need for organizational conditions and dynamics that facilitate collective dialogue and collegially amongst all the educational process actors.
- Pedagogical and methodological innovations that integrate ICTs need to allow room for tools and environments that help learners control and mediate their learning through multiple inquiry and self-reflection pathways. This implies that the educator of pre-service foreign language teachers assumes the role of a skillful strategic mediator whose skills and attitudes empower him to design, implement and evaluate learning paths that are aligned with the nature of the language learning process and the particular socio-cultural context of the learner.

References

- Azadi, G., Biria, R., & Nasri, M. (2018). Operationalizing the Concept of Mediation in L2 Teacher Education. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(1), 132-140. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0901.17>
- Azevedo, R. (2005). Using hypermedia as a metacognitive tool for enhancing student learning. The role of self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 40(4), 199–209.
- Adorno, Th. W. (1998 [1959-1969]). *Educación para la emancipación: conferencias y conversaciones con Hellmut Becker* (J. Muñoz, trad.). Madrid: Ediciones Morata.
- Ala-Mutka, K., Punie, Y., & Redecker, C. (2008). *ICT for learning, innovation, and creativity (Policy brief)*. Luxembourg: Joint Research Centre of the European Community.
- Baregheh, A., Rowley, J., & Sambrook, S. (2009). Towards a multidisciplinary definition of innovation. *Management decisions*, 47(8), 1323-1339.
- Benson, P. (2005). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Beijing: Foreign language teaching and research press.
- Berrio, A. (2016). *La superación de la barbarie, la emancipación del sujeto y la auto-reflexión crítica: Fines del proyecto educativo en Theodor Adorno* (Tesis de maestría). Universidad del Norte, departamento de humanidades y filosofía, Barranquilla, Colombia.
- Biestaab, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and practice*, 21(6), 624-640. DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325
- Bisquera, R. (Coord.) (2004). *Metodología de la investigación educativa*. España: Editorial La Muralla.
- Binimelis, H. (2010). Hacia una sociedad del conocimiento como emancipación: una mirada desde la teoría crítica. *Revista Argumentos*, 23(62), 203-224.
- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1988). *Teoría crítica de la enseñanza*. Barcelona: Martínez Roca.
- Cook, T., & Reichardt, C. (2005). *Métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos en la investigación evaluativa* (5ta ed.). Madrid: Editorial Morata.
- Dam, L. (1995). *Learner autonomy: From theory to classroom practice*. Dublin: Authentik.

- Erdocia, I. (2014). *Autonomía y aprendizaje de lenguas*. MarcoELE, Revista de didáctica español como lengua extranjera, 0(19), 1-20.
- Fandiño, Y. (2010). Research as a means of empowering teachers in the 21st century. *Educación y Educadores*, 13(1), 109-124. Retrieved from <http://educacionyeducadores.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/eye/article/view/1624/2134>
- Fandiño, J. & Bermúdez, J. (2016). *Bilingüismo, educación, política y formación docente: una propuesta para empoderar al profesor de lengua extranjera*. Bogotá: Panamericana Formas e Impresos S.A.
- Fandiño, J., Bermúdez, J., & Varela, L. (2016). Formación docente en lengua materna y extranjera: un llamado al desarrollo profesional desde el empoderamiento. *Revista Virtual Universidad Católica del Norte*, 47, 38-63.
- Fox, E., & Riconscente, M. (2008). Metacognition and self-regulation in James, Piaget, and Vygotsky. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(4), 373-384. doi:10.1007/s10648-008-9079-2.
- Gray, D. (2004). *Doing research in the real world*. London: Sage publications.
- Hernández, G., Quiroz, J., & Olarte, F. (2016). ICT-based strategies for teaching and learning in lesson and unit plans designed by Colombian teachers in a program of educational innovation. Paper presented in the 9th *Future of Education International conference*, June 27 and 28, Florence, Italy.
- Holec, B. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Kimwarey, M. C., Chirure, H., & Omondi, M. (2014). Teacher Empowerment in Education Practice: Strategies, Constraints, and Suggestions. *Journal of research and method in Education*, 4(2), 51-56.
- Kler, S. (2014). ICT Integration in Teaching and Learning: Empowerment of Education with Technology. *Issues and Ideas in Education*, 2(2), 255-271.
- Koehler, M.J., Mishra, P., & Cain, W. (2013). What is technological pedagogical content (TPACK)? *Journal of Education*, 193(3), 13-19.
- Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in the East Asian context. *Applied linguistics*, 20(1), 71-94.
- Loyens, S. M. M., Magda, J., & Rikers, M. J. P. (2008). Self-directed learning in problem-based learning and its relationships with self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(4), 411-427. doi:10.1007/s10648-008-9082-7.

- Măță, L. (2012). Key Factors of Curriculum Innovation in Language Teacher Education. *International Journal of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences*, 6(6), 1222-1230.
- Mykhailyshyn, H., Kondur, O., & Serman, L (2018). Innovation of education and educational innovations in conditions of modern higher education institutions. *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University*, 5(1), 9-16.
- Molba, P.D. (2018). Understanding of the principles of autonomy (part 1). *SADJ*, 73(6), 418-420.
- Mostafa, J., Ahmad, S., Sosahabi, P., & Berahman, M. (2017). The role of ICT in the learning-teaching process. *World scientific news*, 0(72), 680-691.
- O'Sullivan, D., & Dooley, L. (2009). *Applying innovation*. USA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- OECD/CERI. (2010). *Inspired by Technology, Driven by Pedagogy. A systemic approach to technology-based school innovations*. USA: OECD/CERI.
- Puentedura, R. R. (2012). *The SAMR model: Background and exemplars*. Available at http://www.hippasus.com/rpweblog/archives/2012/08/23/SAMR_BackgroundExemplars.pdf.
- Redding, S., Twyman, J. S., & Murphy, M. (2013). What is an innovation in learning? In M. Murphy, S. Redding, & J. Twyman (Eds.), *Handbook on innovations in learning* (pp. 3–14). Philadelphia, PA: Center on Innovations in Learning, Temple University; Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Rodríguez, G., Gil, J., y García, E. (1999). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. España: Ediciones Aljibe.
- Serdyukov, P. (2017). Innovation in education: what works, what doesn't, and what to do about it? *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, 10(1), pp.4-33, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-10-2016-0007>
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books
- Singh, H. ve Reed, C. (2001). *A white paper: Achieving success with blended learning*. Lexington, MA: Centra Software. Available at <https://maken.wikiwijs.nl/userfiles/f7d0e4f0bd466199841ede3eea221261.pdf>
- Shan, F. (2013). ICT in Education: A Critical Literature Review and Its Implications. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 9(1), 112-125.

- Stenberg, A. (2017). *What does Innovation mean - a term without a clear definition*. Halmstad University, School of Business, Engineering and Science. Available at <http://hh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1064843/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Tébar, L. (2003). *El perfil del profesor mediador*. Madrid: Santillana.
- Manen, M.V. (1998). *El tacto en la enseñanza*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- UNESCO. (1990). *Innovations and initiatives in teacher education in Asia and the Pacific region*. Bangkok: Unesco.
- UNESCO. (1996). *Planning for innovation in education*. Paris: International institute for educational planning.
- Verd, J. M. y Lozares, C. (2016). *Introducción a la investigación cualitativa. Fases, métodos y técnicas*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- Walker, A., & White, Goodith. (2013). *Technology enhanced language learning. Connecting theory and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Winters, F., Greene, J., & Costich, C. (2008). Self-regulation of learning within computer-based learning environments: A critical analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(4), 429–444, 2008.

This article was presented in FlipTech Latam 2019 International Conference, in October 2019

Authors

***Luis Jesús Rincón-Ussa** is an associate professor in the education school at La Salle University, Bogotá, Colombia. He holds an M.Ed. in applied linguistics to teaching English and a B.A. in Modern Languages. His research interests are curriculum management and design, innovation in language teachers education and professional development. Fields of expertise: English teaching and learning methodology, pedagogical practicum supervisor, undergraduate research director, and ICT-mediated language learning.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5183-6719>

Yamith José Fandiño-Parra holds a B.A. in English Philology from the National University of Colombia and an M.A. in Teaching from De La Salle University. He is also a specialist in virtual learning environments from Virtual Educa Argentina. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Education and Society at La Salle University. His research interests range from foreign language learning to teacher education and language policies.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5567-5465>

Andrea Margarita Cortés Ibañez holds a Bachelor of Spanish, English and French from Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá and a Master Degree in Education from the same University. She was a Spanish Language Assistant from 2012-2013 in Kingston, Jamaica. She has been a language teacher at different universities. Currently, she is a full-time teacher and researcher at Universidad de La Salle leading the International Visibility Committee of the Faculty of Education. Her areas of research and interest are didactics of language teaching mediated by ICT and pedagogical practicum in teacher training.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1063-6235>

How to reference this article: Rincón-Ussa, L. J., Fandiño-Parra, Y. J., & Cortés-Ibañez, A. M. (2020). Educational Innovation through ICT-Mediated Teaching Strategies in the Initial Teacher Education of English Language Teachers. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 91-117. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.831>

Cooperative Learning to Foster Reading Skills¹

Aprendizaje Cooperativo por Proyectos para Mejorar las Habilidades de Lectura

Marian Lissett Olaya
and Gladys Marta Elena González-González^{2*}

Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia

¹ Received: February 20th 2020/ Accepted: November 26th 2020

² marian.olaya@uptc.edu.co; martaegonzalezg@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper reports an action research study on cooperative learning projects for engineering students at a public university. The research study is aimed at improving reading skills through the use of four cooperative learning projects implemented during the English classes. Data gathered from a survey, four group interviews, and the teacher's journal were collected and analyzed to determine the categories after coding the data. Findings suggest that working cooperatively has a higher effect on students' reading skills. Conclusions also highlight that cooperative learning strengthens English reading skills and fosters leadership, decision making, communication and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, it increases participation, motivation and goal achievement in students' language learning process.

Keywords: cooperative learning; collaboration; interaction; reading skills; reading strategies; English learning, communication

Resumen

Este documento da a conocer un estudio de investigación acción sobre el aprendizaje cooperativo por proyectos para estudiantes de ingeniería de una universidad pública. El estudio tiene como objetivo mejorar las habilidades de lectura mediante el uso de cuatro proyectos de aprendizaje cooperativo implementados durante las clases de inglés. Se recogieron y analizaron los datos de una encuesta, las entrevistas de un grupo y el diario del profesor para determinar las categorías después de codificar los datos. Los resultados sugieren que el trabajo cooperativo tiene un mayor efecto en las habilidades de lectura de los estudiantes. Así mismo, las conclusiones resaltan que el aprendizaje cooperativo fortalece las habilidades de lectura en inglés y fomenta el liderazgo, la toma de decisiones, la comunicación y la capacidad de resolución de problemas. Además, aumenta la participación, la motivación y el logro de objetivos en el proceso de aprendizaje del idioma de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje cooperativo; interacción; habilidades de lectura; estrategias de lectura; aprendizaje de inglés; comunicación

Resumo

Este artigo reporta uma pesquisa ação sobre a aprendizagem cooperativa por projetos para estudantes de engenharia de uma universidade pública. O estudo pretendia melhorar as habilidades de leitura através da implementação de quatro projetos cooperativos implementados durante as aulas de inglês. Uma pesquisa de opinião, entrevista grupal e a análise documental foram utilizadas como instrumentos de pesquisa. Os resultados sugerem que os estudantes melhoraram significativamente as suas habilidades de leitura trabalhando cooperativamente. Da mesma forma, as conclusões ressaltam que a aprendizagem cooperativa melhora as habilidades como liderança, tomada de decisões, a comunicação e a solução de problemas. Adicionalmente melhora a participação motivação e realização de objetivos no seu processo de aprendizagem do idioma inglês.

Palavras chave: aprendizagem cooperativa; colaboração; interação; habilidades de leitura; estratégias de leitura

Introduction

Enhancing reading skills when teaching English is a challenging task in Colombian education where students read lots of specific information related to their major studies. Engineering students need English as means of efficient communication not only for their jobs but also to connect with a world where the English language is one of the official languages of the science community. Therefore, there is a need to provide students with opportunities to use the language and to have a more active participation inside the classroom. Developing reading skills is a complex process considering that students should understand what they are reading, and apply that information on their area of knowledge. According to Maria (2009) “For engineers, English is primarily a library language meaning that the student must understand enough to gain access to knowledge contained in textbooks and particularly in periodicals and journals in order to extract information and keep abreast with latest technologies” (p. 45). It means that there is a constant need for effective reading skills across the curriculum which will contribute not only to foster reading but also to improve the engineering education by exposing learners to authentic knowledge and real situations.

Considering the relevance of improving students’ reading proficiency in this public university, this research study discusses the effectiveness of cooperative learning projects to foster reading skills of a group of students. The university adopts a communicative approach however, it is blended with other teaching methods which depend on the teacher’s perspective. Students have to take six mandatory English language levels which do not affect students’ grade-point averages (GPA) since English is not part of every program curriculum. The fact that English is a mandatory subject has led students to become passive learners who do not regularly attend to English classes, students just come when a test is administered, and according to SABER PRO (2018) testing most of the students’ English level is A2. Despite this situation, students are aware of their need to improve the English level because in the content subjects they are required to read texts in English with specific technical language not seen before in the English classes, in order to keep updated with the different processes, tendencies and technologies in Engineering and industrialized countries.

In this way cooperative learning projects were chosen as a new strategy for them because of their multiple benefits, methods and strategies to use in the classroom, students have different learning styles and that is why they may have different strengths, some of them might be good at grammar or some others might be fluent or feel confident talking in public, this is why students can support each other with their strengths in cooperative activities that help them learn and improve their abilities not only in terms of language proficiency but also in terms of personal skills like teamwork or problem-solving. In this way, a motivation emerged to contribute with strategies to foster students’ reading skills as they need to become effective and efficient learners on

their engineering programs since English is required to acquire knowledge and learn new information, bearing also in mind that the six levels are necessary to graduate.

The proposed question for this research study is stated as: What is the impact of implementing reading skills in cooperative learning projects on undergraduate engineering students in a public university? and the main objective which guided this research study was: To foster reading skills on undergraduate engineering students at a public university through cooperative learning projects.

Theoretical Framework

Cooperative learning

According to Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Johnson & Johnson (2018) “Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. When cooperating, individuals work to achieve outcomes that benefit themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning exists when small groups of students work to enhance their own and their group mates’ learning (p. 62). For the purpose of this research study cooperative learning is seen as an active process where students take an active part in their learning development cooperating together to accomplish their learning goals and acquire new knowledge according to their interests, needs and skills.

Consequently to accomplish the main objective of this research study, cooperative learning projects were chosen considering that each member of a group has a talent or special ability in order to achieve a common goal and support each other on a group work as Gillies (2016) stated “Helping students to interact and work together not only enables students to learn from each other but also to accept responsibility for the tasks they have to complete and the decisions they have to make” (p 44).

Accordingly, in order to answer the question that guided this research study five essential components of cooperative learning described by different authors were implemented to support students’ learning and improve their reading skills while using cooperative strategies inside the classroom.

Face to face interaction: “Teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject” (Wichadee, 2005, p.23).

Positive interdependence: Possibilities students have to promote individual learning through cooperation among others, e.g “Positive goal interdependence (mutual goals), positive reward interdependence (joint rewards), resource interdependence (each group member has different resources that must be combined to complete the

assignment), and role interdependence (each group member is assigned a specific role)” (Johnson, D. W., Johnson, & Stanne, 2000, p.5)

Accountability:each member of the group has a task to do so they are able to report results and the group can identify who needs more support or guidance. “Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is being taught, but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement” (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2010, p.51).

Equal participation: Allows students to become active members of the group, every student has the chance to do a task, assess it and receive feedback. Team work appears as an inclusive alternative to foster reading skills. “Cooperative Learning gives the learners a chance to put the language to use” (Gurk& Mall-Amiri, 2016, p.41).

Group interaction: Group members must promote each other’s learning and success face-to-face, hold each other personally and individually accountable to do a fair share of the work, use the interpersonal and small group skills needed for cooperative efforts to be successful, and process as a group how effectively members are working together”(Wichadee & Orawiwatnakul, 2012, p.93).

Reading strategies

The use of reading strategies in this research study resides in the need of students to improve their reading skills. These strategies were implemented as steps during the development of each of the projects starting by predicting, then making connections, passing to the inference step, later questioning and finally summarizing, they were chosen to help students not only to read texts, but also to interpret diagrams, figures, tables, find main objectives, question the functionality of some devices, summarize and make conclusions of specific content.

There are different views of the use of reading strategies depending on the context and the population. Barnett (2002, p. 14) defines a reading strategy as the understanding processes that a person carries out when reading as a means to comprehend what they read. In this process the teachers’ role is essential to make reading strategies useful for students, it is required a clear, guiding and scaffolding orientation, which lets achieve the understanding process when reading. The reading strategies implemented are:

Predicting. The first step to become an effective reader is setting a purpose for reading and depending on it, looking for details becomes vital to acquire knowledge. “Some of the approaches for teaching predicting are teacher modeling, predicting throughout the text; with partners, with a graphic organizer, or using post-it notes throughout the text. Using the title, table of contents, pictures, and key words is one prediction strategy”. (Küçükoğlu, 2013, p. 710). When implementing these strategies

the brain prepares for the reading process activating previous knowledge to be ready for the text.

Making connections. This second step is very essential because it is at this stage where students connect what they read to what they already know. Effective readers always make connections to the purpose of their reading and with the academic context they are involved. According to McNamara (2012) “Good readers attempt to bridge incoming sentences with previous text content and with their background knowledge”(p. 14) .When readers process a text in a deep way, such as answering WH questions they would start building a meaning which is seen as a comprehension and reflection process.

Inferring means reading through lines. Effective reading requires making a prediction, learners use their background knowledge to infer what is coming up in the text. “If readers could decode the words on a page, they would be able to monitor what was being read to themselves orally and understand what they were reading” (Serafini, 2004, p. 200).This step allows learners to have a more complex process of reading, it requires students to predict, make connections to finally draw their own conclusions.

Questioning. This step can be used before, during or after reading. Its purpose is to guide students to find answers, solve a problem or find out new information. “Question-answering instruction encourages students to learn to answer questions better and, therefore, to learn more as they read” (Adler , 2001, p.43). It also implies learners to make use of all the previous reading strategies mentioned, to achieve an enriching understanding process of the text.

Summarizing. During the summarizing step readers should select and highlight the most relevant information or details of the text read. “The interpretation of the information in the text, the use of prior knowledge to interpret this information and, ultimately, the construction of a coherent representation or picture in the reader’s mind of what the text is about” (McNamara, 2012, p.27).

Methodological Design

Type of research. Based on the main objective of this research “To foster reading skills on undergraduate engineering students at a public university through cooperative learning projects”, this work is framed under a practical action research in which according to Creswell (2012) “Teachers seek to research problems in their own classrooms so that they can improve their students’ learning and their own professional performance” (p. 579).

This process of practical action research was done by following the five stages proposed by Mills 2011 (as cited in Creswell 2012) in which a non-ending process

takes place : identifying the area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, developing an action plan and finally implementing it to reflect again on the results and set future actions.

In the first stage of this procedure, an area of study was identified by reviewing the literature and writing the plan to conduct this research. Second, data was collected by analyzing sources such as interviews, surveys and teacher journals. The third stage focused on analyzing and interpreting data, the process included the identification of topics, coding the data collected, its categorization and the interpretation of the ideas analyzed. Based on the findings in the fourth stage an action of plan was devised; this plan concentrated on developing reading skills on the students by means of cooperative learning projects. In the last stage, this plan was implemented and results were analyzed to recommend actions.

Participants.

This action research study was conducted with 45 university students aged between 18 to 24 years, they are part of Mining, Geological, Industrial, Electronic and Systems Engineering Programs. Students who belong to these programs have to take six mandatory English language levels which do not affect students' grade-point averages (GPA) since English is not part of the programs' curriculum. Students agreed to participate in the research study and signed a consent form before starting. Their English level is between A1-A2; they can read very short, simple texts. They can find specific information, in simple everyday material such as advertisements, brochures, menu and timetables and they can understand short simple personal letters.

Data Collection Procedures

This research study was carried out during the first semester of 2019 in four cooperative learning projects; every project took four sessions, two hours each one. During the implementations three instruments were applied to gather data: a survey, group interviews, and the teacher's journal.

Survey. In order to know students' attitudes and perceptions on fostering the reading skills a diagnosis and a halfway process survey were implemented. The surveys included 11 closed and open-ended questions each; the initial survey encompassed rating-scale questions to inquiry on students' attitudes towards reading. And the second survey looked to find out students' perceptions and attitudes of the cooperative strategy and the improvement of the reading skill through 11 open-ended questions.

Group interview. “Interviews are particularly useful for uncovering the story behind a participant’s experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic” (ADJP, 2016, par. 2). A short group interview including opinion and contrast questions was carried out at the end of each project implementation to find out the student’s opinions about the incorporation of cooperative learning during the English language learning process.

Teacher’s journal. “In pedagogic theory the term journal started to be applied in the context of different auto- regulation and self-reflexive strategies that became an important part in the content profiling of teacher-focused study programs” (Wiegerová, 2013; p. 237). This tool was very important for this study because it allowed having different perspectives of the situation during the implementation of cooperative learning projects to foster reading skills. The focus during the collection process was on students’ behaviors and attitudes towards reading and the different cooperative learning components that emerged during group work activities.

Pedagogical Intervention

The cooperative learning projects focused on particular cooperative learning components, previously explained in the theoretical framework, a reading text taken from engineering online magazines and the reading strategies for all projects: Predicting, making connections, inferring, questioning and summarizing.

Description of the projects. The projects described included the techniques proposed by authors such as: Jamaludin & Mokhtar (2018), Mubarak & Sofiana (2017), Karacop (2017) and Mitchell et al., (2008) who focus on the development of Cooperative Learning in the classroom.

First project: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions technique (STAD). Bearing in mind the purpose of this research study, the cooperative learning projects were framed on STAD, which was the first project; “a STAD technique on structured cooperative learning approach embrace higher instructors’ participation, teams’ rotation roles, helpful peer interaction and conducive learning environment” (Jamaludin & Mokhtar, 2018, p.576). This stage took four weeks and four-two hours sessions. In terms of cooperative learning, the rules were set, and the groups were distributed with the implementation of a multiple intelligence activity in which students with different intelligences made a group to contribute according to their abilities.

Second project: Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition technique (CIRC). By using CIRC, the students were expected to have better achievement in reading based on Mubarak & Sofiana (2017, p.125) who affirm that CIRC increases

students' reading ability better than the conventional teaching strategy. Students worked in four-member cooperative learning teams, they made predictions and summarized engineering articles. They also worked together to master main ideas and other comprehension skills; they were engaged in writing drafts as well as revising and editing one another's work. Finally, students prepared a summary presentation of what they read.

Third project: Jigsaw technique: “brings the cooperation to the forefront by providing support to students’ working together and removing competition in the classroom” (Karacop, 2017, p. 421). Students were assigned to six-member teams to work on academic material that has been broken down into sections. Members of different teams who have studied the same sections meet in expert groups to discuss their sections. These students returned to their teams and took turns teaching their teammates about their sections. At the end, students took individual quizzes, presenting the final activity to the class, which resulted in team scores.

Fourth project: Group Investigation technique, this was the last project in which students were involved as it “allows students to be directly involved in how they obtain knowledge; they are not mere recipients. It is a democratic approach in a classroom setting” (Mitchell et al., 2008 p.389). Students worked in small groups using cooperative inquiry. The groups broke their subtopics into individual tasks and carried out the activities that were necessary to prepare group reports and cooperative development of the project. The students took individual quizzes, which resulted in team scores and each group then made a presentation to communicate its findings to the entire class.

These four techniques share the idea that through the incorporation of cooperative learning into the learning process students enhance team-work, leadership, communication and problem solving. In this sense, learners were involved in the development of their cooperative skills to advance in their English language learning process.

All lessons were adapted based on the cooperative learning components and the reading skills. The lesson plan format was adapted from Macpherson (2015) . This format allowed the teacher to have control of the class and to incorporate the elements of cooperative learning and reading strategies.

Data Analysis and Results

The data collected for this research study were qualitative and the analysis technique applied was a triangulation process where the information obtained from surveys, interviews and the teacher's journal was compared to corroborate the evidence

acquired. Then, information coding was applied. “The researcher bases categories on all data collected, such as interviews, observations, and researcher’s memos or notes” (Creswell, 2012; p. 424).

During this coding analysis two core categories emerged: The first one, Effects on reading skills, pinpoints the importance of improving and implementing different strategies to foster reading skills in the English classes at the university, from this appeared two subcategories: 1. Reading strategies used by the students, 2. Students Reading skills interaction. The second core category Cooperative learning challenges, highlights the advantages of implementing cooperative learning in a context where students are not used to attending English classes and how that implementation promoted leadership, decision making, communication and problem solving; this core category derived two more subcategories: 3. Challenges of working with cooperative projects, and 4. Difficulties in working cooperatively, as it is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Categorization

RESEARCH QUESTION	CORE CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
What is the impact of implementing reading skills in a cooperative learning environment on undergraduate engineering students in a public university?	Effects on the reading skills	Reading strategies
		Students reading skills interaction
	Cooperative learning challenges	Challenges of working with cooperative projects
		Difficulties in working cooperatively

The connections between core categories and subcategories through the data analysis allowed teachers researchers to represent in a better way the phenomenon of this research study and answer the research question. It can be said that students’ participation, motivation and goal achievement in their English language learning process improved thanks to the completion of cooperative learning activities, as it is explained as follows.

Core category 1: Effects on reading skills

Reading strategies and students’ reading skills interaction. The principal aim of this research study was to foster reading skills through the integration of cooperative learning into the regular English classes. Then, the first aspect to be discussed is how reading skills evolved or changed during the research process. In the initial survey a 100% of the students affirmed that they did not read in English for pleasure, all of them answered that they just read because they had an assignment to develop in their content subjects. From that perspective, it was understood that the incorporation of

authentic reading material motivated students to start reading in English because they were interested in knowing what the text was about as it is noted by Duke & Pearson, (2009; p. 211) “providing experience reading real texts for real reasons and creating an environment rich in high- quality talk about text—will undoubtedly help”.

During the first group interview applied at the end of the first cooperative learning project, students asserted the importance of knowing how to implement different reading strategies as well as reading other kinds of texts. Student F said:

“In my English classes I always read articles from a book, they always talk about things that happen in other countries. During these four weeks I read about engineering topics which called my attention and I spent much time predicting what the writer tried to say... it was very interesting, and I worked with classmates from other programs, it was fun” (Researchers’ translation).

This perception from a student indicated that it was required the integration of reading strategies or techniques to explore a text in detail. It was imperative for learners not only to read a text but also to comprehend what is behind it and going beyond the words that are written; all these aspects can be achieved by the implementation of authentic material and a good use of reading strategies since “discovering the best methods and techniques or processes, the learners choose to access, is the goal of research in reading strategies” (Karbalaei, 2010, p. 165).

Participants acknowledged the advantages of discussing the way they used to work on reading activities in English classes compared with the way the reading instruction was done during the implementation of this project. These students interacted to ask each other about not only the texts in depth but especially how they approached every text. The teacher-researchers wrote in the teachers’ journal:

“Today, I noticed that students liked to discuss what the article probably would talk about just by reading the title. They started to talk about engineering requirements nowadays. Another group of students talked about the importance of predicting because it helps them to remember prior knowledge.”

Core category 2: Cooperative learning challenges.

Challenges of working with cooperative projects and difficulties in working cooperatively these subcategories make reference to the cooperative behaviors that participants evidenced during the project implementation; it also presents the benefits, advantages and difficulties. To begin with, it is important to mention that behaviors that emerged during the incorporation of cooperative learning to foster reading skills were: communication, interaction, cooperative planning, sharing ideas, decision making, leadership and motivation. In the same way, confidence also appeared along

the project since students had to solve problems and dealt with them in a proper way, it is worthy to see how trust is built when students can see their partners' ability to figure out a solution.

Similarly, the value of the student's contribution to learning in a group was a vital element evidenced during the second group interview, one of the students said he liked working with people who wanted to win, he also noted how working together to reach a goal made him feel great when other members helped him understand the text and explained ideas when he did not understand certain vocabulary, he feels he knows a lot more now.

As it was indicated by this student, collaborative learning gave them an opportunity to socialize, they changed their attitude towards group work and positive interdependence which is a main component of cooperative learning and this was evident during the project implementation. "Positive interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals and, therefore, promote each other's efforts to achieve the goals" (Johnson, et al., 2007; p.16), this means that showing a mutual interest of winning which indirectly implies learning and interacting is one of the most important cooperative social behaviors.

When students talked about the difficulties and challenges of improving reading through cooperative learning activities they highlighted the importance of carrying out activities that were more dynamic rather than going through a text several times, because these allowed them to feel safer and their self-confidence increased as indicated in the following excerpt:

"We felt different from the previous English classes; we felt that we are important and that we can contribute so the group can have better results. We don't have a good English level but when we read and read and re read an article and we go through it by pieces it is easy to understand and learn new words. That kind of learning made me participate in the classes and now we are not ashamed or shy to work."

Providing a confident and safe environment helped students to make better contributions to their learning process in spite of the differences among the members of the group (language level, academic major, learning styles, etc.), this is how we can see that "CL offers learners the opportunity to harness these differences in the pursuit of learning goals in an environment that shows respect for all contributions to learning and in which learners will be more inclined to value themselves and others" (Sharan, 2010; p.310).

Data also revealed that peer feedback played an important role on students' English language performance because it demonstrated that when students were

motivated to work in groups and made important efforts to success, their academic results and participation were higher. In this view, it can be noted that “opportunities for students to discuss, to argue, and to present and hear one another’s viewpoints are the critical element of cooperative learning with respect to student achievement” (Slavin, et al., 2003. p. 183)

At the last stage of the implementation of cooperative learning activities to foster reading skills, data illustrated that problem solving was the most challenging factor because students had to deal with assigning roles, accomplishing responsibilities and decision levels. One of the teacher’s journal entries said that students spent more than 15 minutes deciding roles such as who is going to be the manager, the reporter, etc. When they did not make a fast decision they started complaining and their voice tone turned loud. Likewise, during an interview a student argued that it was difficult to agree with his partners as all of them wanted to give orders, this extra time they spent discussing letting the other groups finish first.

It can be seen that this kind of interaction that represented a challenge for students was very useful because it allowed them to manage thinking and social abilities at the same time as well as reinforce the idea that the teacher or instructor must be a learning facilitator to help students to keep working effectively in groups to accomplish the tasks, such a role of facilitator can make a difference when trying to improve learners’ skills as Sangadji (2016) points out: “Teachers also play a role to help students to plan, implement the plan, and organize group, and serve as academic counselor.” (p. 98). After analyzing the core categories, it is possible to say that motivation, interpersonal and group skills, goal achievement, communication among students and teachers, and a safe learning environment provide students with security and confidence to work and learn. This improvement of social skills evidenced excellent student’s performance in class considering that when they took a final test and were exposed to different reading activities to assess their knowledge, they obtained good results.

Discussion

Now, we can refer to the question of this research study: What is the impact of cooperative learning projects on undergraduate students reading skills in a public university?

It was demonstrated through the data collection procedures (surveys, group interviews and teacher’s journal) that collaborative learning activities and the implementation of reading strategies actually helped students to understand an article deeper and engaged students in group discussions that fostered communication with others. One of the projects that clearly illustrated this was the implementation of the second project Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), students

integrated the reading strategies used in the first project, Students Teams- Achievement Division (STAD), and they started to be more aware of how their learning process was and how they selected what they read as an important component of their process to become professionals. Hence, it can be appreciated how making learners more aware of their own learning process and “teaching students to become constructively responsive readers can promote skillful academic reading, which, in turn, can enhance academic achievement” (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; p.446). That is consistent with some assertions found in students’ comments in the survey and the teacher’s journal:

“Developing reading strategies during the class has helped me to understand the texts that I have to read in robotics(now I can participate because the teachers speaks English too) ; I liked analyzing titles because it helped my brain to start thinking in English”

Survey 2-St V July 2019

“Today students’ attitudes were much better. At jigsaw, they laughed ,worked together without yelling at anybody. Their faces were happy, they didn’t show any stressed when reading the magazines as in previous classes. it was evident that communication among the participants of each group has improved a lot”

Teacher’s S Journal

These results highlight another benefit of group cooperation, that is, interaction became more active because students had to infer, summarize and present a whole report about the article they read. Though these projects were intended to help students implement a set of different strategies to comprehend a text it also helped to build a positive attitude to the reading activities. Student F affirmed during the third group interview that now he loved English classes because he noticed he was good at inferring and proposing questions related to the article; this allows us to see that the more motivated students are, best results can be seen during the student’s performance in class. A motivated student interacts easily with the reading texts and influences positively on their group development.

At the end of this research study the same initial survey was implemented. Results showed that 25 out of 45 students started to read in English especially magazines or articles related to their programs.10 students started to read in English other topics of interest such as literature and sociopolitical issues after being involved in the research and the last 10 students were not interested in reading in English.

In the last interview 25 students agreed that their reading proficiency improved, they said that the way they used to read changed throughout the project implementation. 10 students affirmed that after the English course skills such as

planning, organizing their academic activities improved. The other 10 students explained that they do not read in English during their free time, but enjoy reading in class because they learnt new vocabulary related to their majors and they have the teacher right away to clear up doubts. “The students who are taught reading by using reading strategies training technique have significantly higher scores of literal and inferential comprehension than those who are taught using more traditional one” (Mistar, et al., 2016; p. 53). From this perspective, it can be inferred that students became more aware of what strategies or techniques can be implemented to understand a whole text as identifying its organization, different types of texts, understanding main ideas, and the use of new vocabulary. These aspects are important to improve reading comprehension skills.

To summarize, it can be said that thanks to the implementation of the projects, the use of reading strategies increased and improved students’ reading comprehension skills. 57% of the participants strongly agreed that they were able to make associations when they did not understand a word; 43% agreed that their ability to contextualize the reading with their real context improved. Students were also able to make decisions in the way they want to improve their reading comprehension skills; student H said in the last group interview “I am able to decide if I have to foster comprehension by making questions or by selecting main ideas which are the strategies that I now employ the most”. Motivation and confidence were also important factors because they let students have a more active participation and a positive attitude regarding the reading activities. 57% of the participants strongly agreed that after the english course they enjoyed reading technical engineering online magazines because it helps their career development so they were more confident to participate in other subjects. The other 43% established that they now enjoy reading literature and other topics.

As a final remark, it can be inferred that students enhanced their reading comprehension skills by using different reading strategies and texts they were interested in.

Students also felt that activities helped them to improve their attitude and ability to read in English and the projects were suitable to promote interaction in the class instead of the traditional use of English textbooks.

“I did not attend English classes of English before because they were boring, the activities were the same every semester, and all teachers used the same book so I asked my friends to lend their books. This course was different; dynamic I was always doing things and shared with different people too”

“I liked to have the feeling that the teacher was a classmate too, she was always sitting with us instead of writing verbs or grammar on the board as in previous courses”.

Along the implementation of the projects, students expressed their insights about cooperative learning, they showed a positive attitude toward working in teams because they received support, feedback of their learning performance and they had an active participation during the English classes as it was evidenced in the third and fourth students' interviews

“This is the first time I understand how to work in groups; everyone did what had to do. it was fun to correct my classmates without being annoyed”

Interview 3- ST- T-2019

Similarly, it is possible to say that motivation, interpersonal, group work skills, goal achievement, communication among students and teachers, and a safe learning environment provide students with security and confidence to work and learn. Those aspects led to evidence of the improvement of social skills in the group work which would result in an excellent student's performance in class. Additionally, students were able to foster their problem solving skills.

Even though results were significant to see changes during the English course , it is necessary to continue examining the effectiveness of cooperative learning and how its implementation can foster not only the reading skills but also all English language skills. Further research should look for other alternatives of cooperative learning projects to be implemented at the university level to have an important impact on the bilingualism policies of the current government.

Conclusions

This research study has examined the impact of cooperative learning projects by mainly fostering reading skills. The study revealed that students changed the way they perceived the English subject by working in a cooperative environment that promotes confidence, communication, motivation and problem solving skills. It was evidenced that no matter what the student's English level is, the amount of vocabulary they know or their content knowledge based they have because if the students are highly motivated and the interaction in the class is active, their reading performance unquestionably rise.

Cooperative learning projects used in this research study, they fostered group work and social skills since they had the opportunity to manage the roles and activities they had to report. They took advantage of having the language teacher as a language facilitator when they did not understand or did not know how to share an idea. Moreover, students displayed confidence levels when interacting in groups and working in a safe environment.

Opportunities to improve their reading skills were also evident when they were exposed to authentic material related to their majors. Motivation here was crucial to have an active reading participation along the project, in this way the most motivated students got the most significant academic results.

Cooperative learning implementation has positive effects on students' English language performance in class and it was evidenced with the results of the final tests students took and also with the activities done in class. They shared their ideas without feeling ashamed about making mistakes. Student's perceptions and confidence to interact in the English language were enhanced. Results emerged from this research study have a great significance in the teaching context and the value of implementing cooperative learning into all the English language levels that offer the university because students can transform their passive role to an active and responsible role of their own learning process and improve goal achievement and autonomy.

References

- ADJP Quad (2016). Research tools: interviews & questionnaires. Retrieved from <https://lled500.trubox.ca/2016/225>. (par. 2)
- Adler, C. R. (Ed.). (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Jessup, MD: ED Pubs.
- Barnett. (2002). Postgraduate students' use of reading strategies in L1 and ESL Contexts: Link to success (pp1-14). *International Education Journal*, 5/4.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed., p. 581). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Duke, N. K., & Pearson, P. D. (2009). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of education*, 189(1-2), 107-122.
- Gillies, R. M. (2016). Cooperative learning: Review of research and practice. *Australian journal of teacher education*, 41(3), 3.
- Gurk, N. K. A., & Mall-Amiri, B. (2016). The Effect of Cooperative Learning Techniques on Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Reading Strategies. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 6(4), 33-59.
- Jamaludin, M., & Mokhtar, M. F. (2018). Students Team Achievement Division. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 570-577.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Stanne, M. B. (2000). Cooperative learning methods: A meta-analysis.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. (2007). The state of cooperative learning in postsecondary and professional settings. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19(1), 15- 29.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2018). Cooperative learning: The foundation for active learning. In *Active Learning-Beyond the Future*. IntechOpen.
- Karacop, A. (2017). The Effects of Using Jigsaw Method Based on Cooperative Learning Model in the Undergraduate Science Laboratory Practices. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(3), 420-434.
- Karbalaei, A. (2010). A comparison of the metacognitive reading strategies used by EFL and ESL readers. *The Reading Matrix*, 10(2).

- Küçüköğlu, H. (2013). Improving Reading Skills Through Effective Reading Strategies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 709–714. 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.113.
- Maria, P. O. (2009, September). Techniques of teaching English for engineers. In *WSEAS International Conference. Proceedings. Mathematics and Computers in Science and Engineering (No. 9)*. WSEAS.
- Mills, G. E. (2011). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher (with MyEducationLab)*. (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon.
- Mistar, J., Zuhairi, A., & Yanti, N. (2016). Strategies Training in the Teaching of Reading Comprehension for EFL Learners in Indonesia. *English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 49-56.
- McNamara, D. S. (Ed.). (2012). *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions, and technologies*. Psychology Press.
- Macpherson, A. (2015). Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Courses
- Mubarok, H & Sofiana, N. (2017). Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) and Reading Motivation: Examining The Effect on Students' Reading Ability. *Lingua Cultura*, 11(2), 121-126. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21512/lc.v11i2.1824>
- Mitchell, M. G., Montgomery, H., Holder, M., & Stuart, D. (2008). Group investigation as a cooperative learning strategy: an integrated analysis of the literature. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 54(4).
- Serafini, F. (2004). *Lessons in comprehension explicit instruction in the reading workshop*.
- Sangadji, S. (2016). Implementation of cooperative learning with a group investigation model to improve learning Achievement of vocational school students in Indonesia. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 6(1), 91-103.
- Slavin, R. E., Hurley, E. A., & Chamberlain, A. (2003). Cooperative learning and achievement: Theory and research. *Handbook of psychology*, 177-198.
- Sharan, Y. (2010). Cooperative learning for academic and social gains: Valued pedagogy, problematic practice. *European Journal of Education*, 45(2), 300-313.
- Sheorey, R., & Mokhtari, K. (2001). Differences in the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies among native and non-native readers. *System*, 29(4), 431-449.
- Suwanarathip, O., & Wichadee, S. (2010). The Impacts of Cooperative Learning on Anxiety And Proficiency In An EFL Class. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, 7(11), 51.

Wichadee, S., & Orawiwanakul, W. (2012). Cooperative language learning: Increasing opportunities for learning in teams. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* (Online), 9(2), 93.

Wichadee, S. (2005). The effects of cooperative learning on English reading skills and attitudes of the first year students at Bangkok University. *BU Academic Review*, 4(2), 22-31.

Authors

* **Marian Lissett Olaya** holds a B.A in Foreign Languages from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. She also holds a M.A in English Language Teaching for Self-directed Learning from Universidad de La Sabana. She has been an English Language teacher for twelve in which she has gained a lot of experience teaching English for engineering programs. Her research experience is focused on how reflective teaching strategies fosters students' language learning, autonomy, self centered and cooperative learning. she is currently a language teacher at UPTC in the city of Sogamoso.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1351-007X>

Gladys Marta Elena González-González Foreign Languages teacher from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC), Specialized as an Educational Manager from the same University. She got her MA in Education with an emphasis on foreign languages teaching Didactics from Universidad Libre de Colombia. Highlighted experience working in the Foreign Languages teaching field has been a full time teacher at the International Languages Institute at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, where she has carried out some research projects about CLIL, Cooperative learning and intrinsic motivation.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5615-4250>

How to reference this article: Olaya, M. L., & González-González, G. M. E. (2020). Cooperative Learning Projects to Foster Reading Skills. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 119-139. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.835>

EFL Students' perceptions on Gender Stereotypes through their narratives¹

Percepciones de Estudiantes de
Inglés como Lengua Extranjera sobre
Estereotipos de Género a través de sus
Narrativas

**Jhonatan Vásquez-Guarnizo, Maribel Chía-Ríos
and Mairon Felipe Tobar-Gómez^{2*}**

Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia,
Universidad de La Salle, Colombia

¹ Received: February 6th 202 / Accepted: September 11th 2020

² jhonatan.vasquez@uptc.edu.co; maribel.chia@uptc.edu.co; mtobar66@unisalle.edu.co

Abstract

This research study was conducted with twelve students from the Modern/Foreign Languages program at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. It was aimed at unveiling EFL students' perceptions on Gender Stereotypes through their narratives in three different moments. Focus group interviews, field notes, and students' artifacts were used as data collection instruments. Data was analyzed under an interactional analysis proposed by Riessman (2005). Findings showed that students' lived experiences on this issue have permeated over the time the way they see their present and future; and their perceptions on gender stereotypes differ from their past generations as they consider themselves as a new generation who does not see any distinction among genders.

Key words: artwork; gender stereotypes; students' perceptions; EFL; experiences

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación se realizó con doce estudiantes del programa de Lenguas Modernas / Extranjeras en la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. Su objetivo era revelar las percepciones de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre los estereotipos de género a través de sus narraciones en tres momentos diferentes. Se utilizaron entrevistas de grupos focales, notas de campo y artefactos por parte de los estudiantes como instrumentos de recolección de datos. Los datos fueron analizados bajo un análisis de interacción propuesto por Riessman (2005). Los resultados mostraron que las experiencias vividas por los estudiantes sobre este tema han permeado con el tiempo la forma en que ven su presente y futuro; y sus percepciones sobre los estereotipos de género difieren de sus generaciones pasadas ya que ellos se consideran como una nueva generación que no ve ninguna distinción entre géneros.

Palabras clave: obras de arte; estereotipos de género; percepciones de los estudiantes; inglés como lengua extranjera; experiencias

Resumo

Este estudo de pesquisa foi realizado com doze estudantes do programa de Línguas Modernas / Estrangeiras na Universidade Pedagógica e Tecnológica da Colômbia. Seu objetivo era revelar as percepções dos estudantes de inglês como língua estrangeira sobre os estereótipos de gênero através das suas narrações em três momentos diferentes. Utilizaram-se entrevistas de grupos focais, notas de campo e artefatos por parte dos estudantes como instrumentos de coleta de dados. Os dados foram analisados sob uma análise de interação proposta por Riessman (2005). Os resultados mostraram que as experiências vividas pelos estudantes sobre este tema permearam com o tempo a forma em que veem seu presente e futuro; e suas percepções sobre os estereótipos de gênero diferem das suas gerações passadas, já que eles se consideram como uma nova geração que não vê nenhuma distinção entre gêneros.

Palavras chave: obras de arte, estereótipos de gênero, percepções dos estudante; Inglês como uma língua estrangeira; experiências

Introduction

Currently, many young people's perceptions are influenced by an abundance of social media messages which have a strong effect when creating a variety of misconceptions that build certain rigid thoughts about the differences between genders. According to Barrera and Cantor (2007), "the use of stereotypes is a part of our everyday way of thinking; for this reason, our society often innocently creates and perpetuates stereotypes" (p. 163). Unfortunately, this process has been shaping students' minds without having a thought about it; that is why, gender stereotypes exist in home, schools, and workplace (Ifegbesan, 2010).

In Colombia, some studies (Castañeda, 2012; Castañeda-Peña, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010; Durán, 2006; Rojas, 2012) have researched deeply into the importance of gender in foreign language contexts. However, EFL Student's perceptions on Gender Stereotypes have not been researched enough currently. In that sense, a gender stereotype is viewed as one type of subjective perception of what a man or woman should be or how people should behave (Martin & Halverson, 1981). They portray the male as the strong and dominant person who works outside the home in often-prestigious occupations, while the female is usually portrayed as being subordinate and confined to the home (Fiske, 1993; Stangor & Lange, 1994).

The world is evolving every day and students are not being left behind; their perceptions are changing, as well as their thoughts about living in the way their past generations once did. In such a way, students have become more aware of having a different perception in their lives and how they see their future.

Thus, for this research study, we proposed the following research question:

What do EFL Students' narratives reveal about gender stereotypes when being exposed to a film, before/now photographs, and their own artwork?

Theoretical Framework

The role of films, photographs, and artwork.

The need to motivate students in the EFL classroom has become an established area of research and discussion (Gardner, 1985). In that sense, using English speaking foreign films within EFL classrooms provides students with an excellent source of native dialogue, cultural context, and interesting material (Brown, 2010).

In this regard, Aguirre and Ramos (2011) argue that films can be used as a “powerful tool to explore educational aspects such as gender, social roles, and power relationships” (p. 175). Therefore, watching films in the classroom can help students discover the possibility that they can be whatever they want to be, no matter what others may think about them (Corral, 2014).

In this manner, incorporating films into the EFL classroom means bringing language to life (Schander, Balma & Massa, 2013). Furthermore, based on Schander, Balma and Massa (2013), interpreting visual art can be an excellent way to teach productive skills and build a lexicon. Thus, photographs were brought into the classrooms as a valuable teaching resource that teachers and learners in more meaningful and memorable learning experiences.

Art has always been an effective tool for teaching and learning among various classes of people (Masoumeh & Masoud, 2011). Freedman (2003) confirms that it is key to teach visual culture, so they are able to view the visual arts by understanding their meanings, purposes, relationships, and influences. Based on Peñaloza and Vásquez-Guarnizo (2019), “the benefits of utilizing artwork in the classroom are countless” (p. 133). Therefore, through artwork, students can be challenged to think critically and analytically (Barber, 2015) and could promote the “inclusion of different perspectives” (Schäffler, 2018, p. 45).

Gender stereotypes.

From a postmodern perspective, and acknowledging the contributions of scholars such as Butler (1990) and Foucault (1992), gender is understood as a sociocultural category by which the issue of the body is connected to everyday social and cultural practices and discourses (Mojica & Castañeda-Peña, 2017, p. 142). In this sense, gender refers to the social differences between men and women, establishing stereotypes boys and girls suffer from birth. Therefore, it has nothing to do with the biological and physical characteristics each sex has, but with the functions, values, and responsibilities they play in society (Corral, 2014, p. 6).

Gender stereotypes are present everywhere in every feature of society, such as: work, family, daily vocabulary, advertisements, and television. They are transmitted from father to son through generations, affecting the development of a free society (Corral, 2014). According to Six and Eckes (1991), gender stereotypes are defined as “products of normal everyday cognitive processes of social categorization, social inference and social judgement” (p. 58). Therefore, Corral (2014) affirms that some gender stereotypes which society has taught us are “Boys dress in blue and girls in pink. Boys study science and technology, and girls languages and literature. Men fight and women cry. Men earn money and women take care of the house and the family” (pp. 6-7).

In this regard, Barrera and Cantor (2007) affirm that “the use of stereotypes is a part of our everyday way of thinking; for this reason, our society often innocently creates and perpetuates stereotypes” (p. 164). Hence, since gender stereotyping in education perpetuates the existing inequality between males and females, the elimination of gender stereotyped messages is vital (Şeker & Dinçer, 2014), as they help determining ideas and values that children come to accept as norms (Haque & Chandran, 2004).

Students’ perceptions.

There has been a recent focus on understanding students’ perceptions on Education. Wright (2004) states that perceptions vary from person to person and consequently, different people perceive different things about the same situation. Therefore, we assign different meanings to what we perceive and the meanings we give to a situation might change for a certain person who does not see it as we do. Based on Eagly and Karau (2002), there is a big difference between men’s and women’s perceptions regarding leadership; therefore, males tend to show a stronger tendency than females since they view women as less qualified for such activity.

In this manner, the way students pay attention to a certain situation, experience and/or action might reflect the way they view the world and it can influence the way they determine what to process or believe in. The perception of a specific situation is a personal interpretation of information from each human being’s own reality. That is why they perceive what they see, they think what they feel or they talk about what they know as their perceptions differ from one experience to another since each human being’s interaction will never be the same in each mind.

Methodology

For the purpose of this research study, a qualitative approach was used as this one seeks to understand the construction of a reality built by participants (Richards, 2000, p. 148), and it is more concerned with “understanding individual’s perceptions of the world since it looks for insights rather than a statistical analysis” (Bell, 1993, p. 6). Moreover, we utilized narrative inquiry where storytelling became “a powerful tool to make sense of the world, to attribute meaning to experiences participants have lived” (Torres-Cepeda & Ramos-Holguín, 2019, p. 14).

Based on Gadamer (2002), “it is not the word what we can see: it is the universe what we try to comprehend” (p. 68). Therefore, we focused not only on participants’

lived experiences, but also on the meaning they gave to those experiences (Trahar, 2006), since understanding their lived experiences from a narrative perspective implies connecting feelings, past-present professional-personal events, and possible future implications of those events in order to gain insights into the way participants co-construct their own self (Coulter, Michael & Poynor, 2007).

Context and Participants

This research study took place at a public university in Colombia with a group of twelve students whose ages range from nineteen to thirty-seven. This group of participants was composed of 8 female and 4 male EFL students. In addition, this research study was carried out in the English Workshop II course, ascribed to the Foreign Languages Program in sixth semester. In this same vein, this course aims at improving students' writing production at the same time they interact and communicate to others in English. Nonetheless, this specific course has a diverse population as it receives students who have failed the English Written Production course in the Modern Languages Program in third semester.

This population was chosen as a notorious preference to be grouped by genders was evident. At the beginning of each class, there were female groups on one side and male groups on the other one, which made us reflect upon this issue, having in mind they will be future language teachers. We thought that issue was a perfect opportunity to raise awareness and eradicate any form of gender stereotyping they will face once they teach.

Thereby, in this research study, half of the participants belonged to the Foreign Languages Program whose students study to become English and/or French teachers at elementary schools. The other half of them belonged to the Modern Languages Program, whose students study to become high school Spanish and/or English teachers.

For this particular case, participants voluntarily accepted to be part of this research study by means of signing a consent form (Annex 1) where all of them opted to choose a pseudonym as Table 1 shows. Additionally, all of them were able to communicate their ideas in English; however, they preferred to speak in Spanish when telling their lived experiences and those narratives were translated to English for the purpose of this research study.

Table 1. Participants' information.

Participants' pseudonyms	B.A Program	Gender	Age
Carolina	Foreign Languages Program	Female	20
Luciana		Female	19
Andrea		Female	20
Jenniwell		Female	29
Ariadna		Female	19
Cris		Male	37
Saluifer	Modern Languages Program	Female	22
M.F		Female	21
Machaela		Female	23
Daniel		Male	21
Andrés		Male	28
Manuel P		Male	25

In this sense, this study was carried out in three different moments. The first moment was divided into four-session classes. In the first two-session class, students were exposed to a film titled “On the basis of sex” which shows the struggle a female character faced with discrimination against women when fighting to have the same rights as men in the United States. As each two-session class is two hours long, the second two-session class from the first moment was at a different time. During this moment, students had a space for a focus group in which they expressed their thoughts on the film and how they are related to this issue currently.



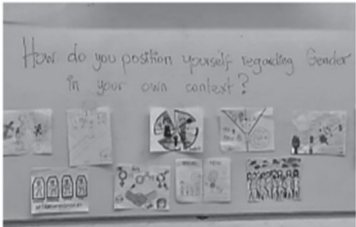
Furthermore, in the second moment, visual art was included through some before/now photographs which revealed how women have been underestimated for years due to their gender and how they are positioned nowadays. These photographs were placed on the walls around the classroom so they could simulate being at an art gallery where they were able to contrast this issue as viewers. Once students finished walking around the classroom, their points of view were heard through a focus group interview.

Lastly, in the third moment, students were asked to draw their own artwork which expressed the way they saw men/women in their contexts. When they were done, all the drawings were pasted on the board and another focus group took place. This one was a key part of this study as it was our closing moment. It allowed these EFL students' perceptions to come up with more determination since they were able to show through a drawing what their perceptions actually were. Besides, as they had the

chance to choose one which caught their attention the most, they were able to speak about their classmates' perceptions as well and how the drawing someone else drew was relevant for their future lives.

Table 2 illustrates how those three moments previously described were carried out by means of providing the dates, a brief description, and an image that represents each moment.

Table 2. Three moments of the development of the study

Moment	Date	Description	Image
First	April 30 th , 2019	Students were exposed to the film titled: "On the basis of sex" for them to have their first contact with the research study and reflect upon gender stereotypes from the movie.	
	May 3 rd , 2019	Students had their first focus group regarding the film, in which they were able to express their thoughts on the film and their lived experiences which were related to the ones presented in the movie.	
Second	May 10 th , 2019	Students reflected upon the importance of women along history through some before/now photographs. Moreover, they participated in their second focus group where they all told lived experiences related to this same issue.	
Third	May 17 th , 2019	Students analyzed their own and classmates' artwork. Besides, they had their third focus group which was focused on expressing their positions regarding gender stereotypes in their own context. Here, they narrated lived experiences related to issues on their classmates' drawings.	

Data Collection Tools

Three focus group interviews, students' artifacts and field notes were the data collection tools applied in this research study. According to Rabiee (2004), focus group interviews provide information about ideas and feelings that individuals have about certain issues, as well as illuminating the differences in perspective between groups of individuals as focus group interviews gather a small group of people to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic (Denscombe, 2007).

Secondly, students' artifacts were collected in the third moment through their own artwork. Based on Ormrod (2005), it is really useful to save samples of students' work produced over time since they can take the form of short stories, lab reports, class notes, handouts, quizzes, which provide equally viable connections to the real-world classroom context. In addition, Weber and Mitchell (1996) affirms that "drawings provide self-reflection by bringing to light ambivalences in teaching identities that might remain hidden" (p. 303). Therefore, when we draw, that artwork displays a hidden reality that helps individuals transmit a true-self context becoming drawing as a powerful means for them to express hidden messages.

Lastly, three field notes were applied throughout the development of this study. Based on Efron and Ravin (2013), field notes "are detailed descriptions of what you see, hear, and sense during the observation, and the thoughts, feelings and understandings these observations provoked" (p. 88). In that regard, the three video-recorded moments were transcribed since the video information needs to be transformed into written data "transcripts" to facilitate the analysis (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004) which has to be carried out "as soon as possible after a lesson" (Hopkins, 2008, p. 116).

Data Analysis and Findings

Once participants' oral narratives were collected, they were transcribed and analyzed under an interactional analysis. Based on Riessman (2005), the emphasis is placed on the dialogic process between teller and listener in an interactional analysis. Stories of personal experience, organized around the life world of the teller, may be inserted into question and answer exchanges; therefore, participants' narratives about their lived experience are occasioned in particular settings where storyteller and questioner jointly participate in conversation (p. 4).

According to Torres-Cepeda and Ramos-Holguín (2019), "this research method helps to understand a narrative by means of splitting it into critical fractions which play a meaning-making role in the whole narrative" (p. 16) due to an interactional analysis is not only focused on the content of a text (*thematic analysis*), the way a story is told (*structural analysis*), but also on the co-construction process between teller and

listener (*interactional analysis*). In this sense, this analysis is carried out step by step as one is connected to the other; that is why, we analyzed participants' narratives through a three-step analysis: thematic, structural, and interactional.

Firstly, participants' lived experiences were analyzed by focusing on the content of the story *per se*. Here, data is grouped into a similar thematic category, data is interpreted by means of focusing on what is said (Riessman, 2005, p. 3). Secondly, we paid attention to the way participants' lived experiences were told as "human beings are storying creatures that make sense of the world and the things that happen to them by constructing narratives to explain and interpret events both to themselves and to other people" (Sikes & Gale, 2006, p. 1).

Lastly, we validated data by means of giving meaningful importance to the interaction, interpretation and sense/meaning making processes that were created among both parts, tellers (participants) and listeners (researchers). According to Bruner (1994), "a life is not how it was but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold" (p. 36); therefore, by focusing on narrative, we are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means; how narratives are silenced or accepted and what, if any, effects they have (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 2).

In short, this three-step analysis: thematic, structural, and interactional gave us the chance to comprehend in-depth participants' lived experiences about gender stereotypes. We analyzed, interpreted, re-interpreted, constructed, and re-constructed participants' narratives in order to raise awareness about gender stereotyped messages and gain insights into the way participants co-construct their own self (Coulter, Michael & Poynor, 2007).

In such way, three themes emerged from our interactional analysis (Riessman, 2005), which aim at answering our research question as it can be appreciated in Table 3.

Table 3. Main themes.

RESEARCH QUESTION	MAIN THEME
<i>What do EFL Students' narratives reveal about gender stereotypes when being exposed to a film, before/now photographs, and their own artwork?</i>	We are all equal
	Changing roles
	Gender discrimination

We are all equal

Nowadays, society is changing as the way of thinking is. In that sense, there are some human beings who are becoming aware that others should be viewed with no differences. In the case of women, even though there have been many fights when looking for equality, their role as women is still underestimated nowadays which has caused a need to keep teaching generations to transform the way they see women; for instance, in this research study, this first theme is named this way after having discussed as a group and reflecting upon a participant's drawing (Figure 1) where she decided to write a hashtag as a way to title her artwork.

Here, Carolina wanted to express the way she viewed everybody. She mentioned there is nothing that can divide us; therefore, we are all equal no matter our gender or religion as in the end, we all are going to end up in the same place when we die. Likewise, even though she emphasized she viewed herself as a woman, she repeated that she believed *we are all equal* and for that reason, she wrote some tags people have given to certain patterns in life as a way of representing our ending on earth. Thus, she concluded by explaining she felt she belonged to a new generation, consequently, she personalized her artwork by adding a hashtag.

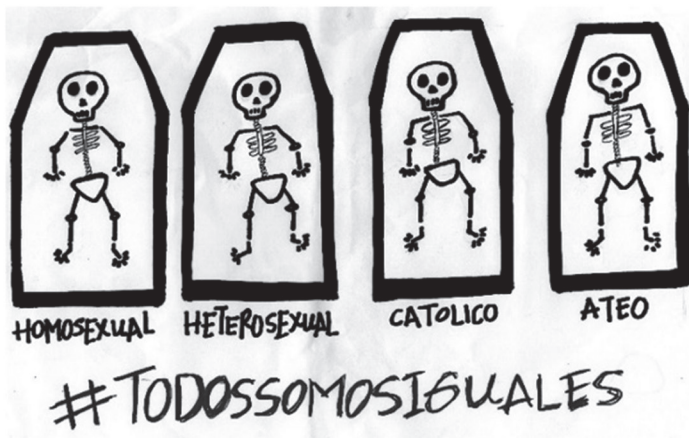


Figure 1. We are all equal. (Carolina, Third moment, Students' artifacts).

After the interpretation of her drawing, participants connected this issue Carolina brought up to the same one the film transmitted to them which was related to the underestimation women have gone through in the past. In this sense, the following examples show how they expressed their thoughts on positing everybody in the same level.

I consider that there has been an advance, and that is the desire to activate the position of women as equal to men since it is quite necessary and important. I think that right now we could not live without it, I mean, not only men and women in the same condition, but everybody (Jenniwell, Third moment, Third focus group).

In this example, we analyzed Jenniwell's words, not only by means of describing the struggle men / women equality has gone through, but also when believing everybody should be in the same condition. From her perspective, it is seen the way she thinks about people, this fight is not only about men / women, but only every single person who feels in another way. Besides, Jenniwell took us to think about a contrast between generations since she mentioned "*I think right now*" comparing ways of thinking from previous generations with this current one. In fact, when contrasting her words with her artwork (Figure 2), we could analyze how she made an emphasis on this idea that we are all equal.

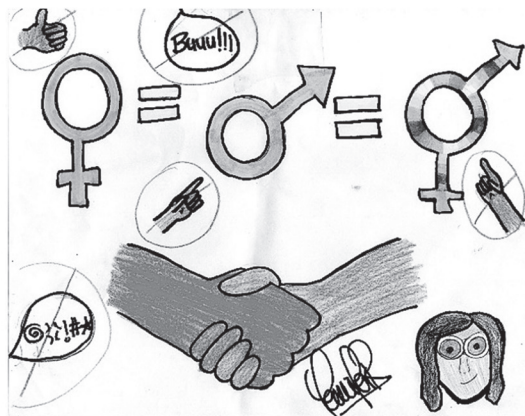


Figure 2. We are all equal. (Jenniwell, Third moment, Students' artifacts).

In this same vein, Figure 3 displays Andrés' artwork which shows his understanding on how equality should be thought out and seen right now. He described his drawing as the way he perceives equality. For him, we all are here not to be judged, but to live happily; that is why, he believes it is not about a certain way to look, dress or feel with our bodies due to equality goes beyond those misconceptions people have been labeled by society.

I think we all should think and see everybody as equal, no matter the way we look, dress or feel with our bodies. We all are here to live happily and that is what I wanted to transmit with my drawing, equality (Andrés, Third moment, Third focus group).



Figure 3. We are all equal. (Andrés, Third moment, Students' artifacts).

Additionally, the following excerpt reflects Daniel's thinking on this same issue. Here, we analyzed how he is conscious about all the fights women have undergone throughout time in order to get the same position as men in society. He as a man, claimed those fights proved to people we are all equal and bearing in mind the big change Ruth, the main character of the film, achieved; she was able to establish an antecedent for future women to cover the fields they can work on. In that sense, men also see equality as only one whole.

All these struggles that are shown here in the film, especially Ruth's, is a great change, because from there, as she says, a precedent was set leaving more space and force for women to be able to cover all the fields they want and so, show us that we are all equal. (Daniel, First moment, First focus group)

Lastly, in this last excerpt, it is interesting to remark how M.F was able to see Ruth as someone who was not interested in fighting for women positioning, but rather for gender equality. She mentioned that there have been some advances regarding that issue and in that sense, women and men are positioned in the same level.

I think that Ruth, having in mind she is a woman, she did not fight only for women but for gender equality. She was looking for that, gender equality! And I feel that right now we have already advanced too much on that (M.F, First moment, First focus group)

Changing roles

As this new generation of people are going through a new way of thinking, the roles of men and women have gone through a process of changing. In other words, those roles society established for men and women long time ago, have transcended and now people see them from a different perception. In that sense, the following

examples proved how those roles have been flipped and nowadays, men can perform situations women are “supposed” to do and vice versa.

The role of men.

This following excerpt shows how the role of men has been changed and accepted over the time with Manuel P's case. He demonstrated men like him from this generation can also perform a duty that a woman was labeled to develop. Specifically, from his narrative, we could analyze that they both, father and mother, spend time with their daughter even though they are not together as a family; they are conscious they both are that girl's parents and they both need to take care of her. Nonetheless, they divide this responsibility equally.

In my case, when I take care of my daughter, I spoil her very much. When my daughter's mother tells me she will party, I am the happiest person because that means I will stay with the girl. Even though I know there are some tasks that are very complex to assimilate for us as men, I do not have a choice but learning how to develop those task by myself (Manuel P, Second moment, Second focus group)

Furthermore, Andrés complements this part of the role of men when narrating he connects the picture he was given in the second moment of this research study with a memory he has from his mother as he was taught in his family (Esen, 2013) but he and his brothers as men could also collaborate doing this house duty.

I relate this picture I was assigned to my mom because she taught us we could also help cleaning the house. She left home to work, and we were in charge of the house, so our brothers and I helped her cleaning (Andrés, Second moment, Second focus group)

In this sense, Cris also contributed by positing himself in showing agreement to Manuel P and Andrés' way of perceiving their roles as men. Cris in the following excerpt shows how he does not feel less because he does things society has established for women to do at home. In fact, he claims how he feels by performing those house duties and his love for his mother. Here, we could analyze how the role of women influences men's way of thinking. Women become that fundamental piece of the puzzle in men's co-construction as human beings, not just as men.

I love my mother with all my heart, she is the only one who matters to me, that is why I always try to help her with anything she needs. I sweep, mop, clean, cook, wash and I do not really feel I am less because I do that; on the contrary, I feel I contribute in this society by showing men can also help women at home and that does not make us less (Cris, Second moment, Second focus group)

Lastly, Andrea closes our second moment by agreeing with her male classmates on the way they perceive gender equality. She considers that people have changed the

old perception that “women were made for the family and not for the great struggles of the world” (Quijano, 2001, cited in Calvo, Rendón & Rojas, 2006, p. 2). Nowadays, this new generation is conscious about gender equality and that is why everybody can do the same things equally. There is nothing impossible when it comes to performing a certain task. In this case in particular, Andrea shows how that wrong perception is left behind since she thinks men have the same skills and capabilities as women to teach children the wrong or good path for them to go. Additionally, we analyzed how both men and women from this new generation show the same thought without complaining about it or showing any type of disagreement. They both position themselves as equal and with the same skills to do anything.

I think that perception that women are the only ones who can do chores and raise children have completely changed today, men also have the same skills and abilities to do it, he can teach his baby the good and bad and not just leave that responsibility to women as it was thought out long time ago (Andrea. Second moment, Second focus group)

The role of women.

Independency has been marked in women when referring to finding another way for them to live without thinking about labels society has created for them. In the following excerpt, Saluifer narrates how that independency was taught to her throughout her context as she was raised in a countryside. Anything she needed, she was the one who was supposed to get it, everything by herself, without a male figure in her life.

My mom is a single mother, same as the rest of my family, except for an aunt who is married. They all are alone because they are single mothers, with no husband, no male figure at home. I remember that my grandmother always taught us to be independent because I was raised in a countryside, so if I wanted to eat, so I needed to get the firewood, if I wanted to wear clean clothes, I needed to wash them by myself. Thanks to that I am totally independent nowadays (Saluifer, Second moment, Second focus group)

In the same manner, the role of women is evidenced in a way previous generations would not been able to accept. From this participant's intervention, we could analyze the transformation from generation to generation and how those changes have been modified. Machaela positioned herself as a person who is not interested in repeating the same mistakes her previous generations committed. On the contrary, her way of thinking has allowed her to achieve different goals that were not the ones society established time ago for women. She mentioned nowadays those old-time-determined perceptions do not exist and consequently, she positioned herself as someone who looks for learning, studying, traveling, instead of having a family first.

Personally, I have seen a transformation process in my family that goes from generation to generation and how we have gone through some context changes; for example in the past, it was thought that marriages lasted for many years and that was nice! However, my grandmother lasted many years with my grandfather until he died, but enduring infidelities, beatings and many more things from him just because of her time. Divorcing was frowned upon and condemned. Nowadays, in our time, for our generation, we do not really see that anymore, or well I think at least for me; it is no longer a goal to be a mom, to cook or wash. I want other things for myself; I personally want to learn, study, travel before looking for a family (Machaela, Second moment, Second focus group)

Thus, when contrasting Machaela's words with the artwork (Figure 4) she decided to draw, we could analyze how those words were put into action when describing those new generation plans for her life.



Figure 4. (Machaela, Third moment, Students' artifacts).

Additionally, another perception we could analyze from her is her position regarding independence. She states repeatedly how she sees herself as a woman who will not be depending on any man. In that sense, the way she perceives herself, in terms of living her life, is without a man by her side so far. Her goal nowadays is to enjoy her life first by means of learning, studying, traveling, and afterwards she plans to have someone by her side. Her independence is evidenced by empowering herself when

believing she can achieve her dreams without the need of a male figure who supports her; in fact, she believes she is strongly able to get what she wants on her own. In that regard, we believe this is exposed thanks to the mark her grandmother and mother left on her when they both experienced dependency on a man in the past.

In the same way, Andrea shows her support to Machaela's way of thinking and she reaffirms she also feels the same way as Machaela. She belongs to a new generation that looks for equality even when finding a person to spend her life with. Based on her narrative, we could analyze that Andrea's words encourage other women to beware of finding someone who supports them at home and does not lean on them as women. They need someone who thinks the same way they do it, otherwise, they will be repeating previous generation's mistakes.

"I reaffirm Machaela's words because I feel the same way. Women do not want to have children or get married yet; we want to enjoy our lives first. We have those mirrors from our families, and we do not want to go back to those old times. In my case, I do not want to repeat those mistakes. I feel that also applies to finding someone in our lives. If we look for a soulmate, we have to beware to know that person will also collaborate at home and will not lean on us" (Andrea, Second moment, Second focus group)

This same thought was compared to Andrea's artwork in the third moment of this research study when she positioned herself as a woman who has different aspirations for her life. Her drawing (Figure 5) shows a division among old ways of thinking from previous generations where women were in charge of everything related to home, and on the other side, new ways of perceiving life which belong to her current generation.

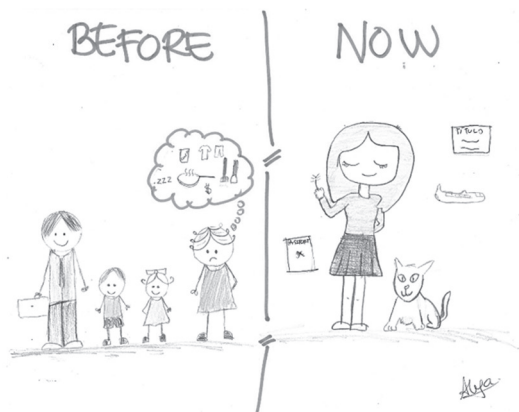


Figure 5. (Andrea, Third moment, Students' artifacts).

Gender discrimination.

Even though this new generation has a different way of perceiving equality, there are still people who underestimate woman for differences in relation to their access to education, work, income level (Quintero, 2012). The following example shows how a participant from this research study experienced a situation in which she was not taken into consideration for a job position, just because of her gender, and how another one reflected upon the hiring process a certain Chinese restaurant uses when choosing a waitress.

"I started working as a waitress at a restaurant, and after a month, they were looking for more staff, so I told a male friend to deliver her CV and he got accepted. Like a couple of months later, he earned a promotion as a head waiter just because he was a male. After some time working there, he quit and the vacancy was supposedly for those with more experience, and since I was working before he entered, supposedly I felt that it was my opportunity to advance. However, they promoted a man who had been working there for only two or three months. You see? There are no open doors for us as women and if we want something, we have to give something back, I mean, something sexual and that is not fair" (M.F, Third moment, Third focus group)

In this excerpt, we could analyze how gender discrimination is evidenced when this participant who decided to name herself as (M.F.) was rejected from a job position just because she was a woman. Even though she was told the position was for the one with more experience working in the place, a male was the one who was promoted for the position she thought it was for her. For a second time, she saw how doors she thought were opened to her, turned out to be closed, instead. Gender discrimination happens to be established in this particular case just by the fact of being a woman (Pérez, 2012). M.F evidenced how a male figure had more power when determining this new job position as "power is produced and enacted in and through discourse, relationships, activities, spaces, and times by people as they compete for access to and control to resources, tools, identities" (Birr & Lewis, 2007, p. 17).

"In my personal experience, let's say that there is a certain preference for men in the kitchen, I mean, in a business. There, he is the cook, the chef, but the woman is not seen as important as a man there, and their payments are not well recognized. On the contrary, they are important at home because they have to cook". (Daniel. Third moment, Third focus group)

In this intervention, Daniel is aware of a sexual division within disciplines where women are stood out or "feminized" for (letters, medicine, human sciences), while men are traditionally "masculinized" for standing out in (mathematics, engineering, law) (Cruz & Moreno, 2012). Nonetheless, it is key to mention how his words show his new-generation-thinking made him approach an issue that is still present nowadays.

He mentioned how women are not well seen in the kitchen of a business but rather in the kitchen of their houses. This contradictory perception has underestimated women as objects from home, with no money recognition. On the contrary, men obtain higher salaries regardless of the professional field, the region or the type of institution (public or private) (Barón, 2011, cited in Fuentes, 2012, p. 99).

Lastly, this following lived experience gave us a key issue to address. Luciana mentioned how she thought gender discrimination only took place here or Latin America until she found out how a Chinese restaurant, where she worked, made the hiring process for its waitresses. Gender discrimination is evidenced in this particular case when making some racist comments about the women who were applying for the job. Unfortunately, we only tend to see our local place that we forget about what it is outside this bubble. Thus, we can analyze how gender discrimination takes place anywhere and, in this case, it affected Luciana somehow since she realized how those people from that restaurant were also racist when choosing their waitresses.

“When I was working at this Chinese restaurant, I began to learn how they choose waitresses. The wife starts looking at them and saying: this one is black, this one is very skinny, this one is very fat. I thought that this only happened here in Colombia, but they also do it. Gender discrimination is everywhere and in this case from a woman to another woman” (Luciana. Third moment, Third focus group)

Conclusions

The research study was aimed at unveiling EFL students' perceptions on gender stereotypes through their narratives in three different moments. As a result of it, we noticed how students went on a reflecting process along this research study as it helped them be prepared to act in a professional area (Sööt & Viskus, 2015) when facing their first classroom experiences (Cote, 2012). Therefore, participants' reflecting processes then emerged as a response to their previous generations' mistakes as they do not want to follow their past generations' steps.

Results showed how participants' lived experiences had an impact on them as they helped them shape their perceptions at a given time in their lives (Lengeling & Mora, 2016). Thus, their goals are different now and the way they see their future has changed 180 degrees over the time thanks to those gender stereotyped messages they grew up with. That is why, they feel they belong to a different generation, one that thinks and wishes things in a different way.

Additionally, letting their voices be heard through their oral narratives and artwork together was a key part in our research study. We argue that helping EFL students

express themselves is possible when having artwork as a backup. We evidenced how their artworks contributed to the development of their human consciousness (Read, 1980) as they revealed hidden realities they live in without feeling judged.

Incorporating artwork in the EFL classes contributed to leave footprints in the formation of students' personality at the same time it provided them with the weapons to face a new teaching world (Hernández, Garriga & Baños, 2009). Based on Peñaloza and Vásquez-Guarnizo (2019), "artwork can help develop observational, thinking, and literacy skills, among many other skills" (p. 133), that is why, it is key to teach visual culture to students, so they can be able to understand their meanings, purposes, relationships, and influences (Freedman, 2003).

Pedagogical implications and further research

Including artwork in EFL classes becomes an effective tool for teaching and learning (Masoumeh & Masoud, 2011) as artwork provides students with content to talk about, it involves creative and imaginative contexts and most importantly, art activities increases students' language proficiency (Lee, 2017). Besides, having them as a backup for expressing the way students see things around them result worthy since they can connect lived experiences that lead them to go through a personal reflective process (Núñez & Téllez, 2015).

Ramos, Aguirre and Hernández (2012) mention that a first step toward promoting intercultural individuals is by encouraging equality in the class. In this sense, we think that it is crucial to start raising awareness about gender stereotypes in future languages teachers, so they get informed and know to handle situations where this issue is presented (Durán, 2006).

In this manner, ELT programs should turn their attention to these types of experiences to incorporate what is being left out, improve teachers' reflection processes, and equip students with the attitudes, skills, and the knowledge to work towards the goal of gender equity in their future teaching contexts (Mojica & Castañeda-Peña, 2017). That is why, opening spaces such these ones allow EFL students to bring this issue up and avoid seeing it as a taboo. Everything starts when thinking outside the box; thus, we believe that after going through this research study, our field in English teachers' education will be engaged in breaking the gap between addressing gender equality in EFL classroom or continuing being a task for few EFL teachers.

Finally, we think there is a need to break the gap on gender equality. Therefore, we feel that there has to be research on revealing EFL students' identity construction regarding the way they see themselves in the future addressing this important issue within the EFL classroom.

Annex 1

Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia
Facultad Ciencias De La Educación
Escuela de Idiomas
Formulario de Consentimiento

Tunja, 02 de mayo del 2019

Estimad@ estudiante,

El siguiente formulario de consentimiento es para invitarlo a participar en un proyecto de investigación como participante. El objetivo principal de esta propuesta de investigación es conocer qué percepciones revelan los estudiantes de Idiomas Modernos/ Lenguas Extranjeras sobre los estereotipos de género a través de sus narrativas. Por lo tanto, para el propósito de este estudio, su participación es de vital importancia y completamente voluntaria. Consecuentemente, no habrá compensación financiera ni académica por ser parte de ella, teniendo la posibilidad de retirarse cuando sienta que lo desea.

Además, me gustaría hacerle saber que su nombre real no se mencionará en el estudio como tal, por el contrario, tendrá la oportunidad de crear su propio seudónimo. Los instrumentos que se utilizarán en esta investigación serán los artefactos por parte de los estudiantes, diarios de campo por parte del docente y discusiones en grupos focales al final. Específicamente, los estudiantes pasarán por tres momentos durante esta investigación en los que reflexionarán sobre los estereotipos de género a través de una película, sus propias obras de arte y la de otros dentro de su propio contexto.

Adicional, el manejo ético y la confidencialidad de la información están suscritas a las normas constitucionales y legales colombianas relacionadas con los datos personales y los derechos de autor. Por último, los resultados de este estudio se utilizarán únicamente para preparar informes académicos, presentar trabajos en eventos académicos y preparar artículos o libros de naturaleza científica en el futuro. Finalmente, este estudio no traerá ningún prejuicio para usted como participante, ya que, por el contrario, se espera que revele cuales son las percepciones que los estudiantes de Idiomas Modernos/ Lenguas Extranjeras tienen sobre los estereotipos de género a través de sus narrativas.

Por favor, no firme este formulario de consentimiento hasta que todas sus preguntas hayan sido resueltas. Si acepta participar, autorice este documento firmándolo con su nombre completo.

Firma:


Seudónimo:

Andrea

¡Muchas gracias por su participación!



Jhonatan Vásquez-Guarnizo
Docente de inglés
jhonatan.vasquez@uptc.edu.co
+57 318 793 2775



Maribel Chía-Ríos
Docente de inglés
mary.c156@hotmail.com
+57 310 332 4610



Mairon Felipe Tobar-Gómez
Docente de inglés
mairontobar@gmail.com
+57 316 538 2084

References

- Aguirre Morales, J., & Ramos Holguín, B. (2011). Fostering skills to enhance critical educators: A pedagogical proposal for pre-service teachers. *HOW Journal*, 18(1), 169-197.
- Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2013). *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage.
- Barber, S. (2015). *Using art to teach critical thinking*. <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/using-art-teach-critical-thinking>
- Barrera, M. & Cantor, S. (2007). Socio-cultural stereotypes: Exploring students' perceptions regarding social issues. *HOW Journal*, 14, 161-173.
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in Education and Social Science*. Open University Press.
- Birr, M. & Lewis, C. (2007). *Examining opportunities to learn literacy: The role of critical sociocultural literacy research*. In Lewis, C., Enciso, P., & Birr, E. (Eds). *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency and power*, 15-48. Routledge.
- Brown, S. (2010). Popular films in the EFL classroom: Study of methodology. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 3, 45-54.
- Bruner, J. (1994). Life as narrative. In Dyson, A. & Genishi, C. (Eds.), *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community*, 28-37. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Calvo, G., Rendón, D., & Rojas, L. I. (2006). *Formación y perfeccionamiento docente desde la equidad de género*. http://www.oei.es/docentes/articulos/formacion_perfeccionamiento_docente_equidad_genero.pdf
- Castañeda, A. (2012). EFL women-learners' construction of the discourse of egalitarianism and knowledge in online-talk-in-interaction. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14(1), 163-179.
- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2008a). 'I said it' 'I'm first!': Gender and language-learner identities. *Colombian Applied Linguistic Journal*, 10, 112-125.
- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2008b). Positioning masculinity and femininity in preschool EFL education. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 27(53), 314-326.
- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2009). *Masculinities and femininities go to preschool: Gender positioning in discourse*. Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

- Castañeda-Peña, H. (2010). The next teacher is going to be...Tereza Rico: Exploring gender positioning in an all-girl preschool classroom. *Magis, Revista Internacional de Investigación en Educación*, 3(5), 107-124.
- Corral, Y. (2014). *Introducing Gender Stereotypes in the EFL Classroom*. [Master's thesis, Universidad de Jaén] Master's in Applied Linguistics to Teaching English as a Foreign Language. http://tauja.ujaen.es/bitstream/10953.1/2237/1/1314YCorral_FP.pdf
- Cote, G. (2012). The role of reflection during the first teaching experience of foreign language pre-service teachers: An exploratory-case study. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14 (2), 24-34.
- Coulter, C., Charles, M., & Poynor, L. (2007). Storytelling as pedagogy: An unexpected outcome of Narrative Inquiry. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 37(2), 103-122.
- Cruz, J. & Moreno, E. (2012). Educación superior mercado laboral: Reflexiones sobre la reproducción de la dominación sexual. *Educación en la Equidad: Boletín Anual*, 2, 48-63.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Durán, N. (2006). Exploring gender differences in the EFL classroom. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 8, 123-136.
- Eagly, A. & Karau, S. (2002) Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598.
- Efron, S., & Ravid, R. (2013). *Action research in education: A practical guide*. Guilford Press.
- Esen, Y. (2013). Making room for gender sensitivity in pre-service teacher education. *European Researcher*, 61(10-2), 2544-2554. <https://doi.org/10.13187/er.2013.61.2544>
- Fiske, S. (1993). Social cognition and social perception. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 44, 155-194.
- Freedman, K. (2003). *Recent shifts in US art education*. In Addison, Nicholas and Burgess, Lesley (eds.). *Issues in Art and Design Teaching*. RoutledgeFalmer, Oxon.
- Fuentes, L. (2012). Hacia la equidad de género en la educación superior: Una interpelación a las políticas educativas. *Educación en la Equidad: Boletín Anual*, 2, 94-104.
- Gadamer, H. (2002). *Acotaciones hermenéuticas*. Editorial Trotta.

- Gardner, R. (1985). *The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery: Technical Report*. <http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/docs/AMTBmanual.pdf>
- Haque, M., & Chandran, S. (2004). Discourse of gender: Conflicting ideologies vs. social policies. *BRAC University Journal*, 1(2), 21-32.
- Hernández, I., Garriga, M. & Baños, I. (2009). El papel del arte y sus manifestaciones en la enseñanza de lenguas: Reflexiones y experiencias. *Didáctica. Lengua y Literatura*, 21, 191-202.
- Hopkins, D. (2008). *A teacher's guide to classroom research* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press
- Ifegbesan, A. (2010). Gender-stereotypes belief and practices in the classroom: The Nigerian post-primary school teachers. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 10(4), 29-38.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for teacher research: From design to implementation*. Open University Press
- Lee, S. (2017). *Teaching English through Art*. www.gendaieigo.info/.../20171115_Teaching-English-Through-
- Lengeling, M. M., & Mora Pablo, I. (2016). Reflections on critical incidents of EFL teachers during career entry in Central Mexico. *HOW*, 23(2), 75-88.
- Martin, C. & Halverson, C. (1981). A schematic processing model of sex-typing and stereotyping in children. *Child Development*, 52, 1119-1134.
- Masoumeh, F. & Masoud, H. (2011). The impact/s of using art in English language learning classes. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 31, 923-926.
- Mojica, C. P., & Castañeda-Peña, H. (2017). A learning experience of the gender perspective in English teaching contexts. *PROFILE*, 19(1), 139-153.
- Núñez, A., & Téllez, M. (2015). Reflection on teachers' personal and professional growth through a materials development seminar. *HOW Journal*, 22(2), 54-74.
- Ormrod, J. E. (2005). Using student and teacher artifacts as case studies in educational psychology. *The Clearing House*, 78(5), 213-217.
- Peñaloza, A. C., & Vásquez-Guarnizo, J. (2019). Reflections on educational issues among modern language students. *HOW Journal*, 26(1), 129-151.
- Pérez, A. (2012). Género y educación superior: Más allá de lo obvio. *Educación en la Equidad: Boletín Anual*, 2, 64-75.

- Quintero, Ó. (2012). Discriminaciones raciales cotidianas como forma de construcción de masculinidades en la universidad. *Educación en la Equidad: Boletín Anual*, 2, 26-33.
- Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* 63, 655-660.
- Ramos Holguín, B., Aguirre Morales, J., & Hernández, C. M. (2012). A pedagogical experience to delve into students' sense of cultural belonging and intercultural understanding in a rural school. *HOW Journal*, 19(1), 123-145.
- Read, H. (1980). *Imagen e idea*, FCE.
- Richards, K. (2000). Trends in qualitative research in language teaching since 2002. *Language Teaching*, 42(2), 147-180.
- Riessman, C. (2005). *Narrative Analysis*. In: *Narrative, memory & everyday life*. University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield. <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/4920/>
- Rojas, M. (2012). Female EFL teachers: Shifting and multiple gender and language-learner identities. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14(1), 92-107.
- Schäffler, A. (2018). Applying advanced methods of reflective practice in decision-making. In S. Stigler. *Stimulating Reflection when Using Artworks from the Collection: DIAL for Complex Artworks*.
- Schander, C., Balma, B., & Massa, A. (2013). The joy of art in the EFL classroom. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(2), 409-414.
- Şeker, M. & Dinçer, A. (2014). An analysis of gender stereotyping in English teaching course books. *Faculty of Education Journal*, 43(1), 90-98.
- Sikes, P., & Gale, K. (2006). *Narrative approaches to educational research: Research in education*. <http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/narrative/narrativehome.htm>
- Six, B. & Eckes, T. (1991). A closer look at the complex structure of gender stereotypes. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 24, 57-71.
- Sööt, A & Viskus, E. (2015). Reflection on teaching: A way to learn from practice. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 1941-1946.
- Stangor, C., & Lange, I. (1994). Mental representations of social groups: Advances in understanding stereotypes and stereotyping. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 26, 357-416.
- Torres-Cepeda, N., & Ramos-Holguín, B. (2019). Becoming language teachers: Exploring student-teachers' identities construction through narratives. *GiST Journal*, 18, 6-27.

- Trahar, S. (2006). *Narrative research on learning, comparative and international perspectives*. Symposium Books Ltd.
- Weber, S. & Mitchell, C. (1996). Drawing ourselves into teaching: Studying the images that shape and distort teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 12(3), 303-313.
- Wright, S. (2004). Perceptions and stereotypes of ESL students. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10(2). <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Wright-Stereotyping.html>

Authors

***Jhonatan Vásquez-Guarnizo** holds an M.A in Language Teaching from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia and a B.A in English Language Teaching from Universidad de la Amazonia. He is currently a researcher and a full-time English language professor in the School of Languages at UPTC. He is also part of the research group “TONGUE” and a first-semester student in the master’s in Education at Universidad Externado de Colombia.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0630-6321>

Maribel Chía-Ríos holds a B.A. in Modern Languages from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC). She currently works at Institución Educativa Luis Maria Jimenez in Aguazul, Casanare where she teaches Spanish/English, besides studying her last semester in the Master’s in Language Teaching at the UPTC.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2520-7863>

Mairon Felipe Tobar-Gómez holds a B.A in English Language Teaching from Universidad de la Amazonia. He currently works at Colegio San Viator in Tunja, Boyacá where he teaches English to tenth and eleventh graders, besides studying his Master’s in Languages Didactic at Universidad de la Salle.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2905-4670>

How to reference this article: Vásquez-Guarnizo, J., Chía-Ríos, M., & Tobar-Gómez, M. F. (2020). EFL Students’ perceptions on Gender Stereotypes. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 141-166. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.836>

Voices of the Hard-of-Hearing about their L2 Acquisition Struggles: A Case Study¹

Las Voces de Estudiantes con Hipoacusia sobre sus Retos en el Aprendizaje de otro Idioma: Un estudio de Caso

**Rigoberto Castillo PhD
and Laura Stefany Florez-Martelo^{2*}**

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas,
Colombia

¹ Received: January 19th 2020/ Accepted: October 1st 2020

² rcastillo@udistrital.edu.co; lauraflorezmartelo1@hotmail.com

Abstract

In the context of advocacy of the rights of minorities, communities should research about the learning rights of individuals with hearing loss. This article reports a case study that looked into the retrospectives and perspectives of three hard-of-hearing participants (HHs) on learning another language. The data on retrospectives refer to the participants' narrative accounts that -as adults today- assess what they have gone through. The data on perspectives refer to what the participants wish were done about by school communities, and society. For HHs the interpretation of language goes beyond the reception of sounds; it draws on reading the body language, context, attitudes, and affectivity. The purpose of examining their testimonies, in the form of narratives, is to contribute to the understanding of how they re-signified their struggles. The results of the study fell into three dimensions: Affective, Attitudinal, and Communicative. These involved family, teachers, classmates, and participants. The results suggest that 1. HHs feel capable of mastering an L2 in integrated classrooms, 2. Language policies and standardized exams misrepresent the HHs' capabilities, and 3. Classroom equity demands material selection and methodological adjustments as well as teacher training in inclusive practices.

Keywords: foreign language instruction; hard of hearing; hearing loss; inclusion; integrated classrooms; special education.

Resumen

En el marco de la protección y defensa de los derechos de las minorías, las comunidades deben investigar más sobre los derechos de aprendizaje de las personas con deficiencias auditivas. Este artículo reporta un estudio de caso que examinó las retrospectivas y perspectivas de tres hipoacúsicos sobre su aprendizaje de otro idioma en un aula integrada. Los datos sobre las retrospectivas se refieren a las narrativas de los participantes que como adultos, que son hoy, evalúan su trasiego en las aulas. Los datos sobre las perspectivas se refieren a aquello que ellos quisieran que cambiara en las comunidades escolares y en la sociedad. Para ellos, la interpretación del lenguaje va más allá de la recepción de sonidos; requiere la lectura del lenguaje corporal, del contexto, de las actitudes y del afecto. El propósito de presentar sus testimonios es el de contribuir a la comprensión sobre cómo resignificaron su lucha y resistencia. Los resultados de este estudio se situaron en las dimensiones: afectiva, actitudinal y comunicativa que involucran a la familia, los compañeros de clase, los docentes y los participantes mismos. Los resultados indicaron que 1. los hipoacúsicos estiman que pueden aprender otro idioma en un aula, 2. Las políticas lingüísticas y el manejo de los exámenes estandarizados y de los resultados no representan sus capacidades, y 3. La equidad en el aula requiere, el ajuste de metodologías, la selección de materiales y la capacitación docente en prácticas de inclusión.

Palabras clave: aulas inclusivas; educación especial; inclusión; hipoacusia; lenguas extranjeras; pérdida auditiva.

Resumo

No âmbito da proteção e defesa dos direitos das minorias, as comunidades devem pesquisar mais sobre os direitos de aprendizagem das pessoas com deficiências auditivas. Este artigo reporta um estudo de caso que examinou as retrospectivas e perspectivas de três hipoacústicos sobre a sua aprendizagem de outro idioma em uma sala de aula integrada. Os dados sobre as retrospectivas se referem às narrativas dos participantes que como adultos, que são hoje, avaliam seu trasfegar nas salas de aula. Os dados sobre as perspectivas se referem àquilo que eles gostariam que mudasse nas comunidades escolares e na sociedade. Para eles, a interpretação da linguagem vai mais além da recepção de sons; requer a leitura da linguagem corporal, do contexto, das atitudes e do afeto. O propósito de apresentar as suas testemunhas é o de contribuir à compreensão sobre como redefiniram sua luta e resistência. Os resultados deste estudo situaram-se nas dimensões: afetiva, atitudinal e comunicativa que envolve a família, os colegas de aula, os docentes e os participantes mesmos. Os resultados indicaram que 1. Primeiros hipoacústicos consideram que podem aprender outro idioma em uma sala de aula; 2. As políticas linguísticas e o manejo das provas padronizadas e dos resultados não representam suas capacidades; e 3. A equidade na sala de aula requer o ajuste de metodologias, a seleção de materiais e a capacitação docente em práticas de inclusão.

Palavras chave: aulas inclusivas; educação especial; inclusão; hipoacústica; línguas estrangeiras; perda auditiva.

Introduction

In 1824, Ludwig Van Beethoven presented the ninth symphony however, the musician was unable to hear people's ovations and euphoria the night of the debut. This almost deaf musician that struggled with his ailment all his life, managed to compose one of the most outstanding works of music (Prevot, 2020). Two centuries after the ninth symphony debut, hearing loss is still invisible and misunderstood. The World Health Organization (2019) estimates that there are 466 million persons with disabling hearing loss (6.1% of the world's population). Many deaf (hereafter D) and hard of hearing individuals (hereafter HHs) struggle to fit the world and receive little help from their communities. In Colombia, 17.3% of people have limitations to hear (DANE, 2005). Furthermore, "sensorineural hypoacusis induced by noise in the workplace has led to a significant increase in reports of hearing damage, resulting in a social and public health problem". (Tilano-Vega et al, 2014).

This case study puts forth the thesis that a disability does not exist in the individual alone but in a society incapable of adjusting to differences. The purpose of this inquiry was to interpret how three HHs aged 18, 20, and 26 assessed their L2 learning. The research question that guided this investigation was: *How do three hard of Hearing individuals make sense of their schooled L2 learning?* The literature presents views from health and education but we could not trace works on the perspectives of the HHs themselves as learners of another language (L2).

This inquiry considered research-based and theory-based literature from a medical and socio-cultural view of hearing loss. For the Ministry of Education of Colombia, (M.E.N, 2007) an "impairment in hearing may affect the student's educational performance" (p.6). Regarding the medical perspective, Jambor & Elliott (2005) explain that "Those who adhere to a medical/pathological view and do not recognize the cultural or linguistic aspects of their deafness, being deaf is a disability and disorder." (p.67). For those who identify with the deaf community, it is a part of their total identity". This sociocultural perspective focuses on the Deaf as a cultural and linguistic minority group with rights to be advocated for. Hard-of-Hearing problems demand more than a technological solution of either an implant or a hearing aid; families and communities need an understanding of discrimination and barriers to access that are bound culturally. This article analyses the narratives of society's failure or refusal to accommodate their difference. We concur with Garden (2010, p.62) that "alternative conceptions of deafness are available and can help both hearing parents and deaf children to adjust positively to the diagnosis and subsequent therapeutic and educational approaches."

HHs within the deafness spectrum are in the middle of two worlds, they do not have enough hearing loss to be deaf or enough hearing capacity to be 'hearing'. Hence, they find challenging to fit a group and understand their identity. Despite the belief

that profound deafness may affect in a greater extent the life of the individuals in comparison with those with residual hearing the author also explains that ‘those with a profound hearing loss are often forced to come to terms with their deafness and to arrange their lives according to this condition.’ (Jambor & Elliott, 2005, p.66). On the other hand, for HHs with a lower level of deafness arrange their lives according to their hearing loss may be more difficult since ‘those with some residual hearing are often caught in the middle since they may do not define themselves as deaf, yet they cannot fully function as hearing in a world that relies on hearing and speech. This may lead to frustrating experiences and a diminished self-regard’ (p.67).

About L2 acquisition, HHs find challenging language articulation and comprehension. ASHA (2005) explains that lack of hearing capacity causes a delay in the development of receptive and expressive communication skills characterized by the misperception of voiceless sounds such as *ch, g, f, k, p, s, or t* and speakers replace or exclude them in their speech. For filling the gaps in understanding HHs may use lip-reading and visual strategies. However, there are limitations for mouth shapes such as */b/, /p/ /m/* look the same. Similarly, words and numbers such as 50,15, or 60,16 sound the same. Most HH children cannot hear word endings such as */s/* or */ed/*. This disturbs verb tenses, plural forms, non-agreement of subject and verb, and possessives. (ASHA, 2005). It also affects L2 learning directly because they find challenging to identify suffixes that add meaning to words.

While in socialization, Jambor & Elliott (2005) express that “strong identification with one’s in-group is assumed to have a positive influence on self-esteem because it provides a sense of belonging and serves as a buffer against the negative impact of prejudice and discrimination” (p.67). In the case of the HHs identifying themselves as members of a group is complicated. Kemmery (2014) concluded that definitions depended on the individual and must be respected and that the feeling of misplacement increases the risk of isolation and depression.

Furthermore, Díaz & Cubillos (2014) identified four discourses toward teaching an L2 to HHs: *approbation, uncertainty, skepticism, and constructive criticism*. Their study concluded that the power of attitude constituted the response to turn a difficulty into a possibility. These discourses were reflected in our case study. Our three participants felt capable of mastering an L2 in integrated classrooms, meaning that they do not feel they should attend special education classrooms. Beltrán, Martínez, and Vargas (2015) explain that the law establishes that schools that enroll students with limitations must gradually adapt their plans following the principle of integration to serve all learners. In this sense, *integrated institutions* and *classrooms*, refer to those that enroll students with or without special conditions in the same educational space. However, the three participants expressed that their schools rarely had curricular, organizational, pedagogical adaptations, of physical, technological resources, educational materials, training teacher improvement, and, in general, of accessibility.

The three HHs' narrative memories receive the name of retrospectives and what they would like to see happening are their perspectives. This case study is coherent with the call for educators to gain knowledge of the psychological and social functioning of D/HH expressed in Dogamala et al., (2016). Hearing loss is not a limitation but a challenge for schools, instructors, learners, and all of society. Disabilities exist because the communities perceive them as a disease instead of a form of diversity. Communities who devote time and resources to educate parents, teachers and others can offer a deeper understanding of a disability. We consider that the issues discussed here value teacher knowledge and experience and we call for reinforcing them to guide and inspire.

This report first presents the problem in the voices of the three participants, then discusses the background and method. The results are grouped under affective, communicative, and attitudinal dimensions.

The problem in the Voices of three Hard of Hearing L2 Learners

Three hard-of-hearing individuals (HHs), that go by the pseudonym of famous HHs *Ludwig* (van Beethoven), (Bill) *Clinton*, and (Thomas Alva) *Edison*, offered the views of their L2 experiences in integrated (other calls them regular) schools. They attended a specialized clinic where one of the authors of this article, an HH herself, does volunteer work. This section echoes their voices, which the authors of this article translated into English. For Ludwig:

My classmates see me as someone who stays away from them. That is odd because they perceive that I hate them and other countless things. It angers me to give that impression. ...All the whispering and background noise is quite hard to assimilate. I don't know, one cannot concentrate.

Ludwig's perspectives and retrospectives touched upon underlying beliefs that account for the feelings and behaviors of the actors involved and he said he advocated for inclusion. Clinton elaborated on problematic areas of the school environment.

My classmates see me as a calm person, who sometimes does not understand, but who is a good and friendly person.

And then clearly if I hear background noise, chatting, and knowing that I am doing my best to follow the teacher becomes a nuisance that puts you out of the game practically. It is like that people should become aware that I am giving my best to hear the teacher.

Many times teachers used to play a tape for listening work, which I found difficult to understand. I almost never caught what they said. I had to remind the teacher of my condition. In my case, I think that large classes are a problem for us. So I told the teacher how ... sometimes teachers go around the classroom because they also have to give priority to those who are in the back of the room.

The testimonies suggest that schools, teachers, and schoolmates' negative attitudes affect HHs; they need more cognitive, affective, and social support to overcome anxiety and frustration. Marschark, Spencer, Adams, & Sapere (2011) remark the difference in cognitive processes between D/HHs and hearing students. They explain that "some of those differences are the product of the reliance of D/HH individuals on visuospatial processing; some result of lesser access to incidental learning during childhood, and others reflect – in a circular fashion – the failure of educators to recognize and accommodate the classroom strengths and needs of D/HH" (p.5). Edison's testimony corroborates the other two angles of the problem.

At school, I had to be as visual as possible, but it was difficult because the teacher was in a corner of the room, moved, and then I asked her if she could speak a little slower because I did not understand her and she did not want. That is, she did not want to help me with that because she had to teach a lesson and everything. She did not spend a couple of minutes writing the topic so I felt as if she did not care.

The perspectives dealt with aspects of others' attitudes, behaviors, and emotions that are worth investigating. Hearing loss is often misunderstood and HHs tend to experience loneliness and isolation due to misconceptions. As Hellen Keller (in Goodreads, 2019) pointed, "blindness separates us from things; deafness separates us from people." Ludwig, Clinton, and Edison reported the need for solidarity of teachers and classmates because classroom practices affect HHs understanding and emotions.

Background.

The first issue is the communication barrier. The HH condition can be more complex than profound deafness in terms of language acquisition. The deaf can fully communicate in their L1, sign language, while many HHs cannot because they grew up as oralists with no exposure to signs. These considerations were taken into account in the data analysis of our study. Jambor & Elliott (2005) state that HHs need further cues, such as face-to-face communication with constant eye contact, lip-reading, and understanding body language. Since these are rarely available in encounters with hearing people, HHs are likely to lose key information. With their residual auditory capacity, HHs acquire the mother tongue as L1 and another language as an L2, but the obstacles in communication are permanent in both, "even the use of hearing aids cannot fully solve the problem since these assistive devices cannot make other people's speech clearer, only a bit louder." (Jambor & Elliott, 2005, p.66)

Education policy in Colombia states that English is “essential” for any society interested in being part of global academic, cultural, and economic dynamics (M.E.N, 2006). However, priority should be given to mitigate the segregation of minorities. M.E.N (2004) regulates the L2 requirement for students with hearing loss mentioning that ‘If possible, they should master spoken and written English or be exempted from this requirement (...). However, if a reference to documents in another language is necessary for the development of a subject, the deaf student, like any other, should look for strategies to access information’ (M.E.N, 2004, p.12). The documents on basic learning rights for English (M.E.N, 2016 b) and the suggested curriculum for English (M.E.N, 2016 c) do not contain any reference to disabilities. Ramirez, Tapasco & Zuluaga (2009) reported an increase in the enrolment of deaf students in higher education. Similarly, Cardona & Pereira (2011) state that as part of the policy, professionals need to achieve a B2 level including the D/HH population. In contrast, ICFES (2017) expresses that:

Persons who, due to a proven diagnosis, present limitations that make it difficult for them to learn foreign languages will be excluded from taking the English module. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with any condition of cognitive, auditory, or visual impairment, regardless of whether or not they require an interpreter (Article 10).

Exemptions from the FL requirement signals low expectations from institutions and contradict the demand for English language proficiency for professionals since HHs also require it to graduate from the university. INSOR (2009) and Ochoa, Angulo & Aparicio (2017) analyzed the current policies on the D/HH population and concluded that there is a need for an inclusive educational model that responds to labor needs and the growth of their participation in society. In sum, learning rights demands actions for inclusive practices, adjustments to the course and materials design, formation, and adaptation. In the quest for equity, the exemption of requirements should be interpreted as exclusion.

Scholars like Szymanski, Lutz, Shahan, and Gala (2013) identified the lack of knowledge as the main obstacle in teaching that results in low expectations, inadequate perception of educators in considering hearing loss as an excuse for learners not to do their work. Similarly, Domagała-Zyśk (2013) reports that teaching EFL to D/HH that despite problems derived from lip-reading, they showed the capacity to produce texts at different levels of complexity. About roles, Szymanski, Lutz, Shahan, & Gala or Domagała-Zyśk (2013) claim that being a pedagogue for the deaf is not enough but knowing about the psychological and social functioning of D/HH is compulsory and highlight the role of the commitment of both teachers and learners for developing practices outside of school boundaries.

Domagała-Zyśk and Kontra (2016) collected strategies for D/HH mentioning the benefit of cued speech for producing intelligible talking and better comprehension

because it shows speech visually and in real-time resulting useful for developing literacy, speech, and intensive as well as extensive listening. Adaptations and monitoring of audio material to the HHs' styles and world knowledge are a must. While Guiberson (2014) found that D/HH children can acquire an L2 without affecting L1 development. L1 proved stronger in the bilingual children than in the monolinguals who participated in that study suggesting that D/HHs benefit from L2 instruction. Likewise, Muñoz (2015) claims that D/HHs can achieve a proper level of L2.

Method

This investigation was based on the subjectivity of three individuals' understandings. We followed a qualitative research "characterized by an interpretative paradigm which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual" (Rebojli, 2013, p.30).

The context of this study was a medical center specialized in technical support and therapies for the D/HHs in Bogotá, Colombia. It provided the contacts and served as the place of encounter with the participants whose pseudonyms correspond to famous HHs: *Edison* for Thomas Alva Edison, *Clinton* for President Bill Clinton, and *Ludwig* for Ludwig Van Beethoven. Table 1 summarizes the participant's characteristics. Two are university students and the other graduated from college. The three have profound hearing loss; one still benefits from hearing aids but the others have cochlear implants that are no longer useful. Their diagnoses took place in the first stage of their lives and since then, they counted with the technological and medical support available. They attended integrated schools, are oralists, and do not know sign language. They learned English in Colombia and afterward stayed in English-speaking countries.

Table 1. Characterization of the participants

Characteristics	Edison	Clinton	Ludwig
Age	26	20	18
Diagnosis's age	1	3	3
Hearing loss degree	Profound	Profound	Profound
Type	Sensorineural Bilateral	Sensorineural Bilateral	Sensorineural Bilateral
Technical help	Cochlear implant	Hearing aids	Cochlear implant and hearing aids
Language therapy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communication	Oral	Oral	Oral
Level of education	University graduate	University student	University student
English level	B2	B1	B1

The analysis via narratives constituted a way to make sense of the experience to construct the meaning of their L2 learning contexts. For Guerrero (2011) "Narrative is

a system of understanding that we use to construct and express meaning in our daily lives” (p.89). Hearing loss was explored beyond the medical perspective and considered social, affective, attitudinal, and communicative issues informed. The narratives were derived from interviews and autobiographical writings. They compiled experiences that were socially situated knowledge constructions that involved meanings and values (Polkinghorne, 1995)

Following grounded theory principles, the data collection and analysis were interrelated. The data organization consisted of grouping according to the dimensions and units of analysis identified. For interpreting, the data and the hypotheses were scrutinized. The data collection took four sessions: in the first, they did autobiographic writings (Appendix 1). The second involved the application of a semi-structured written interview (Appendix 2). The third had a semi-structured oral interview, (Appendix 3) and the fourth a semi-structured interview (Appendix 4). Table 2 summarizes the dimensions and categories of analysis. The perspectives and retrospectives were grouped in categories of analysis within three dimensions of human development: *Affective, Communicative, and Attitudinal*. These allowed the understanding of L2 learning processes.

Table 2. Categories of Analysis

Dimension	Categories
Affective	Emotions and Socialization
Communicative	Communication with teachers and classmates Self-perception of communication
Attitudinal	Attitudes of the educational community Self- perception of attitude

The dimensions collected the meaning that participants assigned to emotions, socialization communication, and attitudes. Ocampo (2011) states that “the communicative dimension is known as the group of potentialities of humans that allows them to make sense and meaning for themselves and represent it through the language for interacting with others” (p.60). In our analysis, affection, emotions, socialization, communication, and attitudes interweave. Attitude constitutes a psychological construct of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors which accounts for emotions, behaviors, and actions forming ideas and opinion. Díaz (2002) states ‘Attitudes refer to something concrete, that is to say, the attitude is toward an object, person or particular situation. Attitudes are not innate in humans but learned about what is favorable or unfavorable for them, and it makes them behave in one way or another (p.152). In this case study, the foci on the *Affective, Communicative, and Attitudinal dimensions* shed light on the understandings of schooled L2 learning for HH students. It encompassed the three participants’ integral development as well as the linguistic and pedagogical aspects.

Results

The results are in line with the *Affective, Communicative, and Attitudinal* dimensions examined. The Affective Dimension comprised the classmates, teachers' and families' empathy -or lack of it- towards HHs' condition. The Communicative Dimension encompassed the participants' perception of communication with teachers, and their self-perception of communication. The Attitudinal Dimension involved the perception of the teachers' attitudes, institutions, and their attitudes towards L2 learning. The results responded to the research question, How do three hard of Hearing individuals make sense of their schooled L2 learning? The participants made sense of the L2 learning process in the narratives which analysis yielded the results discussed next.

Result No. 1. HHs Feel Misrepresented in Current Educational Policies and standardized exams.

There seems to be a myth about the lack of capacity of HHs to learn an L2 in Colombia. The low expectations go beyond doubting their capacities and it is reflected in how scores in standardized national exams are reported. Saber 11, is a high school exit examination administered annually in Colombian high schools for school leavers. The exam is similar to the SAT and ACT standard examinations taken by high school students in the United States. The scores count to access for admission to higher education and financial aid, but the section of the English language is not reported for HHs. HHs' scores are not reported in the added results that show their position in reference groups because they claimed that these may affect schools' and institutions' scores.

Similarly, the Colombian state examination of the quality of Higher Education Saber Pro, which is part of a group of instruments to exercise government inspection and supervision of the educational field does not report HH's scores in the added scores. The three participants reason that their learning rights are ignored in current educational policies. Very few of the 17.3% of the population with hearing loss in Colombia receive support from the health or the educational system. Their learning rights are affected by the lack of resources and the development of communication tools that give the deaf access to education. For Tilano-Vega et al (2014), "The history of exclusion endured by the hearing impaired continues to this day, despite policy decisions" (p.2). The administration and scoring of standardized national exams present contradictions and misunderstandings of the capacities of HH individuals. Regarding L2, ICFES (2016) states that:

Those who, due to proven diagnosis presents a limitation that hinders foreign language learning will be excluded from taking the English section of the test

and, therefore, will not obtain a score. The foregoing includes, but is not limited to, persons with any condition of cognitive, auditory, or visual disability, regardless of whether or not they require an interpreter. (Resolution 455, Article 5)

The above is inconsistent with the ability that HHs have to learn an L2 successfully. The English test does not differ from other disciplines. *Saber 11* or *Saber Pro* do not evaluate listening comprehension. Hence, exempting HHs to take this exam for considering L2 acquisition difficult has no grounds. Clinton illustrates this point:

Well, I had a good score; it was 70 percent. Well, that was a long time ago because now the rating is different, but 70% was very good because in Colombia the average back then was 40.

Unfortunately, students with any limitations are not only exempted from the English language section but are not reported in scoring either. It is evident in the article 5 that explains that “The percentiles indicated in numerals 2.2, 2.3 and 3.2 of Article 5 will not be calculated for people with cognitive, auditory or visual disabilities” (Par.2). These policies show the low expectation that the Colombian State and government have toward the population with disabilities. Nevertheless, the M.E.N claims that policies aim to include students in schools as some schools do not register students with special conditions because these consider it will affect the institution score in *Saber 11* or *Saber Pro*.

Exclusion from the calculation does not give test-takers, with a special condition, the opportunity to know their position at the national level, in their reference group or cohort in both generic and specific competencies, and this also limits the access to benefits designed for students with high scores such as scholarships and credits condonation. On the other hand, the test booklet is the same for all students without adaptation, and the English module is not mandatory for students with disabilities. In other countries, if you have a documented disability, you may be eligible for accommodations such as extended time, extra and extended breaks, someone who reads to you instead of audio-recordings, large-type test books or Braille test books, etc. ICFES do not adapt to any disability including blindness. These policies assure that this is the ‘best way to include’ students. ICFES (2016) states:

The examiners of any of the higher education quality state exams that present at least one condition of disability, in the terms defined by the Colombian norms, will not be included in the population of reference groups for the calculation of aggregates. (Article 9)

The above explains why Clinton decided to register as a regular student. He took *Saber Pro*, but he did not mention his condition in the registration for the exam because he knew it would complicate his process and test administrators would not

consider his good score at all. *No, [laughing] regular, because if I did it as someone with a disability, they would have sent me to a university with sign language.*

Test administrators do not seem to understand that people with auditory difficulties do not always need an interpreter but other adaptations, for example, explaining to proctors the dynamics of the exams and how to give clear instructions. Similarly, Ludwig said about ICFES resolution:

Well, you have to see it in many ways, first that they [institutions] should treat you in the same conditions of others who take the test, They should also ensure that you are in the right environment to take it. You must continue insisting until they allow you to take the test without limitations, nor prevent you from competing at the same level as people who do not have any type of disability.

Ludwig understands that inclusion does not imply excluding students from modules but providing a proper environment. Regarding this, Edison reacted:

I do not really agree with that because first, it seems to me that it is discrimination because they do not know what the person is capable of doing, speaking, listening, etc., so we have the right to take everything, everything that is included there. It seems to me that it is a form of exclusion.

This resolution limits the HHs' opportunity of learning about their placement. Recognition means to support as 'Information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, esteemed, and a member of a network of mutual obligations' (Cobb, 1976, p.300). The author explains that the support involves three types of information 'Information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, information leading the subject to believe that he is esteemed and valued, and information that one is valued and esteemed is most effectively proclaimed in public. (Cobb, 1976, p.300). The three participants estimate that these policies affect learning rights. Being these actions a contradiction to develop inclusive dynamics, schools require understanding resources, adjustments, and exemptions. This study holds the view that not only HHs have the same ability to learn an L2 as any other but consider the so-called "inclusive policies" a form of exclusion that does not guarantee rights.

Result No. 2 HHs Consider that Schools Need to Train Teachers in Inclusive Practices and Use of Resources.

The data revealed the difficulties derived from a lack of understanding of HH's. Schools should provide continued training in inclusive practices such as the establishment of a dialogue with learners and their families to identify their needs. Instructors should develop the capacity to select or create materials and tools that facilitate communication with the hearing impaired. Figure 1 summarizes the

perspectives and retrospectives of three individuals that allowed the identification of critical points to reflect on.



Figure 1. Hard-of-Hearing Perspectives on their schooled L2 acquisition

Clinton reported: *“My fear in class is not being able to understand what the teacher says...My fear in class is not understanding audio conversations well. Moreover, the uses of audio tracks increase the anxiety of the HHs. For Edison, “My fear in class is not understanding audio conversations well.” For Ludwig, “One of the major difficulties was to be able to listen to the teacher in English and the audios that were played on the recorder since my hearing equipment did not facilitate me to discriminate the audios with quality.”*

Instructors should not evaluate something that the HHs are incapable of doing. There are ways to do it; the main recommendation is selecting materials with high context, specifying the situation, purpose of communication, characters, roles, and visual support, among other things. To test listening, L2 instructors can apply a one-to-one interview or dictation.

The Communicative Dimension constitutes the most complex scenario for HHs. They require support from teachers, schoolmates, and the community. Ludwig articulated the importance of making others aware of the condition and inclusion:

Years ago I had a talk with my teachers to explain a little about my experience in the school, to demystify what had happened for I spent my childhood in the

same school, fortunately. Then I want to go back and convince them to take a step further towards inclusion [by learning from] my particular situation.

Ludwig described his anguish and calls for educating others to recognize the hearing loss, understand its implications, and offer support:

The most distressing situation was the thoughts I had to myself when the teacher presented a topic and there were hustle and bustle. I could pick some ideas but understood 10% of them. And I scream in my head ¡quiet! On no, no. This is too hard..!

Clinton commented that equity also involves having the same opportunity to access input and for that, the HHs' effort is not enough; others' contributions are also needed. Depending on the distance of the speaker, communication can be more or less affected. Ludwig refers to the activities in which classmates are located in different positions around the classroom, making it difficult to follow the activity. *"I do not understand debates and do not manage to join in. Classes in which there someone speaks here, another speaks there, or over there."*

Debates can work with HH pupils with some adaptations such as controlling noise, promoting turn-taking, asking speakers to face the HH person. A round table or panel would be a suitable arrangement. In sum, communication with HH requires the support of others to facilitate understanding and leave behind prejudices and misconceptions.

In the Attitudinal Dimension, gaining knowledge about the condition and attending to the HHs' requests facilitate the process. People tend to see HHs as misanthropic, rude, and with other negative characteristics product of the lack of connection with them. Ludwig recalled his attempts to say that he could not quite follow the class:

The teacher was a boastful US marine. I suffered a little in class, for the recordings he used a recorder were from the 1980s. This hindered my liking the class. I go and look for the teacher but his attitude (it is offensive) a very strange attitude is strange, an attitude that does not motivate [more] is worse, it is like those times that teachers say "Come on."

Disdain affects HH'S motivation. Szymanski et al. (2013) denote the limited expectations and the misperception that hearing loss is an excuse. The re-examination begins with schools accepting the students' circumstances and particularities, not pretending that they emulate the hearing students. The three participants agreed that language policies, classroom practices, materials, and standardized exams rarely took into account their capabilities or needs.

Result No. 2 coincides with that of Szymanski, et al, (2013) and Díaz & Cubillos (2014) who state that limited understanding of HHs does not allow the development

of positive attitudes towards inclusion. Instructors should consider knowledge about HH, dialogue with the student to understand their needs, and positive attitudes. This result is also consistent with the findings by Muñoz (2015) in which support makes a difference. This also responds to the need for an educational model of inclusion put forth by Ochoa et al. (2017) and Ramirez et al (2009). The three results derived from the perspectives of stakeholders represent a basis for reflecting on inclusive education. The Ministry of education (British Columbia, 2007) produced a resource guide for teaching the D/HHs that coincides with some of the ideas furthered by the three HHs of our study. Tilano-Vega *et al* (2014) reviewed human tools, software, televised tools, cochlear implants, and recognition systems. Schools need to know about resources.

Result No. 3 Hard of Hearing Individuals Feel Capable of Mastering an L2 in Integrated Classrooms.

Evidence indicated that the three HHs feel they can achieve good L2 proficiency in integrated classrooms displaying self-commitment resiliency and advocacy. These aspects are evidenced in the following excerpts. In the Affective Dimension, positive interaction with instructors and schoolmates was identified as a determining factor not only for L2 development but for helping HHs feel their value. Clinton affirmed: *“I consider that my level of English is B1. Although in terms of communication I would be more advanced. I feel comfortable and calm in my English classes.”*

Similarly, Ludwig said *‘I’ve been learning English for ten years’* and hold a certificate of Upper- intermediate level with a 6.5 score in the IELTS test. Edison displayed self-confidence in his proficiency: *I don’t really speak English perfectly, but I manage and people understand me. I suppose I would be between B1 and B2.* The student shows he recognizes his limitations but also his strengths hence, he manages to communicate despite the difficulties evidencing resiliency and positive attitude.

In the Communicative Dimension, Clinton showed self-confidence to take part in integrated classrooms. He said that repeating may be frustrating for schoolmates and instructors. Nevertheless, they must understand that it means rephrasing and looking for clarity. Edison said: *When I ask people to repeat, they kindly do, people rarely get angry or ignore me.* Asking for support displays advocacy because the participants stood up for their rights to access knowledge in the understanding that the responsibility does not fall on them alone but depend on others.

In the attitudinal Dimension, participants agreed that they had to develop a proactive attitude. Edison showed this pro-activity. He looked for ways to understand and developed strategies for autonomous learning: *I am considering improving my English because I want to learn a third language and I do not consider this step convenient without having mastered English. (Edison).*

The participant explained that he not only wanted to learn a language but master it. Also, he expects to learn more languages. His words exemplify self-commitment and goal-orientation.

Similarly, Ludwig showed motivation. Ludwig not only reported having the strength to achieve but manifesting awareness of his capacity, and considered that he could perform better.

For example, I also [have it] I need more concentration to do something, even to fry an egg, to draw, to write or whatever. When we are alone, if we are in an optimal environment to concentrate, I think we can do better than others. That is my point of view.

In sum, the participants reported having the motivation to study other L2 and confidence in their capacities to execute this aim through their autonomy, ability, positive attitude, and self-advocacy. This result is consistent with those of Guiberson (2014) who provided evidence of the capacity and benefit of learning an L2 for HH students. It also concurs with Muñoz (2015) who recognized the HHs' skills and potential in integrated classrooms. Their capacity to master an L2 despite multiple obstacles deserves the attention of institutions to debunk the myths about disabilities and stop the evident segregation through the implementation of truly inclusive policies and practices.

Discussion and conclusions

This study explored the components of schooled L2 learning for the HHs from human experience. The Communicative, Affective, and Attitudinal dimensions supported the multi-layered results of our study whose purpose was to inquire about how HHs understood and coped in integrated classrooms. The study responded to the research question *How do three hard of Hearing individuals make sense of their schooled L2 learning?* Their perspectives were built through their experiences and the retrospectives were their opinion and beliefs on past events at different ages. Accordingly, the evidence indicated that the HHs of this study made sense of L2 learning as a process in which they developed strategies to overcome the limitations of integrated classrooms. The struggle became manageable when they counted with the assistance of schools, instructors, classmates, and family. The participants echoed messages of solidarity, adaptation, teaching, resilience, exclusion, or disdain. The main standpoints of this study are:

First, despite the difficulties, HHs felt they could learn an L2 in integrated classrooms. Their capacity to learn an L2 passes through their confidence in their ability. They reported being as capable as their classmates. They understood that

support facilitates their process and helps them feel the integration and acceptance of the community.

Second, participants made a call for inclusion to policymakers and all of society. Inclusion means adapting practices and evaluation, not excepting people. Standardized tests, such as the school-leavers test, and the university-exit standardized test (Saber Pro in Colombia) in which HHs are placed in a testing center, should be adapted to their needs, and have a trained proctor. The English language section, which does not comprise a listening component at all, should appear in the HHs' scorecard. English language majors as well as others require the scores as academic credentials, and eventually, to apply for financial aid. The good news is that late in 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled that the testing organization, ICFES (2019), had to change the administration of the tests guaranteeing the participation of students with a reported disability. This order should not impede HHS to choose (i) the type of exam, (ii) the adjustment and support, and other favorable conditions to take the test, and (iii) taking or not the section of the English test.

Lobbying at school communities should be done to abide by regulations. They should, for example, inform the staff that hearing aids have a limitation for the discrimination of speech from tracks or loudspeakers or even for natural conversations and that excepting HHs from projects, tests, quizzes, and other activities do not contribute to an equalitarian education. Schools have to enforce regulations to stop underestimating those who are different, not by choice, by for a health condition.

Third, HHs consider that schools need to train the staff in inclusive practices. Instructors need to learn about the condition and understand its implications and adaptations. They should develop a positive and dialogic attitude and have high expectations about those learners. Language instructors, for example, need to learn to assess learners in one-on-one conferences. Talking directly is one way to support affectively, socially, and cognitively for inclusion. Training in-class communication needs to start with the instructors' and classmate's awareness of how to facilitate HHs' understanding of speech, it includes, talking clearly, pausing between sentences, repeating, rephrasing and writing, and most importantly, accepting them as they are. HHs require the support of classmates for avoiding chatting or noisy situations that reduce the hearing capacity. Teachers can learn to implement, for instance, a rotating buddy system for classmates to assist HHs.

A limitation of this study dealt with the issue of subjectivity, which is common in qualitative research. One of the authors is a HH individual herself, yet she chose not to write herself in the research. The methodological ways of proceeding with and writing up research were careful about too subjective judgments. Nonetheless, personal involvement brought empathy with the participants which allowed the collection of quality data to contribute to the field of ELT by sensitizing communities about equal treatment to people with hearing loss.

References

- ASHA. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2005). *Effects of hearing loss on Development*. Audiology Information Series.
- British Columbia (2007). Ministry of education. Hard of Hearing and Deaf Students: A Resource Guide to Support Classroom Teachers.
- Beltrán-Villamizar, Y. I., Martínez-Fuentes, Y. L. y Vargas-Beltrán, A. S. (2015). El sistema educativo colombiano en el camino hacia la inclusión. Avances y retos. *Educ. Educ.* Vol. 18, No. 1, 62-75. DOI: 10.5294/edu.2015.18.1.4
- Cardona, D. (2011). *Frequent communicative practices in an English Inclusive classroom with deaf and hearing students*. [Trabajo de Grado. Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira.] Repositorio Institucional UTP. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e902/669f477d16fb2d8e0ddc68d86bbdad8d7d7f.pdf>
- Cobb, S. (1976). Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 38, (5), 300-314.
- Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística. (2005) *Censo General 2005: Discapacidad en Personas con Limitaciones Permanentes*. At <https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/discapacidad.pdf>
- Díaz, E.M. (2002). El factor actitudinal en la atención a la diversidad. *Profesorado, revista de currículum y formación del profesorado*. (6)151-165.
- Díaz, M., & Cubillos, J. (2014). *Interesante sería, pero pues ¿Quién la daría? porque como no hay nadie que se dedique a ello. Discursos en torno a la enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés escrito a estudiantes sordos*. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.
- Domagała-Zyśk, E. (2013). *English as a Foreign Language for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons in Europe*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Kul.
- Domagała-Zyśk, E., & Kontra, E. H. (2016). *English as a foreign language for deaf and hard of hearing persons: challenges and strategies*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Florez-Martelo L. (2019). *Perspectives and Retrospectives of the Hard of Hearing on their Schooled Foreign Language Learning*. [Trabajo de Grado. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.]Repositorio Institucional.
- Garden, R. (2010). Language, Identity, and Belonging: Deaf Cultural and Narrative Perspectives. *The Journal of Clinical Ethics* 21, 2. 159-62.

- Goodreads (2019). *Helen Keller quotes*. Consulted on February 13th. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/391727-blindness-separates-people-from-things-deafness-separates-people-from-people>
- Guerrero, A. L. (2011). Narrative as a resource for the display of self and identity: The narrative construction of an oppositional identity. *Colombian Applied Linguistics*, 13 (2), 88-99.
- Guiberson, M. (2014). *Bilingual skills of deaf/hard of hearing children from Spain*. Laramie, USA: University of Wyoming.
- ICFES (2019). Resolución 675 de septiembre 4 de 2019. Por la cual se reglamenta el proceso de inscripción a los exámenes que realiza el ICFES.
- ICFES. (2017). *Resolución 470 de 2017*. Bogotá: Diario Oficial No. 50.301 del 21 de julio.
- INSOR. (2009). Observatorio social población sorda colombiana. Bogotá.
- Kemmerly, M. (2014). Are you Deaf or Hard of Hearing? Which Do You Go by? Perceptions of students with Hearing loss. Dissertation: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Jambor, E., & Elliott, M. (2005). Self-esteem and Coping Strategies among Deaf Students. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 10 (1), 63-81.
- Marschark, M. M., Spencer, P. E., Adams, J., & Sapere, P. (2011). Teaching Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: Teaching to the Strengths and Needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26 (1), 17-23.
- M.E.N. Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2016b). *Derechos básicos de aprendizaje de inglés: Grados Transición a 5º de primaria*.
- M.E.N. Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2016c). *Suggested curriculum structure: English 6th to 11th grade*.
- M.E.N. Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2004). *Estudiantes sordos en Educación Superior, equiparación de oportunidades*. Bogotá: INSOR.
- Muñoz, P. (2015). *La Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera a niños sordos e Hipoacúsicos incluidos en educación común en la ciudad de San Juan, Argentina*. [Trabajo de Grado. Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.
- Ocampo, O. (2011). La dimensión lingüística comunicativa: eje para el desarrollo de las demás dimensiones del desarrollo humano. *Revista Cultura del Cuidado*. (8), 58-66.

- Ochoa, D., Angulo, J., & Aparicio, L. (2017). Inclusión social de la población con limitación auditiva en la educación superior colombiana. *Revista Logos de Ciencia y Tecnología*, (9) 1, 197-209.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1995). Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. (8) 1, 5-23
- Prevot, D (2020). *Ludwig van Beethoven at Heiligenstadt*. Consulted on march 11th 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.lvbeethoven.com/Bio/BiographyHeiligenstadtTestament.html>
- Ramírez, J., Tapasco, J., & Zuluaga, A. (2009). *Characteristics of the Methodology employed with Hearing Impaired Learners in the EFL Classroom*. [Trabajo de Grado. Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira.
- Rebojli, B. (2013). The Case Study as a Type of Qualitative Research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, (1). 28–43.
- Szymanski, C., Lutz, L., Shahan, C., & Gala, N. (2013). *Critical Needs of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. Washington, D.C.: Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University.
- Tilano-Vega, LM. Cárdenas-Torres, AM. *et al.* (2014). Tools facilitating communication for the deaf. *Educación y Educadores*. (17) 3, 468-480.
- World Health Organization (2019). *Deafness Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/deafness/estimates/en/>

Authors

***Rigoberto Castillo** holds a Ph.D. in Education and an M.A in applied linguistics from The University of Texas at Austin. Professor at Universidad Distrital and member of the research group Formación de Educadores. Guest lecturer at post-graduate programs at Universidad de San Buenaventura and Universidad de Caldas, Colombia, Fulbright alumnus, and recipient of the National Award of Asociación Colombiana de Profesores de Inglés (ASOCOPI-TESOL).

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9527-0120>

Laura Stefany Flórez-Martelo holds a B.A. in Education with a major in English Language Teaching from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Colombia. Her undergraduate research work received a distinction. Recipient of the Turkish Language School Scholarship. Ms. Florz-Martelo has participated in several international education conferences to advocate for inclusion and debunk the myths and misconceptions about hard-of-hearing individuals, like herself.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0794-2709>

Appendix 1

Session No 1

¡Cuéntame sobre ti!/ Tell me about you.

A continuación, puedes contarnos sobre ti. En una página, puedes compartir lo que desees, contar experiencias o escribir una breve autobiografía. Next, tell me about you. In one page share what you want, tell experiences, write a short autobiography.

Appendix 2

Written Interview

Sesión 3: A continuación, encontrarás algunas frases que debes completar según tus experiencias.

Ejemplo:

Cuando no entiendo algo	<i>yo...me quedo callado</i>
Aprendo inglés porque	
Cuando no entiendo algo yo	
Cuando pido que me repitan las personas	
Si me repiten muchas veces las personas	
Cuando estoy en clase de inglés me siento	
Mis miedos durante las clases son	
Mis profesores	
Mi familia	
Mis amigos	
Las instituciones	
Lo que me gusta del inglés es	
Lo que no me gusta del inglés es	
¿Cómo me veo a mi mismo?	
¿Cuáles son mis fortalezas y mis debilidades?	
Como pienso que otros me ven	
Mi familia me ve como	
Mis compañeros de clase me ven como	
Mis profesores me ven como	

A continuación, relata una anécdota que hayas vivido en una clase de inglés y que haya tenido relación con las dificultades auditivas Appendix 3: Structured- Interview

Appendix 3

Structured- Interview

Session No. 2. Interview

1. ¿Qué tipo de experiencia tienes aprendiendo inglés? Nombra el tipo de institución, nivel de inglés, describe en términos generales toda la experiencia que tengas aprendiendo inglés como lengua extranjera
 2. ¿Durante el proceso de aprendizaje de inglés cuales han sido las mayores dificultades?
-

Appendix 4.

Semi-structured Interview

- Session 1 ¿Qué experiencias han tenido aprendiendo inglés? ¿Qué nivel de inglés tienes? ¿Cuáles han sido las principales dificultades para aprender el idioma? ¿Por qué aprendes inglés?
- Session 2 ¿Qué estrategias usan cuando no entiendes algo? ¿Cuánto puedes captar leyendo los labios, en porcentaje? ¿Qué experiencia negativa tienes aprendiendo inglés? ¿Te ha sentido en desventaja por tu condición?
- Session 3 ¿Qué piensas sobre la evaluación en personas con discapacidad auditiva? ¿Debe ser la evaluación del aprendizaje igual o diferente? ¿Qué recomendaciones darías a los docentes de inglés que tienen estudiantes con hipoacusia? ¿Qué experiencias has tenido con las voces, con los tipos de voces, con el ruido de fondo?
- Session 4 ¿Qué mitos giran en torno a la hipoacusia?
- ¿Cuál es la reacción de las personas cuando dices que eres hipoacúsico?
- ¿Somos sordos o somos hipoacúsicos?
-

How to reference this article: Castillo, R., & Flórez-Martelo, L. S. (2020). Voices of the Hard of Hearing on their Schooled L2 Learning: A Case Study: . *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 167-190. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.822>

Challenges in the Design and Implementation of an English Placement Test for a Colombian Public University¹

Desafíos en el Diseño e Implementación de una Prueba de Clasificación de Inglés para una Universidad Pública Colombiana

Alexander Ramírez^{2*}

Universidad del Valle, Colombia

¹ Received: November 12th 2019/ Accepted: September 7th 2020

² alexander.ramirez.e@correounivalle.edu.co

Abstract

This reflection paper disseminates the design and implementation of an English placement test for first semester students from different majors. This design was carried out within the framework of a research project in a Colombian public university. The article has a twofold purpose: to scrutinize the stages leading to a test, and to highlight the complexity that underlies the process of conceiving evaluation, so that language teachers who embark for the first time on the task of designing placement exams have a model and can anticipate vicissitudes of academic and administrative nature that may arise. The conclusions derived from the process of construction and implementation of the test highlight the lack of training and literacy in the area of language testing, as well as the existing tensions between academic expectations and the administration within a university institution.

Key words: language testing; placement test; assessment; evaluation; test design

Resumen

Este artículo de reflexión disemina el diseño e implementación de una prueba de clasificación en inglés para estudiantes de primer semestre en diversos programas académicos. Tal diseño se llevó a cabo en el marco de un proyecto de investigación en una universidad pública colombiana. El artículo tiene un doble propósito: diseccionar las etapas conducentes a una prueba y resaltar la complejidad que subyace a la concepción de procesos evaluativos, de manera que los docentes de lengua que se embarcan por primera vez en la tarea de diseñar exámenes de clasificación tengan un modelo y puedan prever las diversas vicisitudes de índole académica y administrativa que se pueden presentar. Las conclusiones derivadas del proceso de construcción e implementación de la prueba remarcan la falta de formación y literacidad en el área de diseño de pruebas, así como las tensiones existentes entre las expectativas académicas y la administración en el seno de una institución universitaria.

Palabras clave: evaluación de lenguas; examen de clasificación; evaluación; diseño de pruebas.

Resumo

Este artigo de reflexão dissemina o desenho e implementação de uma prova de classificação em inglês para estudantes de primeiro semestre em diversos programas acadêmicos. Tal desenho foi realizado no âmbito de um projeto de pesquisa em uma universidade pública colombiana. O artigo tem um duplo propósito: analisar as etapas que conduzem a uma prova, e ressaltar a complexidade que subjaz à concepção de processos avaliativos, de maneira que os docentes de língua que se embarcam pela primeira vez na tarefa de desenhar provas de classificação, tenham um modelo e possam prever as diversas vicissitudes de índole acadêmica e administrativa que se possam apresentar. As conclusões derivadas do processo de construção e implementação da prova remarcam a falta de formação e alfabetização na área de desenho de provas, bem como as tensões existentes entre as expectativas acadêmicas e a administração dentro de uma instituição universitária.

Palavras chave: avaliação de línguas; prova de classificação; avaliação; desenho de provas.

Introduction

The use of tests to keep track of progress and measure users' language proficiency constitutes an ongoing and essential activity in the field of foreign language assessment, evaluation, and testing processes (Douglas, 2010). However, the literature on language testing in Colombia suggests that language teachers lack literacy and training in this field, which means that they are in need of strong skills for the design, implementation, and research of language tests for various purposes (Giraldo, 2018a, 2018b; López & Bernal, 2009). Using tests for evaluation, however, is an activity that underlies the teaching profession; this allows to infer that gaps in terms of testing literacy and training might be leading to commit several irregularities in their evaluation processes. In the same vein, Giraldo (2019) remarks that poor quality in test design “may disorient language teaching and learning” (p. 124) as decisions that derive from test results may lack solid grounds.

The design and development of language tests within an institution is desirable, not only because it can help minimize the purchase of commercial tests—which are not tailored to the needs of a particular institution or context—but it also empowers teachers and contributes to their continuous training in terms of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) (López & Bernal, 2009). The latter translates into greater expertise and diversification of evaluation techniques, as well as the development of constant reflection and critical thinking towards assessment and evaluation.

With this in mind, and in view of the need for an English placement test in a Colombian public university, a research project was designed with a twofold objective: on the one hand, to train a group of teachers in the techniques for the design of tests and their subsequent statistical analysis; and on the other hand, to design a placement test, with high quality standards, that fulfilled the institutional needs. This paper presents the different stages that made up the design of the placement tests, interwoven with the literature review, the theoretical considerations, and the reflection on the various challenges experienced at each stage by me as the person who conducted the training, and by my colleagues as trainees. It is my hope that other teachers who embark for the first time on this ambitious task have a model and can anticipate the various vicissitudes of academic and administrative nature that may arise along the process.

Context

The research project from where this paper derives took place at Universidad del Valle, a public University in the Southwest Colombia. Initially, this institution offered a program of Reading in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to all the majors on campus, composed by four courses. However, the current demands of globalization have pushed the University into academic dynamics that require moving from

merely consulting information in a foreign language, to a more complex need of communicating in general and academic English. Accordingly, the University shifted from the ESP program to an English for General and Academic Purposes (EGAP) program in order for all undergraduate program students to reach a B1 proficiency level in a foreign language (Resolution No. 136 by the Academic Council of the University of Valle, December 22nd 2017).

With a new English program in execution, the University administration commissioned its English teachers to take on the design of the test, although such a task would be much more complicated than expected. First of all, most English teachers lacked from *Language Assessment Literacy* (LAL), as stated by the teachers themselves. LAL is defined as the “knowledge, skills, and principles in language testing” (p. 180) by different stakeholders. Such lack had been previously documented by López and Bernal (2009), who drew attention to the low presence of language assessment training in university undergraduate and graduate programs in Colombia.

With this in mind, a team of 7 teachers was gathered and trained in the basics of language testing for one semester. The trained teachers (hereinafter referred to as the team) were part of the English for General and Academic Purposes (EGAP) Section at Universidad del Valle, which offers its services to all the undergraduate programs on campus. After the training, a research project³ was conducted, resulting in the design and piloting of the Univalle’s English Placement Test UVEPLAT. The test comprises 52 different items and places test takers in levels A2 to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). UVEPLAT, which requires one hour for its completion, evaluates test takers in reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar structures and vocabulary. The next section of this paper gathers the guidelines, recommendations and reflections that resulted from designing team’s experience.

Guidelines for the Design of an English Placement Test

Diagnosing language testing practices in the institution

The starting point for the design of a test that will fulfill institutional purposes must be the meticulous analysis of the context in which the test will be applied, in terms of four fundamental elements: the evaluation practices established in the institution, the specific situations in which a language test is needed, the institutional language policies

³ This research project aimed at piloting the test and measuring its item difficulty and discrimination indexes. The results, as well as a deeper technical characterization of the test, can be found in Ramírez (2020).

(or lack thereof), and the different stakeholders involved in the testing process. I now move on to exploring each one of these elements.

First of all, the recognition of pre-established institutional practices regarding the use of language tests ensures a clear landscape of what to keep and what to avoid in the design of a new test. For instance, in the particular case that feeds this article, a first glimpse into the University allowed for the identification of two practices that were common and traditionally passed on among language teachers: ‘frankensteining’ tests out of different materials, and solving any testing need through the use of commercial testing platforms. ‘Frankensteining’ or making exams out of several pieces coming from test preparation books, previously discarded tests, or even the Internet, revealed a deep lack of awareness towards testing design on the part of the teachers. Similarly, the analysis of the institutional context revealed the unsystematic use of commercial tests for multiple purposes within the institution; for example, a commercial quick-placement test had been used to verify different levels of proficiency, to place undergraduate students into levels of the curriculum, and to determine the entrance of graduate students into certain programs. Not only did both of these practices exposed the Administration’s misinformation towards fundamental principles of testing, such as validity and reliability, but it also evinced that, when it comes to language policies at a university, there might be institutional decisions made by administrative authorities that do not take into account the participation or scrutiny of language teachers or testing experts. The excessive use of commercial tests and the practice of ‘frankensteining’ respond to the Administration’s lack of awareness about the complexity of language testing, and about the intricacy of several aspects (time, resources, budget, training, etc.) behind the design, piloting, and implementation of a test; such a lack of awareness might explain the Administration’s constant and urgent demand for language test scores for various purposes, as well as the seeming institutional idea that one single test might solve a plethora of needs.

It is necessary to establish the different needs that the institution has, as well as the nature of the tests required for each need. In the Colombian context, for instance, several universities usually make use of placement tests and proficiency tests for different types of test takers including aspiring students, enrolled students, faculty and staff. Not all of these audiences pursue the same language programs or linguistic skills, so chances are that the nature of the test might vary, going from language for general communicative purposes, or a particular skill, such as reading or writing, for specific or academic purposes.

Third, the recognition of language policies (or their inexistence) determines a legal framework for language evaluation, assessment and testing in the institution. For example, in the university where this study was carried out, language policies were still in the making, and no light had been shed on the case of indigenous people, who were required to demonstrate proficiency in an L2 through an English test, completely

ignoring that they are users of two or more languages already. If language policies exist, then the design and implementation of new tests have to be planned around the former. Otherwise, the issuing of new language policies must encompass the type of evaluation and tests that will be needed.

Finally, recognizing the different stakeholders involved in the evaluation activity is paramount for the quality of the assessment processes: language teachers, test designers, test takers, and the university administration shape an intricate gear where the role of each one must be clearly established and held accountable for their participation in the testing matters.

Setting up a test design team

As stated before, a team of 7 teachers was gathered and trained in the basics of language testing for one semester, in weekly workshop sessions of three hours. The rationale behind this training program is the fact that test design is a daunting task that “requires attention to a considerable number of theoretical and technical details” (Giraldo, 2019, p. 124); thus, the training program encompassed six elements, as summarized in the following graph:

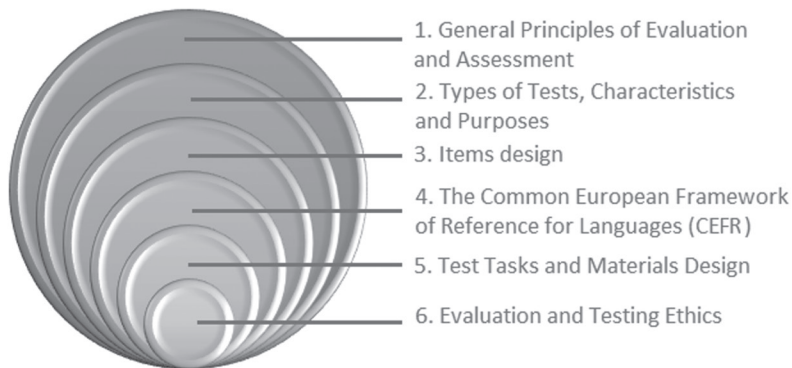


Figure 1: Test Design Training Components

For the purposes of this paper, I have intentionally chosen the term training, and not professional development, mainly because the workshops imparted to the trainees were conducted with a specific and terminal purpose, seeking to respond, in the short term, to an urgent request from the University. However, this type of training could

and should evolve into professional development, understood as a constant process, a continuous activity focused on the teacher, and not merely consisting of 'one-shot' workshops or lectures focused on a specific product (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Cooper, 2009).

The first three components were covered through the study of different postulates by Bachman and Palmer (1996), Carr (2011), Douglas (2010), and Shohamy (2001). Through several study-group sessions and workshops, this component started with the discussion of how abstract and challenging the idea of measuring linguistic performance can be and went on to deepen into the definitions of fundamental concepts. It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of the training, most participants seemed overconfident regarding the training program components as these topics are expected to be mastered by any seasoned teacher. Furthermore, according to participants, testing and assessing languages are tasks that they perform on a regular basis, so they trusted they had a decent mastery of assessment design. The first training sessions, however, showed otherwise; not only did the teachers ignore, or had forgotten, basic concepts such as construct, reliability, validity, washback effect, and the very difference between evaluation and assessment, but they also manifested some ideas that unveiled lack of fairness; for instance, all of them explicitly stated that a high quality test was a synonym of a difficult-to-pass test, rendering evaluation a tool of power and control (Shohamy, 2001).

One of the very first challenges, then, was to establish a group philosophy that a test—and evaluation in general, for that matter—has to do with offering learners as many opportunities as possible for them to show what they know, rather than making them hesitate with a riddle type of exam, because “the more opportunities we give test takers to show what they know, the more accurate and fair the measurement is likely to be” (Douglas, 2010, p. 4).

This was a great opportunity to openly discuss fairness and the ethics of evaluation and testing, which are topics that usually stay under the individual domain of every teacher inside his or her classroom. After this common ground was reached, the second and the third component were covered by focusing on the study of taxonomies of language tests, their purposes, as well as different types of items (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Carr, 2011).

The study of the fourth element, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) was the second major challenge we faced in this training program. The CEFR comprises “a set of common reference levels for language teaching, learning and assessment stretching from basic to mastery” (Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011, p. 91); as indicated by its name, the CEFR is expected to serve as a reference, a lighthouse to look at for guidance. However, a recurring phenomenon among the trainees (also detected to a greater or lesser extent in many teachers formally and informally surveyed in the framework of this study) is the fact

that there is a subjective and mostly intuitively-derived construct with respect to the CEFR levels. Although the CEFR is precisely a reference document, most English teachers agreed upon the fact that they do not consult the reference, but trust ‘their gut’ when it comes to evaluating and placing language users. It seems that some teachers have formed an idea of what it means to be an A1, a B2, or a C1 kind of language user, with very diffuse boundaries between the levels that vary from one teacher to the other; these boundaries are usually rooted in a long tradition of comparing students who have been previously evaluated by the teacher, in a kind of rationale as follows: ‘if John is a B2 and Jane’s level is a little lower than John’s, then Jane must be an A2’. Thus, individual and subjective criteria are created, with rough borderlines that have nothing to do with the descriptors established in the CEFR for each skill. This type of mindset implies quite transcendental incidents for assessment, as teachers will be much more challenging or lax in the type of demands they make for each level, and to a greater extent, these individual mindsets will affect pedagogical relationships within the classroom, as pointed out by Giraldo (2019), when he argues that poor assessment design “may disorient language teaching and learning” (p. 124).

The training also encompassed a component of test tasks and material design, as well as a component of testing ethics. The former was included as the team members were found to lack formal training in the design of language materials, which translated into ambiguity in instruction writing, as well as poor skills for adapting or designing written and oral documents; in other words, material design and test design are expected to be done by teachers on a regular basis, yet the trainees manifested their lack of theoretical foundations to effectively perform both of them. Finally, the training concluded with the study and discussion of the International Language Testing Association’s (ILTA) Code of Ethics³ for language testing.

Defining Test Specifications and Establishing Test Constructs and Audience

After the training, the next step was the creation of a blueprint containing the test specifications, which have been defined as “a detailed set of documentation normally drawn up during the process of designing a new test or revising an existing one” (ALTE, 1998, p. 166). The purpose for the creation of this document was twofold: on the one hand, it was meant to provide a framework of reference that would contextualize future teachers (and other stakeholders) within the institution, to understand the rationale that guided the design of the test, so that future revisions, corrections and improvements would be more easily addressed; and on the other hand, the writing

⁴ This document can be consulted at: <https://www.iltaonline.com/page/CodeofEthics>

of the document was intended to help teachers establish the test construct and make informed decisions about test length, “(...) design, content, level, task and item types used, target population, use of the test, etc.” (ALTE, 1998, p. 166).

For the definition of the test construct, and building on Taylor and Geranpayeh's (2011) proposal, three aspects were taken into consideration: the cognitive processing in the skills to be tested, the characteristics of the target population of test takers, and contextual factors for the implementation of the test. First, understanding the nature of every language skill, the features comprised in each one of them, and the cognitive processes involved in them, allows test developers to sharpen the demands they make from test takers in each of the levels that the test is expected to discriminate. It is necessary to foster discussion among test developers around fundamental questions such as *what does reading comprehension mean?* Or *what does listening comprehension imply?* With this in mind, the teachers were invited to revise the nature of the skills to be tested, in this case listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and language use (grammar and vocabulary). Later, by contrasting the CEFR descriptors and the list of contents in the syllabus of each level course, the teachers came up with what Taylor and Geranpayeh (2011) call a set of ‘can-do statements’; the fact that the team in this study had a copious expertise teaching the different language levels made it easier for them to determine the contents they considered more relevant to be included in the test tasks, as well as the proficiency descriptors they deemed mandatory from test takers at each level.

Regarding the characteristics of the target population, the teachers reflected on the characteristics of the prototypical freshman at this University, as audience characteristics are paramount for designing a test. In this regard, Douglas (2010) remarks the importance “that the test tasks reflect to the degree possible the ways test takers have been learning and using the language” (p. 44); test tasks have to be designed taking into account the strategic competence and background knowledge that the potential audience possesses. In our experience, after the study of items design, the team came up with varied and creative tasks and items that they wanted to include in the test construction. They hadn't taken into account, however, that the prototypical first semester student in our contexts is a 16–18 year-old youngster who has recently graduated from a public high school, mainly familiarized with multiple-choice tests; in this case, test performance might be negatively influenced by the lack of experience with the intricate design in tasks and items, and not necessarily by the language knowledge that test takers have.

Similarly, a small portion of the freshmen population in our context often include blind students, which imply other versions of the test that cater properly to their needs. Finally, our target population also includes a considerable percentage of students who come from indigenous communities, or from the Colombian deaf community, who are usually bilingual in a minority language and Spanish as a second language. This

portion of the population raised the discussion around several questions: What are the entry requirements in terms of second language and bilingualism? Who should be exempted from these requirements and, therefore, the placement test? Who meets already the bilingualism requirement by being speakers of Spanish as a second language? The emerging reflections testified for the need of a clear linguistic policy within the institution regarding bilingualism and showed the importance of the participation of administrative representatives, as the development of tests is best done collaboratively between different stakeholders (Douglas, 2011; Giraldo, 2018a).

Designing Items

Although many high-stake language tests are designed by specialists in the field of testing who do not necessarily teach the language, we believe that language teachers “make good item writers as they have developed a deep understanding of language learners and of the language” (ALTE, 2011, p. 26); therefore, university language teachers should be offered more participation in test-design teams, as well as in language policy decision-making. After the item design workshops, three challenges were identified and manifested by the team: variety in the nature of items, instructions writing, and distractors design.

The first challenge in this stage was fostering variety within the test design. In our training experience, the workshops allowed the teachers to discover several forms of items they did not know, or that they had never included in a test before. Thus, once the teachers started designing the first test blueprint, they felt a creative rush to incorporate as many different items as possible, in sake of rich variety in the test. The result was an intricate test that could mislead test takers, as the proposed items and the tasks did not match the target audience’s background experience in solving language tests. Once again, the first designs produced by the team would propose items and tasks that were very complex for the target audience. The trainees in our team would draw heavily upon a framework of previous experiences as test takers, and so they would try to mimic tests they had solved, tasks they had found particularly complex and demanding, or tasks that they deemed interesting.

At this point, the team had to reflect upon how paramount it is to carefully choose items that test takers have been previously exposed to, since both success or failure in a test also depends on the level of familiarity that the test taker has with the item type; for instance, it might happen that a test taker with a high level of language proficiency performs poorly in a test: he might be linguistically good enough but he might get confused with the format of the item stem, resulting in poor task completion. This desire to include several types of items opened the discussion towards what it means to foster variety within the test. Although a good test should offer tasks that are varied in nature, the real challenge is to offer as many varied opportunities for language learners

to show their mastery of different linguistic functions. In that sense, variety in tests can be achieved through the incorporation of different communicative functions in each of the assessed skills; for instance, there may be tests with a vast array of item types that revolve around the same topic or function, rendering the test tricky in the solving but monotonous in the content; on the other hand, there may be an exam containing only multiple choice and cloze items, but whose content is rich in the type of communicative functions it evaluates.

The second major challenge was instruction writing. During the design of items and peer evaluation within the training sessions, it became clear that, in general, there was a lot of difficulty writing clear and concise instructions on item stems. To this respect, the language teachers stated that perhaps the reason for such difficulty was the fact that they were more familiar with giving instructions and explanations orally, and not so much in written form. The following common errors could be identified in the first item proposals:

- The instruction was ambiguous, giving rise to more than one interpretation
- The instruction did not clearly state what the test taker was expected to do
- The instruction was too long, with redundant explanations of what the test taker was expected to do.

After finally learning how to write clear instructions in item stems, our rookie design team had to face the third challenge at this stage: designing distractors. Initially the team would design an item with the expected correct answer, and then would randomly include scattered words to function as distractors; the result was an item that could easily be solved without actual knowledge of the topic, as the correct answer was very obvious amidst poorly selected distractors. With this in mind, the team was led to understand that distractors in multiple-choice items are actually designed, based on the target function, structure or vocabulary that the item intends to assess.

This stage of the process revealed that the teachers in the designing team felt much more comfortable while designing tasks for grammar and vocabulary assessment. At the opposite side, they did not show to be so at ease while defining assessment for listening and reading. This suggests the need to constantly revise the concept of construct in relation to all the language skills, and the necessity for teachers to reflect upon what it means to ‘measure’ listening and reading comprehension, as well as oral production.

Making Decisions

One of the hardest lessons we had to learn as rookie test designers was the fact that there is no such thing as a step-by-step recipe to craft a new test. In that sense, Taylor and Geranpayeh (2011) were very assertive when they mention that “all language testing, including large-scale assessment, is ‘the art of the possible’” (p. 94); this means that for every case of test design there are many decisions to be made by the designing team according to their particular setting, and that many of the questions and concerns you may have while crafting a new test do not have a unique valid answer. In our case, for example, the teachers felt very unconfident and anxious about questions such as what the best scale to grade the test was, whether text in the reading comprehension section should be utterly authentic, or if a computer-based version of the exam would be better than a paper-based version. In this regard, Taylor and Geranpayeh (2011) explain that “tests remain to some degree provisional, work-in-progress, even experimental, hopefully serving a positive and practical function in the real world of here and now” (p. 94); informed decisions have to be made taking into account the academic, social, and economic context where the test will be designed and implemented, as well as the possibilities of the human resources involved in the making; all of these aspects have to be attentively taken care of, as “language testing occurs in an educational and social setting, and the uses of language tests are determined largely by political needs.” (Bachman 1990, p.291).

In our case at Universidad del Valle, for instance, we had to make decisions on the number of items that would eventually compose the test, about the source and length of written and oral texts that would be used for the tasks, and about the weighing assigned to every section of the test; similarly, discussions among the designing team allowed for decisions on the best platform to host the digital version of the test, the braille and special versions for disabled people, and the security protocols for the exam implementation. Every decision, every discussion, every stage of the process brought a deeper understanding of language evaluation and assessment, as “the main purpose of language testing is to provide opportunities for learning, both for the students who are being tested, and for the professionals who are administering the tests” (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 39). We agree profoundly with Tomlinson (2005) when he asserts that “while it is obviously important that tests should be fair, valid, and reliable, the most important of all is that tests should provide useful opportunities for learning” (p. 40). All in all, through this process we could attest that the design of any test, whether for placement, proficiency or achievement purposes, bears “An intrinsic potential as [a] research tool[s] whose outcomes will help enrich our understanding of the nature of language proficiency so we can develop better tests in the future” (Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011, p. 94).

Limitations and Further Constraints

The reflections and advice given here are far from being the ultimate complete guide for the construction of a placement test, as there are still many more elements at each stage of the process that deserve deep discussion and analysis, such as adaptation of oral and written texts, the care with copyright norms, the study of statistical variables in the piloting of the test and the creation of parallel versions, or mirrors, just to mention some relevant topics. However, it is expected that this paper has been able to highlight the complexity that underlies the process of conceiving evaluation, as assessment practices and the construction of evaluation devices are bound to face multiple challenges, some of which have been discussed here.

More reflection is needed, however, in order to establish a frank dialogue between academia and administration around issues such as financial support, time constraints, and the joint construction of clear language policies. Finally, it is worth mentioning that some of the challenges faced by the team in terms of test design such as difficulties for writing item stems, designing answer distractors, or designing tasks might be related to their experiences with material design; thus, further studies in this particular context could focus on the correlation between the team's skills and formal knowledge (or lack thereof) in materials design and test design.

Conclusion

I agree with López and Bernal (2009) and with Giraldo (2018) that it is an imperative need to train language teachers in the design, analysis and research on language exams. Beyond merely being aware of the different types of tests and their uses, language teachers require “knowledge on how to write, administer and analyze tests” (Inbar-Lourie, 2013, p. 32). So far, it seems that many language teachers are mainly users and consumers of tests but not their designers or producers. In this regard, it is worth remembering what Giraldo (2018a) asserts the teachers who have received language assessment training “use[d] assessment to improve teaching and learning, whereas those with no training used it as a way to solely obtain grades” (p. 181).

Administrative stakeholders within universities usually demand from language departments to implement exams and report results, for them to make decisions. The process, however, needs fixing: administrative stakeholders should work hand-in-hand with language teachers (especially the ones involved in test design) so that clear and fair evaluation policies are established in the institution. Administrative stakeholders need to understand how demanding the process of designing a high-quality test is, so that more support for teachers and researchers may be granted; similarly, they need to know how crucial their participation is, if tests are to become fair instruments that

enlighten long-term decisions, they will absolutely have an impact in the test taker's life, as well as in the institution itself.

A strong focus on LAL needs to be fostered, starting with pre-service teachers in undergraduate language teaching programs so that they understand, from the very beginning, the far-reaching responsibility that comes with evaluating. On these grounds, it is recommended that undergraduate and graduate programs offer more subjects with a practical component on test design, so that both pre-service and in-service teachers may sharpen their skills in defining constructs, designing items, and piloting tests on grounds on fairness and social justice.

Finally, the long-term success of a test design resides in team effort: a team composed by the test designers, the language teachers and the representatives from the institutional administration. In this sense, it is paramount to devote time for group training if the endeavor of test design is to succeed, but it is also equally important to foster constant dialogue between academia and administration, so that time and financial resources may be granted for research, as well as good conditions for the planning, designing and piloting of tests. Similarly, in the long term, institutions must think up language evaluation processes in relation to a linguistic and evaluative policy, one that should be consistent with the academic objectives of the program, in accordance with institutional purposes, and fair to the population evaluated.

This article derives from the research study “Piloteo de una Prueba de Clasificación de Inglés para Estudiantes de Primer Semestre en la Universidad del Valle: Análisis de Ítems,” carried out at Escuela de Ciencias del Lenguaje, Universidad del Valle, and sponsored by the Research Vice-rectory from the Humanities Faculty (registration code CI-4383).

References

- ALTE, Association of Language Testers in Europe (1998) *Multilingual glossary of language testing terms*. Cambridge: United Kingdom. Available at: <https://www.alte.org/Materials>
- ALTE, Association of Language Testers in Europe (2011) *Manual for Language Test Development and Examining*. Cambridge: United Kingdom. Available at: <https://www.alte.org/Materials>
- Armbruster, B. B., and Osborn, J. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read (K-3)*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading
- Achievement, University of Michigan. Distributed by National Institute for Literacy (NIL), National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the U.S. Department of Education.
- Bachman, L. (2007) What is the Construct? The Dialectic of Abilities and Contexts in Defining Constructs in Language Assessment. In Janna D. Fox, Mari Wesche, Doreen Bayliss, Liying Cheng, Carolyn E. Turner & Christine Doe (Eds.), *Language Testing Reconsidered* (pp. 41–71). Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press/Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.
- Bachman, L. and Palmer, A. (1996) *Language Testing in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Carr, N. (2011) Designing and Analyzing Language Tests. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, J. D. (2009). *Professional development: An effective research-based model*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Retrieved from <http://dataworks-ed.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/JoyceShowers.pdf>
- Douglas, D. (2010). *Understanding Language Testing*. London: Hodder-Arnold
- Giraldo, F. (2018a) Language assessment literacy: Implications for language teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 20 (1), 179–195. Available at <http://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n1.62089>
- Giraldo, F. (2018b). A Diagnostic Study on Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Foreign Language Assessment. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 23(1), 25–44. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v23n01a04>

- Giraldo, F. (2019). Designing Language Assessments in Context: Theoretical, Technical, and Institutional Considerations. *HOW Journal*, 26(2), 123–143. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.26.2.512>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2013). Guest Editorial to the special issue on language assessment literacy. *Language Testing*, 30(3) 301–307. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480126>.
- Joyce, B., and Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- López, A., & Bernal, R. (2009). Language testing in Colombia: A call for more teacher education and teacher training in language assessment. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 55–70.
- Ramírez, A. (2020). Análisis de ítems para prueba de clasificación en inglés en una Universidad colombiana. *Cultura, Educación y Sociedad*, 11(2). 177-190
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17981/cultedusoc.11.2.2020.11>
- Shohamy, E. (2001). *The power of tests: A critical perspective of the uses of language tests*. Harlow: Longman.
- Taylor, L. (2009). Developing assessment literacy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29, 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190509090035>.
- Taylor, L. & Geranpayeh, A. (2011) Assessing listening for academic purposes: Defining and operationalizing the test construct. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10, 89–101
- Tomlinson, B. (2005). Testing to learn: a personal view of language testing. *ELT Journal* Volume 59, 1, 39-46. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci005>
- Universidad del Valle (2017) Resolución No. 136 del Consejo Académico de diciembre 22 de 2017. Cali: Colombia.

Author

Alexander Ramírez holds a B.A in Foreign Languages English-French and an M.A in Linguistics. He is a first-year PhD student at Universidad del Valle, where he also works as an associate professor of English and Linguistics. His research interests include language testing, intercultural communication, and Queer linguistics.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7122-9537>

How to reference this article: Ramírez, A. (2020). Challenges in the Design and Implementation of an English Placement Test for a Colombian Public University. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 191-208. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.825>

Task-Based Language Assessment: Implications for the Language Classroom¹

La Evaluación de Lenguas Basada en
Tareas: Implicaciones para el Aula de
Lenguas Extranjeras

Frank Giraldo^{2*}

Universidad de Caldas, Colombia

¹ Received: November 12th 2019/ Accepted: August 8th 2020

² frank.giraldo@ucaldas.edu.co

Abstract

With a communicative approach to language testing, performance assessment has taken on a prominent role in testing systems around the world. Specifically, Task-Based Assessment (TBA) is now being used to make inferences about people's language ability and what they can do with this construct under realistic communicative scenarios. This reflection paper discusses central issues in TBA, and in doing so, it shows that TBA can be observed through a classroom-assessment lens, an idea I present as Instructional Task-Based Assessment (ITBA). The paper starts by reviewing the meaning of tasks, then discusses problems with TBA and finally offers a list of principles for teachers to explore TBA in classroom contexts. I also include limitations of the proposal and conclusions.

Key words: alternative assessment; language assessment; language testing; performance assessment; task-based assessment.

Resumen

Partiendo del enfoque comunicativo en evaluación de lenguas, la necesidad de evaluar la competencia comunicativa ha conllevado al diseño de pruebas estandarizadas alrededor del mundo. En especial, la evaluación de lenguas basada en tareas (TBA sus siglas en inglés) se usa como una manera de inferir qué es lo que pueden hacer las personas con su habilidad de lengua en encuentros reales comunicativos. Este artículo de reflexión examina temas claves en TBA, y mediante esta discusión, sugiere que TBA puede analizarse desde el salón de clases; esta es una propuesta que presento como Evaluación de Lenguas Basada en Tareas en Contextos Pedagógicos (ITBA sus siglas en inglés). El artículo comienza con una revisión del significado de tareas, luego analiza los problemas relacionados con TBA y, finalmente, ofrece una lista de principios para que los docentes de lenguas exploren TBA en sus contextos educativos. De igual manera, incluyo algunas limitaciones de la propuesta y conclusiones del artículo.

Palabras claves: evaluación de desempeño; evaluación de lenguas; evaluación de lenguas basada en tareas; evaluación formativa.

Resumo

Partindo do enfoque comunicativo em avaliação de línguas, a necessidade de avaliar a competência comunicativa levou ao desenho de provas padronizadas ao redor do mundo. Em especial, a avaliação de línguas baseada em tarefas (TBA suas siglas em inglês) usada como uma forma de inferir as pessoas e o que pode fazer com a sua habilidade de língua em encontros reais comunicativos. Este artigo de reflexão examina temas chaves em TBA, e mediante esta discussão, sugere que TBA pode analisar-se desde as salas de aula; esta é uma proposta que apresento como Avaliação de Línguas Baseada em Tarefas em Contextos Pedagógicos (ITBA suas siglas em inglês). O artigo começa com uma revisão do significado de tarefas, logo analisa os problemas relacionados com TBA e, finalmente, oferece uma lista de princípios para que os docentes de línguas explorem TBA em seus contextos educativos. Da mesma forma, incluo algumas limitações da proposta e conclusões do artigo.

Palavras chaves: avaliação de desempenho; avaliação de línguas; avaliação de línguas baseada em tarefas; avaliação formativa.

Introduction

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement that started in the 1960's brought with it a new perception of language learning. The field decided to look at language from a communication point of view and no longer as an accumulation of rules, (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) through the goal of language learning: The development of communicative language ability (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Fulcher, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). One way to operationalize the rather philosophical view of language in CLT was to think of tasks as a way to teach, learn, and assess language ability. Task-Based Assessment (henceforth TBA) uses tasks as core vehicles to activate and observe language being used to achieve real-life purposes and derive interpretations of what test takers or learners can do with their language ability (Bachman, 2002; Ellis, 2003; Norris, 2016). The literature in task-based assessment has primarily been focused on testing, not on the implementation of tasks for language assessment in the classroom; for instance, Ellis (2003), in an entire chapter, dedicates only three pages to TBA in the classroom. Similarly, Wigglesworth and Frost (2017) dedicate one paragraph to classroom TBA, through which they state the usefulness of TBA as it can match teaching.

Given that there is scarce literature on TBA as it is implemented in the classroom context, in this reflection paper I look at task-based assessment from an instructional perspective; that is, TBA as teachers and learners engage in it. This view aligns with a call that scholars in TBA have recently made, namely the need to understand TBA in classroom contexts (Bygate, 2016; Norris, 2016). I start the paper with an overview of tasks in language instruction and move to a definition of TBA. Later, I review core issues in classroom TBA and discuss the notion of *Instructional TBA* (henceforth ITBA). I then close the paper with a list of principles for applying TBA in the classroom, followed by relevant limitations and conclusions.

Literature Review

Any discussion around TBA and task-based instruction should necessarily scrutinize the meaning of tasks. The literature in language teaching has defined tasks as a spectrum, from the communicative grammar activity, to the strong form of real-life activities that need language for accomplishment (Van den Branden, 2006). While the definitions are indeed many, the consensus is that learners use their language knowledge and skills to perform activities which need the use of language (e.g. opening a bank account). The purpose of tasks is not to have students show their explicit knowledge of, for example, grammar structures, but what they can do with them in a real-life communicative encounter. Thus, tasks are not to study language

forms; they are focused on meaning-making through forms (Van den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2007).

In fact, tasks have gained major attention in language education and have become the center of language programs and language testing. Consequently, in a strong form of task-based teaching, language syllabi are designed around tasks, whereas a weak form uses them as an add-on to language learning (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). As types of tasks, Willis and Willis (2007) include listing, ordering and sorting, matching, comparing, sharing personal experiences, projects and creative tasks, and problem-solving. There are, additionally, other types of tasks that are present in the literature, for example opinion-exchange (Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun, 1993). Similarly, in a TBA framework, language testing uses tasks mainly to elicit and assess learners' language ability in action (Brindley, 1994; Norris, 2016). Large-scale tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Chapelle, Enright & Jamieson, 2007) use tasks to ascertain how test takers can cope with academic language demands in English-medium universities. Task-based tests such as the TOEFL, following a communicative approach, do not require test takers to show their linguistic knowledge but rather what they can do with it in academic environments.

Along these lines, task-based language assessment can be classified as a sort of performance assessment (Brindley, 2013; Brown, 2004), for TBA differs from traditional language testing in which a structural view of language was paramount. Rather, TBA engages test takers in replicating real-life uses of language through the use of their linguistic and even non-linguistic resources (Brindley, 1994). Additionally, Ellis (2003) claims that TBA involves real world behavior (what people accomplish with language) and processing (how people accomplish it). As in task-based teaching, TBA is meaning-focused and goal-oriented. This orientation feeds back on the meaning of performance: Test takers do something through and with language. As Norris (2016) explains, task completion through performance is essential in TBA, because it is task performance what matters to make decisions about learners.

However, while task completion is indeed important in TBA, the task has to provide evidence of learners' language ability (Bachman, 2002; Ellis, 2003). Bachman (2002) argues that TBA is problematic in the sense that learners may do well on a test task but this cannot be replicable in other contexts, essentially because of the limitations of the task itself. Therefore, what is needed is a full picture of the learner's language ability, i.e. the construct under consideration. Bachman argues that in order to make valid decisions based on TBA data, a counterbalanced approach is needed, where task-centered and construct-centered designs are combined.

Issues in Task-Based Assessment

As presented above, the information tasks give to testers may be problematic as learners could cope with tasks by implementing non-linguistic strategies, namely non-verbal communication. While the discussion of a task-centered and/or construct centered design to TBA is ongoing (Bachman, 2002; Ellis, 2003), the final decisions in testing should be based on language ability, as other non-linguistic factors are still not theoretically part of language ability models in language testing (see Fulcher, 2010).

Other common issues in TBA are indeed interrelated and feed back on the validity of decisions made from test scores. Among issues receiving attention are TBA's authenticity, representativeness, generalizability, and inseparability (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1984). In terms of authenticity, authors agree that merely replicating an activity from the real world does not make a TBA informative (Bachman, 2002; Chalhoub-Deville, 2001; Norris, 2016). Authenticity needs to be embedded in a test from a situational and discourse point of view (Chalhoub-Deville, 2001), involve authentic participants (Bachman, 2002) and be as realistic as possible, although this is not fully achievable as tests are artificial by nature (Bachman, 2002; Brindley, 2013).

What is more, authors agree that it is challenging to either generalize from a task performance to a wider target language use in real scenarios, or collect a good enough sample of data to ascertain confidently what a person can really do with language (Bachman, 2002; Ellis, 2003; Kim, 2004; Norris, 2016). Generalizability and representativeness are specifically problematic when arguing for the validity of general proficiency (construct-based) tests. For example, if a test taker performs an oral task well (negotiate a bank transaction), it may not be argued that s/he can negotiate in other non-testing contexts or that the test/task includes enough contexts and language to support the same conclusion.

A task-centered approach is, however, key in occupational language tests (Kim, 2004). A task for traffic controllers is a classic example of task-centered design. The TBA has to provide evidence that the candidate can (or cannot!) help a pilot land a plane safely, and he/she should be able to mobilize language to accomplish exactly such task. As authors argue, successful task completion in this approach is paramount (Kim, 2004; Norris, 2016).

A major area of concern in TBA is its reliability (Brindley, 2013; Ellis, 2003). One of the causes of unreliability is the inconsistency of scores given by human raters. Additionally, test-taker characteristics (e.g. anxiety) and faulty test administration may lead to fluctuations in scores. Together, all these factors make test scores unreliable, and therefore invalid. As a way to ameliorate TBA reliability in classroom contexts, Ellis (2003) suggests that the test be lengthened, scored by at least two raters, and raters be trained in assessing performance.

Another challenge in TBA is what Ellis (2003) calls inseparability. This refers to candidates calling upon their world knowledge in a TBA situation. As the author argues, if a candidate is more familiar than others with the content (or topic) of a TBA, then he/she is at an advantage; therefore, low scores from test takers who have no background in the topic, and who do poorly because of this fact, may not say much about these people's language ability: They got low scores due to something unrelated to this construct. However, as Ellis explains, performance in a language test *requires* content knowledge, rendering language and content inseparable. As a recommendation, authors suggest that assessment rubrics include criteria for language and content (Douglas, 2001; McNamara, 1996). On this same line, Brindley (1994; 2013) asserts that scoring criteria in TBA, whether in testing or classroom scenarios, must be comprehensive and transparent; these criteria must include the language aspects to be examined, as well as the task-centered factors that can influence performance (e.g. level of participation in a roleplay, in terms of time).

Creating criteria for language assessment may be challenging for the construct validity of TBA (Brindley, 2013). First, expert-based design of criteria may misrepresent the central construct (i.e. language ability) and not include all relevant information for all the skills necessary to do the task under consideration; second, available theoretical descriptions of language ability are difficult to operationalize and lack other dimensions (e.g. relation between test taker and interlocutor); and third, available criteria such as those found in the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001) are not sufficiently validated (Fulcher, 2010).

All in all, while problems in TBA may cast doubt upon decisions made from this approach, authors still support the use of tasks for language assessment, provided that

- tasks are comprehensively described and aligned with the language constructs they elicit information about (Bachman, 2002; Brindley, 2013; Chalhoub-Deville, 2001);
- tasks engage students in using realistic language for authentic activities (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015; Norris, 2016);
- there is a balance between construct-centered and task-centered design (Bachman, 2002; Ellis, 2003; Mislevy, Steinberg, & Almond, 2002);
- assessment criteria are comprehensive enough to validly assess task performance of linguistic and non-linguistic issues (Brindley, 1994; Chalhoub-Deville, 2001; Kim, 2004).
- last but not least, the language constructs that tasks are supposed to activate must be substantively described (Bachman, 2002; Brindley, 1994; 2013).

Task-Based Assessment in Language Education

Scholars in the area of task-based assessment agree on the features of this type of assessment in instructional contexts. For example, Norris (2009; 2016) and Long (2015) state that task-based assessments can be used for summative and formative purposes. However, since the idea is to help students develop their language ability for communicative tasks, formative uses are prime for task-based assessment, an idea Nunan (2004) strongly supports. Formative assessment, as discussions and research have shown, happens in the form of peer-, self-, and portfolio assessment (Leedham, 2005; Norris, 2016; Nunan, 2004; Weaver, 2012). Feedback from these sources is meant to improve performance at the level of language use (construct-centered) as well as the task itself (task-centered).

In terms of the actual use of task-based assessment in class, this approach tends to have clear stages. In his study, Weaver (2012) presents four interrelated stages of task-based assessment: task selection; task definition and assessment criteria; assessment implementation and task performance; and feedback. In the study, the author had students select a task (business oral presentation), gave students the criteria to be used, and engaged them in peer assessment. This approach helped the group to perform their oral presentations successfully.

In a similar vein, Leedham's (2005) study implemented a task-based assessment to help students improve their performance in a large-scale test, specifically in a task for discussing the suitability of a room for an event. The stages included an initial performance of the task, then students listening to native speakers doing the task, and finally students repeating the task. In this sequence, students identified language used by speakers and incorporated this learning in their second performance of the task.

Other research studies looking at TBA in educational contexts agree on a set of core features. The study by Chuanren (2006) aligned tests, curriculum, and teaching with the hopes to consolidate a coherent focus of instruction, where tasks played a predominant role. The study by Byrnes (2002) looked at task-based assessment as a transition from a form-focused to a meaning-focused approach to language learning. In both studies, it is clear that TBA in the classroom has an impact on curricula, teaching, and the teachers themselves. Based on these two studies, it can be confirmed that TBA may bring about positive change to language programs, a generally held notion among TBA scholars (Brindley, 1994; 2013; Norris, 2016).

Finally, task-based assessment in the classroom has varied advantages for language instruction. First and foremost, as Long (2015) argues, these assessments provide visible evidence of what students can do with language; because of this feature, the data collected from these assessments can help students to improve their language ability and teachers to adjust their teaching. As Norris (2016) states, opportunities abound for students to perform given several stages in TBA implementation, which leads to

what the author labels as “instruction-related feedback” (p. 238). In addition, Norris states that TBAs have the benefit of engaging students in integrated skills assessment. As shown, language learning benefits from task-based assessments, so Willis (1996) and Willis and Willis (2007) even suggest that students can feel prepared for language examinations provided that they too include tasks for language ability and value authenticity as a condition for language performance.

The next section of this paper synthesizes the information from the previous review and delves into the notion of *Instructional Task-Based Language Assessment* (ITBA), a proposal to observe TBA in the context of the classroom and how it can be operationalized jointly by teachers and students.

Instructional Task-Based Language Assessment (ITBA)

In his overview of TBA, Ellis (2003) comments that his discussions are in a vacuum and argues that TBA needs to be conceptualized from where it happens more often: The language classroom. However, discussions of TBA in the language classroom seem scarce (Norris, 2009; 2016; Bygate, 2016) and do not delve into the nature of TBA as it happens in class *while* teachers and students are engaged in this approach to language assessment.

I therefore believe the literature of TBA has not thoroughly discussed the implementation of tasks for assessment in the classroom. Rea-Dickins (2001) and McNamara and Hill (2011) discuss language assessment as it happens in classrooms, but they do not specifically describe how teachers deal with tasks in the sense that the literature of TBA has conceptualized them. Of course, assessment through tasks was not the goal of these two studies; they shed light on broad assessment stages in language classrooms –planning, presenting, doing, and analyzing assessment data.

What I feel can contribute to further understandings of TBA is a more fine-grained and observational stance to what happens as assessment tasks are employed in a classroom. Bygate (2016) recommends that banks of data be built so the field can collect information about classroom practices and useful assessment tasks in instructional TBA. Likewise, Norris (2009, p. 587) explains that language education can benefit “from the actual uses to which assessments are put, the contexts in which they are used, and the individuals or groups who are using them.”

As I see it, instructional task-based assessment will necessarily involve *assessment* in the sense of data collection about language progress over time (Chapelle & Brindley, 2010) and summative assessment, particularly in the form of grades. However, ITBA must essentially be assessment for learning (Davison & Leung, 2009), as it seeks to exercise positive impact on teaching and learning. Finally, ITBA is seamlessly

intertwined with teaching (Rea-Dickins, 2007), as the interrelationships between both processes are evident in classroom scenarios. Finally, ITBA *is* assessment because of the following characteristics:

- It is, naturally, based on a central task (or tasks) and language activities feed that task, so that constructs are developed and then captured in task performance.
- Judgements about task completion may lead to deciding whether a person can do something through language or what language abilities he/she needs to improve.
- There are robust scoring criteria involved, and these may be used either formatively or summatively, with some emphasis on the former.
- There is feedback in the form of grades *and* opinions or judgements given to learners by teachers or learners themselves.
- Teachers may use assessment results to improve further learning and teaching; there is a feedback loop between assessment and instruction.
- There are uses of alternative assessment procedures, for example peer or self-assessment.

In conclusion, I propose ITBA as a form of language assessment that is closely related to and empowered by teaching and the learners themselves; as such, ITBA does not necessarily imply a fixed point in time but may rely on a construction of the assessment task and throughout a series of stages (e.g. lessons); finally, ITBA relies heavily on feedback from both teachers and students to improve language learning. Therefore, this approach aligns well with alternative assessment.

A Synthesis of Practices in ITBA

Based on my review of the literature on TBA, I synthesize what could potentially be good practices for TBA in general. I suggest, however, that the usefulness of such synthesis be evaluated against the particular intricacies of contexts where TBA is used. I present such synthesis in the form of principles in the Table below (left column) and include an example to illustrate how these principles can inform assessment in classroom contexts (right column).

Table 1. Principles and Related Example for Instructional Task-Based Assessment

Principles	Instructional Example
<p>A. A task is the center of the TBA.</p> <p>B. The task is not a one-off; since it involves performance, students have had opportunities to do their best in the final task performance; thus, the TBA is directly aligned with instruction.</p> <p>C. There is some sort of connection between performance in the TBA and real-life use of language.</p> <p>D. Performance in the task is supported/enhanced by formative feedback that comes from teachers or other students.</p> <p>E. A task for TBA involves the use of different language skills, with a particular focus on one: for example, reading a text before orally report something.</p> <p>F. The TBA uses criteria that clearly delineates what students will do and how they will do it. Teacher and students know these criteria.</p> <p>G. The TBA has the potential to provide feedback to improve language learning and instruction.</p> <p>H. TBAs can come in the form of various instruments.</p> <p>I. The TBA can be assessed on two grounds, depending on the language focus of a course: The TBA's language constructs or task achievement.</p> <p>J. The TBA allows stakeholders to judge how well the task was achieved and why this happened thanks to language ability.</p>	<p>Getting a Cup of Coffee</p> <p>A. Teacher tells students they will learn how to ask for a cup of coffee in English.</p> <p>B. Teacher announces task and asks students how it can be done; teacher shows an example, students do listening and grammar-in-context activities (about the central task). Students rehearse task and get formative feedback from classmates and teacher.</p> <p>C. Teacher remarks how this is something people do in real life with language.</p> <p>D. In rehearsals, students get feedback from one another and from teacher; feedback focuses on language aspects and/or task completion: You can ask for a cup of coffee in English!</p> <p>E. Students read menus used in cafes, listen to someone asking for a cup of coffee in the target language and take notes.</p> <p>F. Teacher presents task and assessment criteria to students. They revisit these when needed. Teacher explains what aspects of language are needed for the task (using clear questions to request, e.g. "Do you have latte?"; pronounce key words correctly, e.g. sugar, spoonful, etc.).</p> <p>G. Based on students' performance during rehearsals, teacher analyzes what language aspects they need to improve so they can do better in the final task performance.</p> <p>H. Teacher provides students with a simple checklist to judge peer or self performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intonates questions correctly. - Pronounces key words correctly. - Requests type of coffee. - Asks for price. <p>I. Teacher evaluates whether students learned the language objectives related to the task (e.g. requesting, asking for prices, etc.) and completion of the task itself: Do you feel students can now ask for a cup of coffee in English?</p> <p>J. Teacher makes learners aware of what they can do through English now and how they used this language for this particular purpose.</p>

Limitations

Bygate (2016) and Norris (2016) have suggested that initiatives on TBA in classroom contexts be promoted. Thus, there may be (or have been) ongoing studies that report TBA in these scenarios and that I did not report in this manuscript. This may be considered a first limitation. Also, the ideas in this paper represent my analysis of the existing literature. Other authors may provide different interpretations of what TBA can represent for the language classroom. Lastly, given space constraints and the limited information they provide on TBA, I could not include other studies or examples of this approach in classroom contexts, which may have communicated with a wider audience. Regardless of these limitations, I invite teachers and teacher educators to look at the benefits and challenges for ITBA and derive their own contextual implementation.

Conclusions

In this paper I offered reflections on some issues related to task-based language assessment (TBA). In doing so, I have highlighted that discussions around this topic have centered upon testing—conceived as collection of language performance at a fixed point in time—rather than assessment, or the collection and judgements of language performance data over time in classroom contexts. As scholars agree, the field can benefit from looking at ways in which TBA is operationalized in the classroom, arguably where TBA happens most. Consequently, I have proposed the notion of ITBA to analyze TBA in instructional scenarios.

Task-Based Assessment can be used in classroom contexts because it is amenable to good practice for language teaching in general: Clear objectives, authentic language use, formative feedback, and student-centeredness through alternative assessment (e.g. peer feedback), to name a few. Against these general core tenets, I offered a list with detailed principles to operationalize ITBA. I also provided some limitations for such proposal and the paper overall.

Today, language classrooms are expected to advance people's communicative competence. That seems to be the general consensus in applied linguistics. One way to do this is to implement task-based language teaching, and as I highlight in this paper, instructional task-based assessment. While challenges exist, the use of TBA may help teachers and learners develop communicative ability for real-life purposes.

References

- Bachman, L. & Palmer, A. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests*. Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. (2002). Some reflections on task-based language performance assessment. *Language Testing*, 19(4), 453-76.
- Brindley, G. (1994). Task-centred assessment in language learning: The promise and the challenge. In N. Bird, et al. (Eds.), *Language and learning: Papers presented at the Annual International Language in Education Conference* (Hong Kong, 1993) (pp. 73-94). Hong Kong Education Department.
- Brindley, G. (2013). Task-based assessment. In. C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, pp. 1-6. John Wiley & Sons.
- Brown, J. D. (2004). Performance assessment: Existing literature and directions for research. *Second Language Studies*, 22(2), 91-139.
- Bygate, M. (2016). Sources, developments and directions of task-based language teaching. *The Language Learning Journal*, 44(4), 381-400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2015.1039566>
- Byrnes, H. (2002). The role of task and task-based assessment in a content-oriented collegiate foreign language curriculum. *Language Testing*, 19(4), 419-437. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0265532202lt238oa>
- Chalhoub-Deville, M. (2001). Task-based assessment: Characteristics and validity evidence. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing*, (pp. 210-228). Longman.
- Chapelle, C., Enright, M. K., & Jamieson, J. M. (2007). *Building a validity framework for the test of English as a foreign language*. Routledge.
- Chapelle, C. & Brindley, G. (2010). Assessment. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics: Second edition*. pp. 247-267. Hodder Education.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, and assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chuanren, K. (2006). A model of formative task-based language assessment for Chinese as a foreign language. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, (3)2, 207-227. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15434311laq0302_6

- Davison, C. & Leung, C. (2009). Current issues in English language teacher-based assessment. *TESOL Quarterly*, (43)3, 393-415. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00242.x>
- Douglas D. (2001). Language for specific purposes assessment criteria: Where do they come from? *Language Testing*, 18(2), 171-185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553220101800204>
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press
- Fulcher, G. (2010). *Practical language testing*. Hodder Education.
- Kim, H. (2004). Task-based performance assessment for teachers: Key issues to consider. *Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019>
- Leedham, M. (2005). Exam-oriented tasks: Transcripts, turn-taking and backchannelling. In C. Edwards & J. Willis (Eds.), *Teachers exploring tasks in English language teaching*, 93-102. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Long, M. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- McNamara, T. (1994). *Measuring language performance*. Addison Wesley Longman.
- McNamara, T. & Hill, K. (2011). Developing a comprehensive, empirically based research framework for classroom-based assessment. *Language Testing*, 29(3), 395-420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532211428317>
- Mislevy, R. J., Steinberg, L. S., & Almond, R. G. (2002). Design and analysis in task-based language assessment. *Language Testing*, 19, 477-496. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0265532202lt241oa>
- Norris, J. (2009). Task-based teaching and testing. Edited by M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The Handbook of Language Teaching*, 578-594. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Norris, J. (2016). Current uses for task-based language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 230-244. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190516000027>
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pica, T., Kanagy, R., & Falodun, J. (1993). Choosing and using communication tasks for second language instruction. In G. Crookes and S. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks and language learning* (pp. 9-34). Multilingual Matters.

- Rea-Dickins, P. (2001). Mirror, mirror on the wall: identifying processes of classroom assessment. *Language Testing*, 18(4), 429–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553220101800407>
- Rea-Dickins, P. (2007). Classroom-based assessment: Possibilities and pitfalls. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *The international handbook of English language teaching*, Vol. 1, pp. 505–520. Springer.
- Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Skehan, P. (1984). Issues in the testing of English for specific purposes. *Language Testing*, 1(2). 202–220. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553228400100205>
- Van den Branden, K. (2006). *Task-based language education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weaver, C. (2012). Incorporating a formative assessment cycle into task-based language teaching in a university setting in Japan. In A. Shehadeh & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Task-based language teaching in foreign language contexts: Research and implementation*, 287–309. John Benjamins.
- Wigglesworth, G. & Frost, K. (2017). Task and performance-based assessment. In E. Shohamy, S. May, & I. Or. (Eds.), *Language testing and assessment: Third edition. Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (pp. 121–130). Springer.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching: Oxford handbooks for language teachers*. Oxford University Press.

Origin of article: This article comes from a personal review and analysis of the existing literature on Task-Based Language Assessment.

Author

* **Frank Giraldo** holds a BA in English Language teaching from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Colombia; an MA in English Didactics from Universidad de Caldas, Colombia; and an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the USA. He works as a language teacher educator in the foreign languages department of Universidad de Caldas, Colombia, where he works for the BA in Modern Languages and MA in English Didactics.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5221-8245>

How to reference this article: Giraldo, F. (2020). Task-Based Language Assessment: Implications for the Language Classroom. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 209-224. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.828>

Promoting an Academic International Profile in Undergraduate Students of Psychology Programs in Colombia¹

Promoviendo un Perfil Académico Internacional en Estudiantes de Licenciatura en Psicología en Colombia.

**Germán Andrés Torres-Escobar
and Rolan Arcadio Correa-Lopez²**

Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, Colombia

¹ Received: December 10th 2019 /Accepted: September 15th 2020

² german.torreses@amigo.edu.co; rolan.correalo@amigo.edu.co

Abstract

The present reflective article aims to describe some challenges that psychology programs in Colombia must face in the future, in order to let their students achieve an international professional profile and to improve their academic quality. First of all, psychology programs need to implement a bilingual curriculum, with many basic and professional courses in a foreign language like English, to teach students to think social and psychological problems in a wide intercultural way (Coulson & Homewood, 2016; Taylor & Hulme, 2015). Secondly, psychology professors should motivate their students to acquire higher levels of engagement with bilingual communication learning, to have better opportunities of professional development by applying to academic exchange experiences with international universities.

Keywords: Psychology programs; International profile; Bilingual education; Academic exchange; English Proficiency.

Resumen

El presente artículo reflexivo tiene como objetivo describir algunos desafíos que los programas de psicología en Colombia deben enfrentar en el futuro, a fin de permitir que sus estudiantes alcancen un perfil profesional internacional y mejorar su calidad académica. En primer lugar, los programas de psicología necesitan implementar un plan de estudios bilingüe, con muchos cursos básicos y profesionales en un idioma extranjero como el inglés, para enseñar a los estudiantes a pensar en problemas sociales y psicológicos de una manera intercultural amplia (Coulson y Homewood, 2016; Taylor y Hulme, 2015). En segundo lugar, los profesores de psicología deberían motivar a sus estudiantes a adquirir niveles más altos de compromiso con el aprendizaje de la comunicación bilingüe, para tener mejores oportunidades de desarrollo profesional mediante la aplicación de experiencias de intercambio académico con universidades internacionales.

Palabras clave: Programas de psicología; Perfil internacional; Educación bilingüe; Intercambio académico; Dominio del inglés.

Resumo

O presente artigo reflexivo tem como objetivo descrever alguns desafios que os programas de psicologia na Colômbia devem enfrentar no futuro, com a finalidade de permitir que seus estudantes alcancem um perfil profissional internacional e melhorar sua qualidade acadêmica. Em primeiro lugar, os programas de psicologia precisam implementar um plano de estudos bilíngue, com muitos cursos básicos e profissionais em um idioma estrangeiro como o inglês, para ensinar os estudantes a pensar em problemas sociais e psicológicos de uma forma intercultural ampla (Coulson e Homewood, 2016; Taylor e Hulme, 2015). Em segundo lugar, os professores de psicologia deveriam motivar seus estudantes para adquirir níveis mais altos de compromisso com a aprendizagem da comunicação bilíngue, para ter melhores oportunidades de desenvolvimento profissional por meio da aplicação de experiências de intercâmbio acadêmico com universidades internacionais.

Palavras chave: Programas de psicologia; Perfil internacional; Educação bilíngue; Intercambio acadêmico; Domínio do inglês.

Introduction

Psychology programs in Colombia, are regulated by legal Resolution 3461 of 2003 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2003), which states, the basic academic contents of basic and professional courses across the curriculum. This law mentions article 2, every program should teach a second language as part of its curriculum structure, but it doesn't clarify the academic purpose of learning a foreign language nor the impact on career development of students.

Many psychology programs have currently a list of English courses that are articulated by the level of skills and prepare students to achieve basic levels of competence in daily life situations according to an intermediate or B level of the *Common European Framework of Reference*. Other universities are more demanding and also request their students to present international exams like the Test of English as a Foreign language TOEFL (Ahern & Litt, 2018; Mustafa & Anwar, 2018) or the *International English Language Testing System* IELTS (Sabet & Reza, 2017; Nosrati, 2015) as a condition to get their professional certificate.

However, teaching English as a content area is not articulated with disciplinary or professional contents of universities' careers. In many cases, it's been seen as isolated from the curricula, because it's considered as a complementary educational field. The current version of Saber-Pro[1] exams (Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación, 2018) confirms the idea because it assesses under degree student's general competences in five fields of knowledge which are: Critical Reading, Quantitative Reasoning, Citizen Competences, Writing Communication and English. The English Module of Saber-Pro exams specifically intends to evaluate basic concepts of English and classify students' level of skill in levels A (basic) and B (intermediate).

The difficulty with teaching a second language as a complementary and basic language (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016), is that students tend to perceive English as required and don't understand the relevance of English learning in their career projection (Sánchez, Obando & Ibarra, 2017).

Taking into account, the present text points out a new approach for the teaching of English as an inner part of courses of psychology that let students achieve higher levels of communicative competence (Serna, 2019; Ceo-Di Francesco, Mora & Serna Collazos, 2016; Jaime & Insuasty, 2015) in English across their professional studies as well as more engagement with their under degree education, projecting it at an international level.

In the next sections, it will be explained some core concepts related to this reflection.

English proficiency of Colombian students

In Colombia, the National Bilingual Education Program 2004-2019, that was launched by the government during 2004 (Cárdenas & Miranda, 2014; Fandiño-Parra, Bermúdez-Jiménez, Lugo-Vásquez, 2012) intended to educate citizens able to communicate themselves in English to insert the country in the global economy and the cultural opening with international standards. One of the goals of this program was that undergraduates could achieve at least a high intermediate level or B2 according to the Common European Framework.

Nevertheless, recent results in English skill tests had shown that Colombian college students had not to get expected scores and the country has been classified with a low English level[1] among with other Latin American nations (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Sánchez, 2013) in the English Proficiency Index (EPI). One evidence was the score of 48,90 points that Colombia got in the EPI in 2017, occupying the place 60 of 88 countries of the World (Education First, 2019).

In the last five years, Colombia's position in *English Proficiency Index* (EPI) has decreased at least 18 positions in the ranking of countries (for more information see Figure 1).

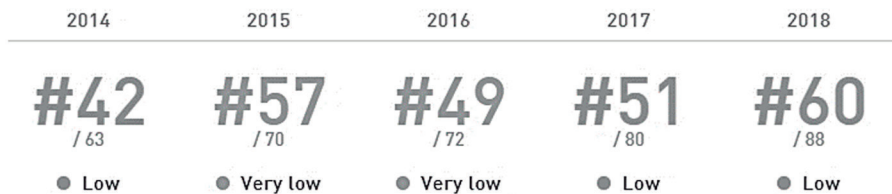


Figure 1. Colombia proficiency trend during the last five years.

Taken from: <https://www.ef.se/epi/regions/latin-america/colombia/>

From Latin America, Argentina was the only country in the region that got a high level of English proficiency, followed by Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Uruguay that got a moderate level of English proficiency and the rest of countries including Colombia had a low level of English proficiency, below Chile and Mexico (for more information see: Table 1).

Table 1. English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2018 results. Adapted from: <https://www.ef.com/ca/epi/>

Argentina	27	High
Costa Rica	36	Moderate
Dominican Republic	37	Moderate
Uruguay	40	Moderate
Chile	46	Low
Brazil	53	Low
Guatemala	55	Low
Panama	56	Low
Mexico	57	Low
Peru	59	Low
Colombia	60	Low
Bolivia	61	Low
Ecuador	65	Low

The countries with higher levels of proficiency were Sweden (first position), Netherlands (second position), and Singapore (third position). (Education First, 2019).

This information shows to the universities and psychology programs the importance to reinforce English language teaching by using new pedagogical strategies with intensive practical exercises, more class hours in the curriculum, and the students training to present international English tests (Nielsen, 2017).

Currently, English courses in Colombian universities are common to many career curriculums and are separated from professional courses of those programs, but if they want to improve English proficiency of their students, they have to include the use of English across the curriculum courses, because it implies a conceptual articulation between professional and bilingual education.

Teaching English inside courses of the psychology curriculum

The curriculum or plan study refers to the set of subjects of a programming career. These courses must have a sequential relation in order of complexity and have an educative purpose. In Colombia, most of the programs have many courses in Spanish and tackle psychological topics in a general and theoretical way, but without a context of practice.

It would be a positive illustrate for the professors, the need to articulate psychological topics, and their enforcement to solve specific problems from local and international contexts too. One strategy to do it's to make a curricular change (Rangel, 2015; Huang & Garrett, 2015; Williams, McCarley & Kraft, 2013; McMurray, Roberts, Robertson & Teoh, 2011) with a teachers' training program in each faculty, to explain them how to make adaptations of contents, academic references and activities into an intercultural approach (Elosúa, 2015) of psychological problems including a local point of view.

This intercultural adaptation has to be gradual, each semester in some courses, beginning with the assignment of tasks in English (Riyaz, 2016). For instance, reading comprehension exercises based on technical readings, then developing lectures, and by requesting students to write essays, to do written reports, and prepare expositions.

The idea's to practice English during class interactions in a natural way and get an advance along with the different curricular levels of the educational program. However, faculty's deans should assess communicative competence in technical English of their students, by the use of standardized tests such as the *Graduate Record Examinations Psychology Test* (Educational Testing Service, 2017; Kalat & Matlin, 2000), the *AP Psychology Exam* (The College Board, 2014) and the *Thinking Skills Assessment – TSA* (Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing, 2018).

An additional positive aspect of the use of standardized tests in psychology is the possibility of contrasting the educational quality level of local psychology programs with international psychology programs that apply the same tests. This comparison could be the base to take academic improvement decisions, and for curricular homologation processes between psychology programs (Jessop & Adams, 2016; Cantu, 2013; Mercer, 2011).

The homologation processes are important to create an international exchange opportunity (Lai, 2018) for Colombian students towards other destinations like European countries, Australia, and the United States and also to increase the academic level of psychology programs in Colombia.

The importance of communicative and intercultural competences in psychology according to the American Psychological Association

Contents of psychology curriculum programs are organized mainly by fields, theories, topics, and concepts, but sometimes this theoretical approach is disconnected from social problems of everyday life (Osorio, 2017).

Actually, and based on the previous statement, the American Psychological Association (2018) has a new view of psychologists' profile not as scientists or academics, but as citizens who serve as leaders in their communities, by offering public service, volunteerism, board membership, and other strategic roles to improve community well-being locally, nationally, or globally.

To educate this generation of citizen psychologists, the APA Citizen Psychologist Presidential Work Group proposed a frame of professional competencies to develop along their educative process. Those competencies are 1) the application of psychological knowledge to solving problems in everyday life; 2) community awareness; 3) community engagement; 4) community advocacy; 5) community leadership; and 6) the application of ethical principles and code of conduct (American Psychological Association, 2018).

In addition to, the American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs (American Psychological Association, 2013), defined five learning goals for the undergraduate psychology major, which are: Goal 1: Knowledge base in psychology; Goal 2: Scientific inquiry and critical thinking; Goal 3: Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world; Goal 4: communication; and Goal 5: professional development. Each goal is assessed during under degree levels and during baccalaureate.

The Goal 3, is associated with students' knowledge of formal regulations that govern professional ethics in psychology that contribute to positive outcomes in work settings and in building a society responsive to multicultural and global concerns, and in the particular case of Goal 4, it's divided into three outcomes: demonstrate effective writing for different purposes; exhibit effective presentation skills for different purposes; and interact effectively with others (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Taking into account this educative model of intercultural competences from the American Psychological Association (2018), Colombian programs of psychology could foster in their students the relevance of being bilingual professionals pursuing to understand beliefs and cultural patterns from other countries and also to convey their ideas orally and through different kinds of academic texts.

Academic international exchange for Colombian psychology students

Many students travel abroad during one or two semesters of their careers (Lovett, 2018; Lai, 2018), with the main purpose of knowing a different approach to psychology, and this kind of experience is useful for personal growth, but it doesn't have necessarily a direct impact in student's possibility to get access to a master degree or a doctoral program, because, in the majority of cases, students must return to Colombia to finish their under degree program in psychology instead of continuing their studies in the foreign country that they were visiting.

If Colombian psychology programs had homologation processes, students could continue their professional studies in different countries and even begin postgraduate studies. For example, EuroPsy, it's an international academic arrangement among countries which belong to the *European Common Framework of Reference* and promotes the homologation of under degree studies in psychology (European Federation of Psychologists' Association, 2013; Teichler, 2012) and Colombian programs of psychology could adapt their curricula to this kind of educative model. A homologation process increases the academic quality of psychology programs (Cornejo, 2018) and lets them update them to current pedagogical trends (Pinquart & Bernardo, 2014).

One way to begin the homologation processes is by the mediation of foreign embassies in Colombia that have scholarships programs, such as *Erasmus Mundus* from Europe (European Commission, 2019), the *Fulbright* from the United States (Institute of International Education, 2011), *Chevening* from The United Kingdom (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2018) the *Canada-CARICOM Leadership Scholarships* (Government of Canada, 2009), and the *Australia Awards* (Australian Government, 2019).

Also, psychology faculties, could guide their students to know this kind of programs, and counsel them to postulate to those scholarships. If many students are chosen to study postgraduate studies abroad (Bodycott, 2009), it improves the social status of psychology faculties and opens the possibilities to create alliances with particular psychology programs, for collaborative research projects and academic events.

Additionally, an alternative to do it's hiring academic experts in exchange programs from foreign nations (Shor & Breithaupt, 2016), to advise psychology faculties about how to prepare their students to start post-graduate studies in international destinations. For example, these experts could give academic conferences on topics like cultural characteristics of foreign countries, their lifestyle, job opportunities for non-native students, and the advantages of studying abroad. These conferences give an intercultural approach to students and exemplify them on how to be an autonomous learner and person.

A proposal of bilingual education within psychology programs in Colombia

It would be useful for psychology programs to include inside their curriculums, intercultural courses in psychology, pursuing to prepare students to achieve homologation processes of the career in other countries. For example, a course of: specialized academic writing 1: academic essays; specialized academic writing 2: academic reports and papers; communicative competences in advanced English; American and Canadian trends in psychology; European trends in psychology; Australian trends in psychology; African trends in psychology; Asian trends in psychology; and Latin-American trends in psychology.

The idea with these courses is to give students a wider approach of their career in psychology, by studying international trends and current psychosocial problems in different continents. Also these courses could be taught by local professors as well as virtually by foreign professors of psychology from other international colleges as invited teachers.

Some contents that could be taught in these courses are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Suggested courses to promote an International scope of psychology in local psychology programs.

Course	Main topics
Specialized academic writing 1: academic essays.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines for writing of specialized essays in psychology in English. 2. Writing of essays in the Vancouver citing and referencing style. 3. Writing of essays in the Modern Language citing and referencing style. 4. Writing of essays in the American Psychological Association citing and referencing style.
Specialized academic writing 2: academic reports and papers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines for writing of specialized reports and papers in psychology in English. 2. Writing of reports and papers in the Vancouver citing and referencing style. 3. Writing of essays in the American Psychological Association citing and referencing style.

Communicative competences in advanced English.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines for preparing specialized presentations of psychology in English. 2. Guidelines for preparing seminars of psychology in English. 3. Guidelines for preparing academic debates of psychology in English.
Latin-American trends in psychology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from Latin-America and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of Latin-America.
American and Canadian trends in psychology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from North America and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of North America.
European trends in psychology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from Europe and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of Europe.
Australian trends in psychology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from Australia and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of Australia.
African trends in psychology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from Africa and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of Africa.
Asian trends in psychology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative psychologist from Asia and their ideas. 2. Current framework of social and psychological problems of Asia.

Even similar courses could be adapted from other psychology programs of foreign countries looking for stating connections among scholars, the sharing of teaching experiences, to start common research projects in psychology as well as to create dual degree programs in a virtual methodology which is more accessible and cheaper for students than traveling abroad.

Many under degree programs of psychology have a local view of the career, but with these courses, their students could open the view of psychology, by listening teachers from other countries, sharing with them ideas and the main professional challenges they may face off. In this way, Colombian students of psychology could understand better social problems in many parts of the World not only in Colombia, and they also could have the possibility to think about studying a virtual master or a virtual doctoral degree program.

In addition to, psychology programs with these dual degree programs could design common scientific journals of psychology in English to publish papers with an international scope of social problems, and it would improve the publication rankings of Colombian psychology programs in comparison with other psychology programs from other Latin American countries such as Mexico or Brazil.

Conclusions

To sum, Colombian programs of psychology must implement curricular changes (Rangel, 2015; Huang & Garrett, 2015; McMurray, Roberts, Robertson & Teoh, 2011) to acquire an international level (Jessop & Adams, 2016; Van de Vijver, 2013), with better academic quality and new possibilities for their students to travel abroad (Milian, M; Birnbaum, Cardona & Nicholson, 2015) and find better job opportunities as well.

One strategy to achieve this goal, it's by adapting gradually all academic courses into a bilingual and intercultural approach (Pinquart & Bernardo, 2014), that let students learn disciplinary and professional topics with a wider perspective of social reality, not only national but also international.

Besides, psychology programs should prepare their students in communicative competences (Serna, 2019; Ceo-Di Francesco, Mora & Serna Collazos, 2016; Jaime & Insuasty, 2015) in English to understand the last research advances in scientific literature, to express their ideas in appropriate way and to get excellent results in international tests of psychology.

Finally, Colombian programs of psychology could promote homologation processes with foreign programs of psychology (Cornejo, 2018; Cantu, 2013), to motivate their pupils to study master and doctoral programs in those international programs (Nedelcu & Ulrich, 2014), to invite international professors to get involved in research projects and to create new common postgraduate programs.

References

- Ahern, J & Litt, E. (2018). Creating Buy-In: Integrating IEP Core Curricula and TOEFL Prep. *The CATESOL Journal*, 30(2), 65-76. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1206488.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2018). *Citizen Psychologist. Preparing the next generation of citizen psychologists: competencies and learning outcomes across levels of education and training*. Document available at: <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/citizen-psychologist/citizen-psychologist-curriculum-draft.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2013). *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0*. Document available at: <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>
- Australian Government. (2019). *Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook*. Document available at: <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/aus-awards-scholarships-policy-handbook.pdf>
- Bodycott, P. (2009). Choosing a higher education study abroad destination. What mainland Chinese parents and students rate as important. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 8(3), 349-373. ISSN: 1475-2409. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083776_Choosing_a_higher_education_study_abroad_destination
- Bonilla, C & Tejada-Sánchez, I. (2016). Unanswered questions in Colombia's language education policy. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(1), 185-201. Article available at: <https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/51996>
- Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing. (2018). *Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Test Specification*. Document available at: <https://www.admissionstesting.org/images/47832-tsa-test-specification.pdf>
- Cantu, M. (2013). Three Effective Strategies of Internationalization in American Universities. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 3(3), 1-12. ISSN: 2161-7252. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1136025.pdf>
- Cárdenas, R.& Miranda, N. (2014). Implementación del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo: un balance intermedio. *Educación & Educadores*, 17(1), 51-67. Article available at: <http://educacionyeducadores.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/eye/article/view/3045>

- Ceo-DiFrancesco, D; Mora, O & Serna, A. (2016). Developing intercultural communicative competence across the Americas. In S. Jager, M. Kurek & B. O'Rourke (Eds), *New directions in telecollaborative research and practice: selected papers from the second conference on telecollaboration in higher education* (pp. 59-67). Document available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571343.pdf>
- Coulson, D & Homewood, J. (2016). Developing psychological literacy: Is there a role for reflective practice? *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 13(2). Article available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol13/iss2/5/>
- Cornejo, W. (2018). The teaching of psychology in Colombia: The challenges for the discipline and high quality. *International Journal of Psychological Research*, 11(1), 6-8. DOI: 10.21500/20112084.3380. Article available at: <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/ijpr/v11n1/2011-2084-ijpr-11-01-00006.pdf>
- Duarte, H. (2016). *Desempeño del nivel de inglés en Colombia para el período 2011-2015*. Tesis de grado del Programa de Economía. Cali: Universidad ICESI. Document available in: https://repository.icesi.edu.co/biblioteca_digital/bitstream/10906/81161/1/TG01604.pdf
- Education First. (2019). EF EPI. Índice de Dominio del Inglés. Document available: <https://www.ef.com.co/~media/centralescom/epi/downloads/full-reports/v8/ef-epi-2018-spanish-latam.pdf>
- Educational Testing Service. (2017). *Graduate Record Examinations Psychology Test Practice Book*. Document available at: https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/practice_book_psych.pdf
- Elosúa, M. (2015). Intercultural competence in the education process. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(1), 72-83. .ISSN 1927-5250. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1075168.pdf>
- European Commission. (2019). *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*. Document available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2019_en
- European Federation of Psychologists' Association. (2013). *EuroPsy—the European Certificate in Psychology*. EFPA Regulations on EuroPsy and Appendices. Document available: <http://www.europsych-efpa.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/EuroPsy%20Regulations%20July%202013.pdf>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y; Bermúdez-Jiménez, J & Lugo-Vásquez, V. (2012). Retos del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. Colombia Bilingüe. *Educación & Educadores*, 15(3), 363-381. Article available at: <http://educacionyeducadores.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/eye/article/view/2172/2951>

- Foreign & Commonwealth Office. (2018). *Apply to study in the UK with a Chevening Scholarship*. Brochure available at: <http://bcckenya.org/assets/documents/Chevening%20Scholarships%202018-19.pdf>
- Government of Canada, (2009). *Canada and the Americas Priorities and Progress*. Document available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/maeci-dfait/FR5-41-1-2009E.pdf
- Huang, F & Garrett, M. (2015). A Comparison of Psychology Curriculum and Instruction: China & America. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 3(3), 237-242. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1056097.pdf>
- Institute of International Education. (2011). *Orientation Handbook. A guide for U.S. Fulbright Fellows*. Document available at: https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/documents/z_Orientation_Handbook.pdf
- Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación. (2018). *Guía de Orientación Saber – Pro. Módulos de Competencias Genéricas*. Document available at: <http://www2.icfes.gov.co/en/docman/estudiantes-y-padres-de-familia/saber-pro-estudiantes-y-padres/estructura-general-del-examen/modulos-saber-pro-2017/modulos-primer-sesion-competencias-genericas-16/5398-guia-de-orientacion-modulos-genericos-saber-pro-2018/file?force-download=1>.
- Jaime, M & Insuasty, E. (2015). Analysis of the teaching practices at a Colombian foreign language institute and their effects on students' communicative competence. *HOW*, 22(1), 45-64. ISSN: 0120-5927. Article available at: <https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/133>
- Jessop, N & Adams, G. (2016). Internationalising the psychology curriculum: Preliminary notes on conception and assessment of anticipated benefits. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 22(2), 41-52. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316636423_Internationalizing_the_Psychology_Curriculum_Preliminary_Notes_on_Conception_and_Assessment_of_Anticipated_Benefits
- Kalat, J & Matlin, M. (2000). The GRE Psychology Test: A Useful But Poorly Understood Test. *Teaching of Psychology*, 27(1), 24-27. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247504605_The_GRE_Psychology_Test_A_Useful_but_Poorly_Understood_Test
- Lai, L. (2018). Global world, global mind: Narratives of the University of Hong Kong Worldwide Exchange students. *Transformation in Higher Education* 3(0), 1-18. ISSN: (Online) 2519-5638. Article available at: <https://thejournal.org.za/index.php/thejournal/article/view/42/140>

- Lovett, T. (2018). Participating in a study abroad program. Concerns and hopes of intending international students. *Australian Universities' Review*, 60(1), 3-8. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1169173.pdf>
- McMurray, I; Roberts, P; Robertson, I & Teoh, K. (2011). An action research project exploring the psychology curriculum and transitions to employment. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 17(1), 51-63. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ932190.pdf>
- Mercer, J. (2011). Experiencing ERASMUS: Reflections on integrating Polish psychology students onto a year of a degree in the UK. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 17(1), 13-22. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ932185.pdf>
- Milian, M; Birnbaum, M; Cardona, B & Nicholson, B. (2015). Personal and Professional Challenges and Benefits of Studying Abroad. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 5(1), 1-12. ISSN: 2161-7252. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1135354.pdf>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. (2003). *Resolución 3461 de 2003. Por la cual se definen las características específicas de calidad para los programas de pregrado en psicología*. Document available at: https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-86388_Archivo_pdf.pdf
- Mustafa, F & Anwar, S. (2018). Distinguishing TOEFL score: what is the lowest score considered a TOEFL Score?. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 26(3), 1995-2008. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED590428.pdf>
- Nedelcu, A & Ulrich, C. (2014). Are we ready for international students? Our university as window and mirror. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 142, 90 – 96. Article available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814045212>
- Nielsen, J. (2017). Simulacro de las pruebas internacionales: una mirada desde los estándares de lengua. *Sophia*, 13(1), 55-63. Article available at: <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/sph/v13n1/v13n1a07.pdf>
- Nosrati, V. (2015). Reading Test-taking Strategies in General Training IELTS. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 6(5), 134-141. ISSN: 2203-4714. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1127466.pdf>
- Osorio, M. (2017). El currículo: Perspectivas para acercarnos a su comprensión. *Zona Próxima, Revista del Instituto de Estudios en Educación y del Instituto de Idiomas Universidad del Norte*, 26, 140-151. ISSN 2145-9444. Article available at: <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/zop/n26/2145-9444-zop-26-00140.pdf>

- Pinquart, M & Bernardo, A. (2014). Teaching of psychology in countries with advanced versus developing economies. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 20(1), 26-40. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1149740.pdf>
- Rangel, H. (2015). Una mirada internacional de la construcción curricular. Por un currículo vivo, democrático y deliverativo. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 17(1), 1-16. Article available at: <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=15532949001>
- Riyaz, S. (2016). Importance of English communication skills. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2(3), 478-480. ISSN: 2394-5869. Article available at: <http://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2016/vol2issue3/PartH/2-3-47.pdf>
- Sabet, M & Reza, H. (2017). On the relationship between the IELTS listening and listening in Academic English Programs. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(2), 170-179. ISSN: 2203-4714. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1144049.pdf>
- Sánchez, A; Obando, G & Ibarra, D. (2017). Learners' perceptions and undergraduate foreign language courses at a Colombian public university. *HOW*, 24(1), 63-82. <http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.24.1.310>. Article available at: <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/how/v24n1/v24n1a04.pdf>
- Sánchez, A. (2013). *Documentos de trabajo sobre Economía Regional # 191. Bilingüismo en Colombia*. Colombia: Banco de La República. ISSN: 1692-3715. Document available at: http://www.banrep.gov.co/docum/Lectura_finanzas/pdf/dtser_191.pdf
- Serna, H. (2019). Implementing an instructional design on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with foreign language students aimed at joining the corporate world. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3), 161-177, E-ISSN 1916-4750. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331046601_Implementing_an_Instructional_Design_on_Intercultural_Communicative_Competence_ICC_With_Foreign_Language_Students_Aimed_at_Joining_the_Corporate_World
- Shor, R & Breithaupt, L. (2016). Teaching Abroad as Graduate Students: Reflections on an Applied Cross Cultural Psychology Course in Morocco. *International Psychology Bulletin*, 20(4), 43-46. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312167643_Teaching_International_Psychology_Teaching_Abroad_as_Graduate_Students_Reflections_on_an_Applied_Cross_Cultural_Psychology_Course_in_Morocco
- Taylor, J & Hulme, J. (2015). Introducing a compendium of psychological literacy case studies: Reflections on psychological literacy in practice. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 21(2), 25-34. Article available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1146628.pdf>

Teichler, U. (2012). International Student Mobility in Europe in the Context of the Bologna Process. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 2(1), 1-13. ISSN:2161-7252. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281812747_International_Mobility_in_Europe_in_the_Context_of_the_Bologna_Process

The College Board. (2014). *Psychology Course Description*. Document available at: <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/apc/ap-psychology-course-description.pdf>

Van de Vijver, F. (2013). Contributions of Internationalization to Psychology: Toward a Global and Inclusive Discipline. *American Psychologist*, 68, 761-770. DOI: 10.1037/a0033762. Article available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259251149_Contributions_of_Internationalization_to_Psychology_Toward_a_Global_and_Inclusive_Discipline

Williams, J; McCarley, N & Kraft, J. (2013). History and systems of psychology: A course to unite a core curriculum. *College Quarterly*, 16(2). Article available at: <http://collegequarterly.ca/2013-vol16-num02-spring/williams.html>

Authors

***Germán Andrés Torres-Escobar** Is a full-time professor at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, Faculty of Psychology and Social Sciences in Bogotá. His research interests are schooling topics, educational psychology, and school guidance. He also worked as school counselor in two private educational institutions

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6417-8850>

Rolan Arcadio Correa Lopez Is a full-time professor at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, Faculty of Psychology and Social Sciences in Bogotá. His research interests are neuropsychology, neurosciences and cognitive processes in human beings. He also teaches psychology at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5345-6875>

How to reference this article: Torres-Escobar, G. A., & Correa-López, R. A. (2020). Promoting an Academic International Profile in Undergraduate Students of Psychology Programs in Colombia. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 21, 225-242. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.775>

Guidelines for Authors

GiST Journal ISSN (1692-5777) is a peer-reviewed journal published bi-annually by the *Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana (ÚNICA)* in Bogotá, Colombia.

Content. GiST Journal disseminates the results of national and international studies in language education, particularly in bilingual education and language learning innovation. GiST addresses related topics including language policy, the relationship between language, culture, and society, the role of first and second languages, teaching methodologies, learning strategies, educational planning, and other topics related to language education.

Journal Aim. To disseminate the results of national and international research carried out in the field of language education, in particular bilingual education, as well as innovations in language teaching and learning.

Readership. GiST Journal is directed towards students, researchers, educators, policy makers, and other parties interested in the field of (or in fields related to) language education.

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

Submission of articles. Authors must submit documents exclusively and directly via the platform of Open Journal Systems (OJS). Users must register, and articles should be submitted by clicking on the link “online submissions.” Submissions are received in the dates established and published by GIST. Submissions to GIST can be sent via: <https://latinjournal.org/index.php/gist/issue/view/66>

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

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

Article Presentation Format

Language. The article should be in English.

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

Length. At least 15 but no more than 25 pages.

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

Style. Authors should follow *the Publication Manual of the APA (Seventh Edition, 2019)* for writing style in general as well as references. Some key aspects of the general APA style include:

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

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

Martínez, A. A., Jones, B. B., & Schmidt, C. C. (1997). Título de artículo en español [Title of article translated into English]. *Name of Journal*, 8(3), 492-518.

Chang, F. F., & Donovan, P. P. (Eds.). (1985). *Title of work*. Location: Publisher.

Martínez, A. A. (2009). Title of chapter. In E. E. Godoy (Ed.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.

Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. doi:xx.xxxxxxxx

Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. Retrieved from <http://name.of.website>

Chang, F. F. (2000, July). *Title of paper or poster*. Paper or poster session presented at the meeting of Organization Name, Location.

Martínez, A. A. (2002, October 12). Title of article. *Name of Newspaper*, pp. B2, B6.

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

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

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

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

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

Types of Articles

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

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

Peer Review Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Editorial Committee will decide on the publication of an article according to the following criteria: the fulfillment of the above stated conditions, methodological and conceptual rigor, originality, scientific quality, and relevance.

If the article is accepted for publication, the Editor proceeds with the editing and proofreading process. Once the final version of the article is completed, it is sent to the author for final approval, and is then forwarded to the design team for its preparation.

Relinquishing of Rights and Distribution of Published Material

The publication of articles in GIST implies that authors relinquish all rights to the article and its content. Authors also authorize GIST to promote and distribute the article via the means it deems appropriate, be it in print or electronically. For this purpose, authors should sign and send both the letter of relinquishment, and the declaration of conflict of interest upon submission of the article. These formats are available in the OJS platform of the Journal.

Code of Ethics and Good Practices

The Editorial Committee of GiST Education and Learning Research Journal, as part of its commitment to the scientific community, strives to guarantee the ethics and quality of its articles. The publication takes the code of conduct and good practice of the Committee of Ethics in Publications (COPE) as its point of reference, which defines standards for editors of scientific journals, as well as the legal and ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the sixth edition of its Style Manual.

All parties involved in the publication of the journal (Editor, Committees, Authors, and Peer Reviewers) must accept and adhere to the ethical guidelines and principles outlined here.

Editor Obligations and General Responsibilities

The Editor of the journal is responsible for ensuring strict compliance with the policies and principles of the journal. Specifically, the Editor is expected to act in an ethical manner in the following aspects:

Decision making. The Editor guides all decisions regarding articles submitted and published according to verifiable criteria of impartiality and fairness, taking into consideration the primary objectives of the journal.

The works submitted are evaluated objectively, based solely on the scientific merit of their content, without discrimination in regards to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, nationality or political persuasion.

Confidentiality. The Editor is committed to the principle of confidentiality and anonymity in communications between Editor and Authors, and Editor and Peer Evaluators. The Editor shall not disclose information related to the article or its process with third parties or colleagues not related to the journal, except in cases when an expert opinion is required, and in which the express permission for this purpose is granted by the author(s). The Editor shall not use the results of research of articles not accepted for publication for his or her own benefit or that of others, except with express permission from the author(s).

Communication. The Editor shall receive and respond to complaints, petitions, and comments in a reasonable amount of time. This also applies to the publication of corrections or modifications stemming from the editing process of published articles.

Compliance. The Editor strives to comply with the editorial policies of the Journal, and the publication of each online and print issue according to its established publication schedule.

In the same fashion, to:

- Consult the opinion of the members of the Editorial Board and Committee.
- Generate initiatives of support and constantly improve editorial practices.
- Support initiatives to educate researchers on issues of publication ethics and other ethical aspects of the journal.
- Take responsibility for the process of all articles submitted to the Journal, and develop mechanisms of confidentiality and peer evaluation up to the point of publication or rejection by the journal.

Other principles to follow include:

Peer Review Process and Editorial Decisions. The decision to publish or not shall be established via the process of peer evaluation, according to the “double blind” method in order to guarantee that the evaluation process that is free of conflict of interest between the parties. This rigorous procedure allows peer reviewers to value the technical quality, originality, and scientific contribution of the articles, among other aspects, and at the same time provides authors with the means to improve the article. For this revision process, a sufficient number of peer reviewers will be provided, selected from qualified area experts, with the intention of allowing for a more critical, expert, and objective editorial decision-making process.

Editing and Publication Schedule. The Editor provides for the fulfillment of the editing and publication schedule of articles accepted for publication. Upon the publication of each issue, the Editor and the editorial team accept responsibility for the promotion and distribution of the journal to its readers, subscribers, authors, peer reviewers, and other organizations with whom the institution holds agreements, as well as the data bases and national and international indexing services.

General Editor Obligations and Responsibilities

Authors must present their articles in the link indicated on the OJS-web page, according to the guidelines for the presentation of articles established by the journal. Authors are responsible for the ideas expressed in the articles, and for the ethical appropriateness.

Originality, plagiarism and exclusivity. Authors must explicitly state that the article is original in its creation, and that every effort has been taken to respect the intellectual property of those third parties cited within. Articles must not be reprints, nor published in other journals. Further, authors must declare that the findings are original in nature, that no plagiarism exists, nor distortion or manipulation of the facts.

Exclusivity. Articles submitted to the journal must not be simultaneously submitted to other publications.

Citations and references. Authors must ensure that they have received express permission for the use of material they do not own, including the reproduction of charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, photographs, etc. All sources must be cited appropriately, with complete references provided.

Authorship. Articles with more than one author should order authors' names in hierarchical fashion, indicating by this the degree of function, responsibility, and contribution to the article. By the same token, mention must be made to any individuals who have made significant scientific or intellectual contributions to the research, composition, and editing of the article.

Responsibility. All authors submitting articles must assume full responsibility for their work, and ensure that it presents an exhaustive review and discussion of the most recent and relevant literature.

Research ethics. Research studies must use methodology that ensures that subjects are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to those principles of the code of conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA), GIST highlights the following: discussion of the limitations of confidentiality and the safekeeping of the same, minimization of the intrusion and invasiveness in individuals' privacy, conservation of data and informed consent to research, record, or film. Further, the names of institutions or individuals should be avoided, even if the author has gained permission for their use. If their mention is considered necessary, the author must submit signed authorization for their inclusion. The names of the researchers and participants shall likewise be omitted from the article. It is suggested that authors use pseudonyms, for example in case studies.

Conflict of interest. The Editor shall not consider articles that possibly represent a real or potential conflict of interest, resulting from financial or other relationships of competition or collaboration between authors, companies, or institutions mentioned in the article.

Errors in articles published. Any error or imprecision shall be communicated by the editorial team, and the necessary corrections in the online version of the article made.

Obligations and General Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers:

In the revision process, peer reviewers shall adhere to the following principles:

Confidentiality. Peer reviewers shall not share any information with third parties related to the article or its publication process. In such case that an external opinion may be necessary, reviewers shall seek express written authorization from the Editor in Chief, explaining the reasons. By the same token, reviewers shall not use the content of non-published articles for their own benefit or that of others, except with the express authorization of the authors. The violation of the principle of confidentiality constitutes bad practice by the reviewers.

Contribution to quality. Individuals who commit to evaluating articles submitted to the Journal shall carry out a critical revision, without bias, using clear, non-offensive language, with the intention of guaranteeing scientific and literary quality, according to the area of expertise.

Time management. Although the Journal has a maximum time allotted for the revision process, articles should be evaluated as soon as possible in the hopes of optimizing the revision and editing process. At the same time, peer reviewers who feel that they are unable to fulfill their function as evaluators, either because of lack of expertise, time or possible conflict of interest, shall communicate this immediately to the Editor or editorial team through regular channels.

Detection of errors and bad editorial practices. Reviewers shall pay particular attention to gaps in references to literature or authors that they feel need to be included. At the same time, if in the process of revision, it is possible to detect bad practices on the part of authors, peer reviewers are under the obligation to inform the Editor so that he or she may proceed in accordance with the ethical principles of the journal.

Additional Information

Compensation. The author will receive three copies of the edition in which his/her article shall appear.

Concerns. Communicate with the Editor through e-mail or by telephone, please. Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, International: (57-1) 281-1777 ext. 1296; In Colombia: (05-1) 281-1777 ext.1296

Waiver. Every article shall be subject to the review of the Editorial Committee. The Editor reserves the right to make formal modifications to articles through the editing process.

Editorial Norms. The contents of the articles are the exclusive responsibility of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GiST or ÚNICA. Any article published in GiST may be quoted as long as the source is clearly referenced.

Correspondence. For contributions, subscriptions or journal exchanges please write to: GiST Journal, Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana ÚNICA, Calle 19 # 2A -49 Bogotá, Colombia. PBX: (57-1)2811777 email: gist@unica.edu.co <http://www.unica.edu.co>

Reviewers

No. 21, 2020 (July - December 2020)

Gist would like to thank the following reviewers for their valuable comments and thoughtful revision:

Ayşegül Takkaç-Tulgar, *Atatürk University*, Turkey

Jair Ayala-Zárate, *Educational Testing Services*, Colombia

Sanja Škific, *University of Zadar*, Croatia

Astrid Nuñez-Pardo, *Universidad Externado de Colombia*, Colombia

Josefina del Carmen Santana Villegas, *Universidad Panamericana*, Mexico

Edgar Lucero Babativa, *Universidad de La Salle*, Colombia

Mauricio Arango, *Universidad de Antioquia*, Colombia

Ana Clara Sánchez Solarte, *Universidad de Nariño*, Colombia

Bertha Ramos Holguín, *Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia*

Mauricio Aldana, *Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana*, Colombia

Alejandro Pérez, *Centro Colombo Americano*, Colombia

Paul Abraham, *Simmons College*, USA

Henry Sevilla Morales, *Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica*, Costa Rica

Anna Peñaloza, *Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia*

Derly Cespedes, *Universidad ECCI*, Colombia

Alexander Aristizábal, *International School of Penag*, Malaysia

Zahra Alimorad, *Shiraz University*, Iran

Adriana Castañeda, *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas*, Colombia

Gabriel Cote, *Universidad de Pamplona*, Colombia

Claudia Acero, *Universidad de La Sabana*, Colombia

FORMAMOS LOS MEJORES MAESTROS

Innovadores • Bilingües • Inigualables



ÚNICA

INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA
COLOMBIANA AMERICANA

LICENCIATURA EN BILINGÜISMO CON ÉNFASIS EN ESPAÑOL E INGLÉS

VIGILADA MINEDUCACIÓN

Registro Calificado: Resolución 9965 de 31 de Julio de 2013.



FORMAMOS LOS MEJORES MAESTROS

Innovadores • Bilingües • Inigualables



ÚNICA

INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA
COLOMBIANA AMERICANA

ESPECIALIZACIÓN EN EDUCACIÓN BILINGÜE

VIGILADA MINEDUCACIÓN

Registro Calificado: Resolución 9965 de 31 de Julio de 2013.



www.unica.edu.co